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An Humble and Serious  
**ADDRESS**  
 TO THE  
 Princes *and* States  
 OF  
**EUROPE,**

For the ADMISSI<sup>O</sup>N, or at least open  
 TOLERATION of the CHRISTIAN  
 RELIGION in their Dominions.

CONTAINING

- I. A Demonstration, that None of them do, properly speaking, *Admit* or openly *Tolerate* the *Christian Religion* in their Dominions at this Day.
- II. The true *Occasions*, why it is not Admitted, or openly Tolerated by them.
- III. Some *Reasons*, why they ought to Admit, or at least openly Tolerate this Religion.
- IV. An earnest *Address* to the several *European Princes and States*, grounded on the Premises, for the *Admission*, or at least the open *Tolerati<sup>o</sup>n* of the same *Christian Religion* in their Dominions.

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By WILLIAM WHISTON, M. A.

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*Let me not, I pray you, accept any Man's Person: neither let me give flattering Titles unto Man. For I know not to give flattering Titles: In so doing, my Maker would soon take me away. Job xxxiii. 21, 22.*

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*F*Rustra quidam qui ratione vincuntur, Consuetudinem nobis opponunt; quasi Consuetudo sit major Veritate; aut non id sit in spiritualibus sequendum, quod in melius fuerit a Sancto Spiritu revelatum. Ignosci enim potest simpliciter erranti: Post Inspirationem verò & Revelationem factam, qui in eo qui erraverat, perseverat prudens & sciens, sine veniâ ignorantia peccat: presumptione enim atque obstinatione quadam nititur, cum ratione superetur. Cypr. Epist. ad Jubaian. p. 310.

*Sed dicit aliquis: Quid ergo fiet de his qui in præteritum de Hæresi ad Ecclesiam venientes, sine Baptismo admissi sunt? Potens est Dominus misericordia sua indulgentiam dare, & eos qui ad Ecclesiam simpliciter admissi, in Ecclesia dormierunt, ab Ecclesia suæ muneribus non separare. Non tamen quia aliquando erratum est, ideo semper errandum est; cum magis sapientibus & Deum timentibus congruat, patefactæ & perspectæ veritati libenter atque incunctanter obsequi, quam pertinaciter atque obstinate pro hæreticis reluctari. Ibid. Pag. 313.*





An Humble and Serious

# ADDRESS, &c.



BEFORE I begin to discourse upon the particular Assertions already set down, I desire the Reader to observe, That by the *Christian Religion* I here mean that Religion or Institution of Divine Worship, of Faith, Practice, Government and Discipline, which Christ our Lord did by himself, and by his Holy Apostles and their Companions, Ordain and Settle in the World, in the first Century; and this, as it appears not in the Modern Books or Notions, but as it stands in all the *Original Records of Christianity*: Not only as it is distinguished from bare Natural Religion, and from the *Jewish* or *Mahometan* Institutions; but also as it is different from, or contrary to those particular Sects and Parties which are called *Greeks* or *Latins*, *Papists* or *Protestants*, *Lutherans* or *Calvinists*,

*Presbyterians or Independents, Baptists or Quakers, or any others professing the same Religion among us: So far, I mean, as any or all of them do recede from those Original Settlements, and not otherwise. Now, that the Princes and States of Christendom do Admit and Tolerate in their several Countries some or other of these Sects and Parties pretending to Christianity; nay, that they do usually establish and support some one of these Sects or Parties, which their own Education, or Worldly Politicks have recommended to them, I do not at all deny. Nor do I in the least question, but every one of these Sects not only do allow of and receive, but zealously contend for and earnestly embrace several Parts, several Doctrines and Duties of the true Christian Religion; so far, as their respective Leaders and Guides have happened formerly to embrace and receive the same. But then, what I would be understood to mean here, is plainly this, That 'tis not the true, the entire Christian Religion, as attested to and delivered in the New Testament, and the other Original Records of the same, which is thus admitted and receiv'd by the several Kingdoms and States of Europe; but 'tis only that Religion or Settlement which the several Leaders of each Party did formerly, in Times of great Difficulty and Ignorance, suppose, and imagine, and vote to be the Christian Religion. Thus, for Example, if you go into some Parts of Germany, and enquire of a true Lutheran, What Religion he is of? He will certainly answer, Of  
the*



*the Christian Religion.* But if you farther enquire of his particular Opinions or Practices relating to this which he calls the *Christian Religion*, you will find him to follow the *Augsburg Confession*, or that Set of Doctrines and Rules which was agreed on by the *Lutherans* at that particular City of *Germany*, in the particular Year 1530. And if, upon your comparing Things together, you represent to him, that you have been studying the Scriptures of the New Testament, and all the other most Primitive Remains of Christianity, but cannot possibly find that many of the Contents of that Confession have any Foundation there; nay, that some of them are visibly contrary to it; and therefore that, if he be of the *Christian Religion*, as he affirm'd he was, he ought to follow the Christian Notions and Christian Rules, but not those of *Luther* and his Associates; he will probably be so far from thanking you for your Information, and from impartially comparing the *Augsburg Confession* with the Christian Records, in order to his own Improvement, and the Reformation of his own Mistakes; that he will rather grow warm upon it: He will affirm that, to be sure, the Christian Records do agree with the *Augsburg Confession*; and that, for certain, such great and good Men as those *Lutherans* who framed it, were not permitted by Providence to mistake in these Matters. Nay, 'tis well if he do not immediately declare his Resentment at your very Supposition, That *Luthera-*

*nism* is not exactly agreeable to Christianity. He will readily confess, that as for the poor unhappy *Papists* and *Calvinists*; the imperfect Churches of *England*, and *Scotland*, and *Holland*, and *Muscovy*, &c. their several Schemes are, in many Points, very far from agreeing with the *True Christian Religion*: But that he can never allow the same in the first Reformers among the *Lutherans*. If you happen thence to pass over the Sea, or perhaps only over a River, and there to apply your self to some other Great and Learned Man of another Establish'd Church, be it *Papist* or *Calvinist*; be it of the Church of *England*, or of *Scotland*, or of *Holland*, or of *Muscovy*, &c, you will commonly meet with the same Treatment; and may observe the like Surprize, when you discover any such Variations from *Old Christianity* in any of them. It will be severally affirmed, That to be sure the *Lutherans*, with their *Augsburg* Confession, as to many Points, can never be justify'd; and that 'tis very strange, that any Learned Men should ever imagine several of those Articles to be agreeable to Christianity. But then he cannot but bless God for the great Happiness that their own Articles, or Confessions of Faith, and Laws for Worship and Discipline, agreed on either at the Council of *Trent* one Year, or at *Geneva* another, or at *London* another, or at *Edinburgh* another, or at *Dort* another, or at *Moscow* another, should so exactly and surprizingly agree with the *New Testament*, and the other Books

of the Primitive Fathers. Nay, perhaps he will, without further Examination, assert this Agreement to be so exact, and so plain, that he can take it to be nothing but gross Partiality and Obstinacy in all the other Sects, that they are not sensible of it; and accordingly cannot but think that the Christian Magistrates of his Opinion might justly use *wholesome Severities*, in order to make Dissenters consider better; and according to Christ's Admonition, to Luk. xiv. 23.  
*compel them to come in to the same*

Scheme of Christianity. That this is the common Case with the several Kingdoms and Churches in *Christendom*, as this Part of the World is still call'd, I may Appeal fairly to every one's own Observation: as I may also Appeal thereto, whether this Case does not imply, that the Christian Religion is not in Strictness receiv'd and follow'd therein. But lest this general Reasoning should not have its due Effect on the Reader, I shall descend to Particulars; and

I. In the first place shall prove, That none of the present Princes and States of *Europe* do, properly speaking, Admit or openly Tolerate the *Christian Religion* in their Dominions at this Day; either

(1.) As to the Belief of the True *Christian Faith*.

(2.) As to the Performance of the Genuine *Christian Worship*.

(3.) As

(3.) As to the Admission of the Original *Christian Church Government*.

(4.) As to the Submission to the Primitive *Christian Discipline*.

(5.) As to the Obedience to the Proper *Christian Laws*.

(6.) As to the Care of the Ancient *Christian Practice*.

(7.) As to the receiving the Original *Christian Books*.

(8.) As to the Administration of the Solemn *Christian Sacraments*.

But before I come directly to prove the Particulars, I desire that the Reader will take these here set down as only a few Arguments, or Instances chosen out of a much greater Number; which might most easily be alledg'd on this Occasion. For if I were to set down here all the Variations wherein the present Churches and Sects in *Europe* differ from Christianity, as it was settled by the Apostles at first, *the Time would fail me*; and the Largeness of this Work would, in great part, prevent the Hopes of its being perus'd by those that ought to be concern'd in the Correction of them. Nor will it be necessary here to exhaust this Subject before-hand; but leave that to the future more compleat and more exact Enquiries of the several Churches and Sects, when they once in earnest set about a Reformation.

(1.) I shall endeavour to prove, That the several Princes and States of *Europe* do not Admit or openly Tolerate the true *Christian Faith* in their Dominions. For the true Christian Faith, to speak here only of the Belief of Fundamentals, was no other than the Original Creed, or Profession made before Baptism; which was their only *Rule of Truth*; their only uncontroverted *Catalogue of Fundamentals* in Doctrine, and their proper Guide and Standard in Matters of that Nature: This *Rule of Christian Truth* or *Faith* then, which was the plainest thing in the World in the first Ages of the Gospel, and of which we have so great Number of undisputed Ancient Monuments still preserv'd, is the great Character of Christianity, as to the *Credenda* of it; and those Nations which receive it as such, are so far Christian Nations; and those that take other Rules of Faith of Human Institution in its stead, are hardly, properly speaking, worthy of such a Denomination. Now let us try the several States and Kingdoms, which at present call themselves *Christian States and Kingdoms*, by this *κρηθρον*; and see if they can thus approve themselves to be of the same *Faith* with the Original Christians, or not. And I think it is so far from it, that without insisting on the human, the various and the uncertain Schemes of lesser particular Doctrines or Articles now every where current among us, and subscribed

by

*See my Scheme  
of the Ancient  
Creeds.*

by us, it will soon appear, that the very *Creeds* themselves generally receiv'd, have but small Pretence to be of any great Antiquity, or to have been so much as known in the first Ages of the

Church. I have my self made a  
 Ut supra;  
 with Col-  
 lect. Monum.  
 p. 126---138.

Collection of such Creeds, or Summaries of Fundamental Christian Doctrines, for the first Four Centuries; where Two of our Three Creeds, I mean that stiled *the Apostles*, and that called *Athanasius's*, do not at all appear in those Centuries. Nor is that called the *Nicene*, really and purely such, but rather the *Constantinopolitan*, made at first and compleated afterwards by one Party of Christians against another in the Fourth Century. And as for the *Athanasian Creed*, 'tis so far from a Profession of Faith deriv'd from Christ or his Apostles, that 'tis only a very late and entirely counterfeit Composure, of no manner of Authority; full of *Athanasian* Philosophical Absurdities or Mysteries; and of such gross Uncharitableness withal, in its damnatory Sentences, as ought to make it so far abhorr'd by every Christian. Now here I wou'd ask this plain Question, Can those be, strictly speaking, *Christian Churches*, which give us our very *Rule of Faith* from such suspected, perhaps Antichristian Originals? Can our present Baptifinal Profession be supposed to be strictly *Christian*, when the very *Creed*, into which we are Baptiz'd, is not to be traced in Four Centuries? and which is no better than an  
 imper-

imperfect and interpolated *Abridgment* of the *Original Creed* it self? Or can those States and Kingdoms, which only establish or allow of the same, with the Exclusion of all the most ancient ones, be, properly speaking, esteem'd to establish or allow of the *Christian Faith*? No, certainly: This is not in strictness the *Christian Faith*; and those Countries that receive & tolerate no other, *i. e.* almost all the Countries in *Europe*; can hardly be esteem'd *Christian Believers*; since the Faith they profess is not that which Christ and his Apostles delivered, but what the Church of *Rome* gave us in the Fifth; and some *Athanasian* Counterfeiter of Books, was pleas'd in the same, or some later Age to impose upon us: Especially, since these alone are now used, notwithstanding the Apostolical, Primitive, and Nobler Confessions of Faith are still extant, and may be received by us whenever we please. Nor indeed, ought any that have it in their Power to establish, or admit the real Original Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, and yet follow *Athanasian* Composites, to flatter themselves that they have properly and truly the *Christian Faith* among them.

(2.) I shall shew, That the several Princes and States of *Europe*, do not admit, or openly tolerate, the *Christian Way of Worship* in their several Dominions. Now this seems plain, upon a Comparison of the Original Manner of the Worship of God among the first Christians, with that which is alone now publickly used, al-

lowed, and established in *Europe*. The Christians originally gave their supreme and highest

*Prim. Christ.  
Revis'd. Vol.  
IV. Art. 2. 19,  
20.*

Worship, only to the Supreme and most High God, the Father. We profess to give it equally to the *Son*, and to the *Holy Ghost*; nay,

to the *Trinity*; as if that complex Notion were a distinct Object of Worship. Those Christians never called the Holy Ghost *God*, or *Invocated*, or gave *Doxologies* to him. We venture upon all this; nay, and sometimes make it Heretical and highly Criminal in others not to do so; and that without shewing one Command or Ex-

*Vol. IV.  
Artic. 2.  
Col. ii. 18.  
Apoc. xxii. 9.*

ample in all the early Ages. The Christians address'd to the Supreme God only through Christ, as the Mediator. We often join Saints and Angels in that Office with him,

against the plainest Cautions in Scripture to the contrary. The Christians of old admitted of no barely Human Models and Forms of Publick Worship, but kept every where close to that

*See Vol. II, and  
III. with St. Clement's  
and St. Irenæus's Vindi-  
cat. of the Const.*

Noble One left them by the Apostles, and still extant in the *Apostolical Constitutions*. But we, neglecting almost the very Enquiry after any such Model, introduce both new Objects and Methods of Wor-

ship, as we please; We order our Publick Service after our own Imaginations; and accordingly have, in almost every Country, a different Liturgy or Form for the same: Nay, in some Congregations



Congregations there is scarce any regular Form at all ; but the whole is commonly left to the *Prudence* and *Discretion* ; I had almost said, sometimes to the *Humour* and *Folly* of every particular Presbyter. We now Fast and Pray in one Place, while we Rejoice and Give thanks in another, and that on the very same Occasion. We make our Devotions keep pace with the Orders of the State, or of our Party ; and our Liturgies are still oblig'd to comply with the Politicks of our Courtiers, or the Opinions of our Leaders. We sometimes put God in mind in our Pulpits and Prayers, that our *Church is established by Law* ; as if it therefore were the *most Pure and Primitive* of all others ; and we seem to hope that this will be a Motive to him to preserve the same free from any farther Reformation, which we are generally much afraid of. In short, the most solemn Part of Religion, which is that of Divine Worship, is often so far from that Gravity and Reverence, that Dignity and Sacredness which it once had among the Christians, that it is become a Tool of State, a *Shibboleth* of a Party, an almost despicable Branch of our Religious Assemblies : While we can be much more attentive to the Novelty of the Sermon, than to the Importance of the Prayers ; and while we can almost appropriate the former to the Bishop or Minister of the Parish, but leave the latter to be run over by an inferior Curate or Reader ; and all this in direct Contradiction to the first Laws of Christianity ; which allowed

of even a Lay-man that was well qualify'd to Preach ; but would not allow any under the Order of a Presbyter, directly to offer up any part of the Churches solemn Devotions to the Almighty. Nay, such is now the miserable State of Religion all over *Christendom*, that I don't know that there is one Kingdom or State therein, which will do more than connive at any Congregations of Christians, who shall make use of the very Apostolical Forms themselves, in their Publick Worship ; while, yet, many of them Admit or Tolerate almost all other Models or Forms whatever for that Purpose. So little is Christ's own Religion, and his Apostles own Constitution thereof regarded ! And so much are meer Human Laws and Settlements, in Matters of Divine Worship, in esteem among us !

*Jer. xxxv.* A Bishop of Rome, a Luther, a Calvin, a Crammer, or a Knox, like *Jonadab the Son of Rechab*, shall have his Commands punctually obeyed, by one Generation after another ; while the Laws of *Moses*, or of *Christ*, the Sacred Appointments of God himself by his immediate Ministers, shall be despised and rejected from one Century to another, without any great Remorse ; certainly without a through Reformation ! *Aut Hoc non est Evangelium, aut Nos non sumus Evangelici !* Either the old One is not the True Gospel, or we of the Modern Churches are not True Gospellers !

(3.) I shall shew, that the several Princes and States of *Europe*; do not Admit, or openly Tolerate, the *Christian-Church Government*, in their several Dominions and Countries. That Form of Government, which Christ and his Apostles left the Church under, is plain in Antiquity, *viz.* That it was of the Apostles own Appointment, by Direction from Christ; that it was generally by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with their Under-Officers, and the Body of the Church; that it was no way subject to Human Alterations, nor at all dependent on Civil Authority; that the Church-Governors themselves had no Power given them to make any new Laws for Christians, but were only to see Christ's own Laws duly executed; that the State could no way intermeddle with Ecclesiastical Administrations, nor the Church with State Employments, or Politicks; that accordingly, any Bishop who should procure his Bishoprick by the Assistance of the State, should be liable to Deprivation and Suspension, with all his Adherents; that the Clergy were still to be *Chosen* by the Votes, or with the Approbation of the Clergy and Body of the People, and then solemnly *Ordained* by the Bishops; and this after an exact *Enquiry* into their Lives and Characters; and that on their Misbehaviour and Wickedness afterward, they were by the same Authority to be depriv'd; and in short, that Church-Authority was not to be used for the Purposes of Worldly Grandeur or Temporal

poral Advantages ; but was properly design'd for another World, for the Conversion, Edification, and eternal Salvation of Mankind ; and so in its own Nature was rendred incapable of mixing with Temporal Power, and Worldly Politicks, in any Ages whatsoever. Yet, alas ! where can we find such a *Church-Government*, or Settlement of Ecclesiastical Affairs, either Establish'd, or Admitted, or even Tolerated in *Christendom* ! *Constantine* the Great, and his Successors, heaped so much Temporal Power, and Secular Authority upon the Bishops and Clergy, They poured so much *Poison* of this World upon the Church, that the Governors thereof were quite overborn with it ; and soon advanced themselves from the humble State of Christ himself and his Apostles, *who had not where to lay their Heads ; who wandred about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented,* in the laborious spreading of the Gospel over the World ; to the more exalted Condition of Worldly Dominion, and Temporal Authority : They got so much of the Wealth, and Power, and Ease of Secular Greatness, and Protection by Human Laws, that they soon forgot their real or Spiritual Power, their Christian Duty, and their Ecclesiastical Canons. They readily came to a Compromise with the Court, and upon its Advancement of the Church's Prerogatives and Demeans in this World, permitted it, without any Authority from Christ, to have a great Share

Share in what ought only to have concern'd the next: They soon proceeded, not only to make new Laws and Canons of their own for Christians; but also, by the Assistance of the State, to see them executed by Temporal Penalties; a Thing utterly repugnant to Christianity, and wholly unknown among the Primitive Christians. Nay, when they were sensible this Alteration was condemn'd as unjustifiable by all the Records of Old Christianity, they have sometimes grown so bold and daring as to allow it to be so; but yet to plead, that it might still be justified by the Necessity of Affairs, and the Rules of good Policy; and that as the State was then become, what they call'd *Christian*, the Church ought to partake of Worldly Greatness and Power with it: So that tho' the *Revealed Will* of Christ appear'd against all such Innovations, and Political Mutations, yet was it to be presumed his *secret Will* was for the Church's Temporal Prosperity and Advantage, There were Reasons soon found out, why the Election of the Bishops and Clergy ought rather to be under the Direction of the Court, than at the mere Choice of the Church; and in Times of Prosperity, to insist strictly on Apostolical Qualifications and strict Rules, laid down in Times of Persecution, was not thought suitable to the better State of Things now in the World; and in truth was become at once both *impolitick and impracticable*: It was soon thought very convenient at least, if not necessary, that the Church should have a *Power of*

*Legi-*

*Legislation* of its own, to alter or explain away sometimes the too rigid Laws of Christianity, and now and then to change *Old Apostolical Decrees* for *New Synodical Canons*. It was esteem'd a blessed Mutation from the Labours and Pains of Christian Bishops, wearying themselves in executing the Laws of Christ, and in the feeding their Flocks, and sitting their People for Martyrdom; to find themselves seated on their several Thrones of Worldly Power, exercising that Secular Authority which Christ indeed had forbidden; but the later *good Synods*, and *kind Emperors* had been pleas'd to confer upon them:

Matth. xx.  
25—28.  
Luke xxii.  
24—30.  
Constit. II.  
Can. 7, 26,  
81, 83.

And he that could be at once a Temporal *Magistrate*, and a Spiritual *Bishop*, tho' contrary to several express Constitutions and Canons of the Apostles, was thought a very weak Man, if he refused so tempting an Offer of *Pluralities*. Nor was it thought improper, that those Settlements which were at first instituted for the real Purposes of true Religion, the making Men more Holy, and Righteous, and Devout, and Heavenly, and Self-denying here, in order to their everlasting Happiness in the *next* World, should also, by the way, be apply'd to the Purposes of Politicks, and Preferment, and Ease in *this* before-hand.

(4.) I shall prove, That the several Princes and States of *Europe* do not Admit, nor openly Tolerate

Tolerate the True *Christian Discipline* in their Dominions. This is particularly notorious in our own Church of *England*, which is indeed forc'd to *Complain* of the Want of such Discipline, and once a Year to *Wish* it might be restor'd; but has seldom or never so much as attempted to have it in earnest restor'd amongst them. And I fear that other Churches now settled in *Christendom* have, if not equal, yet some Reason for the same *Complaint*, and the same *Wish* also; and yet do not use sufficient Endeavours for its Revival. This indeed is one of the Fundamental Points of our Religion, one of the Essentials of a True Church, that Those who voluntarily have entred themselves into this *ἐκκλησία*; this Christian, this Select Society, or *Church*, chosen out of the rest of the wicked World, and set apart for Holiness and Purity, should be subject to the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel; to the Constitutions and Canons deriv'd from Christ by his Apostles; should submit to Christian Admonition and Reproof, both private before a few, and publick before the Bishop, Priests, Deacons, and People; should be liable, upon great and notorious Crimes, and scandalous Breaches of the Christian Laws, to Suspension, Deprivation, and Excommunication from the Society; and should not be readmitted, but upon such Repentance, such Mortification, and such Reformation, as the Original Rules of the

Office of Com-  
mination.

Constit. II.  
passim.

Gospel, and Constitutions of the Apostles do require; tho' always without any Temporal Detriment, or Corporal Penalties whatever; which the old Ecclesiastical Laws never pretend in the least to. This is plainly a true Account of that *Christian Discipline*, which is the principal Design and Part of a Christian Church. But how little of this Discipline is there now in *Christendom*? Any Sin whatsoever is forgiven by our pretended *Ecclesiastical*, in reality *Civil Courts*, except that of the *Contempt* of their own ill-grounded Authority. Nor is Legal Excommunication usually awarded in these latter Ages, that I can find, for any other Sin, Heresy or Blasphemy whatsoever. Do but Obey the Church, the Legal Church, acting not by the Laws of the Gospel, but by some later Decrees and Canons, even those made under the Reign of Antichrist, and you are ever safe from the Modern Discipline; what Life soever you lead, or what Crimes soever you are guilty of. Nor does that Legal Penance, or open Shame, which those Courts enjoin under the Penalty of Imprisonment, depend now on the real Penitence of the Offender, which they seem to have little Regard to; but has usually no other Effect than that of adding to their former *Crimes* that most abominable Sin of *Hypocrisy*. And if you think you have a too severe Penance enjoin'd you by the Court, do but apply for a *Commutation* into Money, and you will find it seldom deny'd you. Besides, What Resemblance



is there between the awful Solemnity of a truly Christian Court, Ibid. c. 47, &c. compos'd of a Christian Bishop, with his College of Presbyters, Deacons, and People, acting by the Authority, and according to the Laws of Christ himself, delivered by his Holy Apostles ; and the trifling Appearance of a Chancellor or Official, and he oftentimes a Lay-Person also, acting by no Authority but what is Civil, and in this Case plainly unwarrantable? Between the just Terror arising in Conscience from the one, as to the momentous Concerns of another Life ; and the mean Affrightment from the other, as to some Temporal Penalty, or Commutation-Money legally due in the present World. 'Tis true, there is *one*, and I doubt *but one* Point of *Discipline*, which the present Legal Churches are very fond of ; I mean the Power of Prosecuting those that Dissent from them in doubtful Matters, and of excluding them thereby, I say not from their Religious Communion, for from that they are already excluded by their Dissent, but from the Civil Preferments and Advantages of the Establish'd Church. But then, the Exercise of this Piece of Severity, is generally desir'd and practis'd in such an evil Manner, and for such evil Purposes, as makes it so far from *Christian Discipline*, that 'tis frequently no better than *Unchristian Cruelty*. And I dare Appeal to all sober and considering Men, what Title the Rulers of *Christendom* can have to the Establishing, Admitting, or openly

Tolerating the *Christian Discipline*, while they not only do exclude the *real Discipline* of Christ's Religion on the Guilty, or render it ineffectual ; but while they usually, under the Notion of this Discipline, permit and encourage such Cruelty and Violence against the Innocent , as the Civil Courts themselves would be ashamed of, and which is no better than *Antichristian Persecution*.

(5.) I shall shew, That the several Princes and States of *Europe* do not Admit, or openly Tolerate the proper *Laws of Christianity* in their Dominions. For the *Laws of Christ* can, properly speaking, be no other than those which Christ himself made, or gave Directions to the Apostles to make, and to establish in his Church ; either before his Death, which are principally contain'd in the Four Gospels ; or after his Resurrection, and before his final Ascension, which are principally contain'd in the Apostolical Constitutions and Canons, and frequently refer'd to in the Epistles of the Apostles, and other most Ancient Records of Christianity, and indeed do still every where appear in true Primitive Antiquity. And this is the sad Case in all the Modern Churches. For under the Pretence, that Christ or his Apostles did not ordain particular Laws for the Settling and Government of his Church ; or that if he did so, the Records of most of those Laws are lost ; or however, that in abundance of Cases the Bishops and Pastors of the Church have Power to alter those Laws,

and

and make new ones in their stead ; every Part of which Pretence may now be fully prov'd to be false and unjustifiable : The present Ecclesiastical Settlements in *Europe* are so far from being managed on the Foot of Christianity and its Laws, that those Laws are rarely so much as once mention'd in any Case ; no, not even in those that are determin'd by what we call the *Ecclesiastical*, or *Spiritual Courts*, among us. Suppose a Bishop is to be made for any Diocese : Do we hear of any Recourse to *St. Paul*, or to the Constitutions of the Apostles, for the Age, or Character, or Form of making him ? Do we look over the several Qualifications of a Christian Bishop there, and satisfy our selves by the authentick Testimony of his own Parishioners, or those of his Diocese, that he is truly and in earnest such an one as they describe ? Do we examine his Knowledge and Faith by the Original Remains, and Confessions, and Creeds of the Ancient Christians, before we admit him ? Do we call for, and take the free voluntary Choice and Election of the Presbyters, Deacons, and People, as we ought to do by those Laws, before we Ordain him ? Surely no. Those Ancient Rules of Christianity are looked upon as antiquated by Disuse, and disannull'd by later Councils and Practice. What do we then ? Do we take care in our own Methods, that at least nothing be done that contradicts those Laws of Christ hereto relating ? Not this, neither. In short,

See Clement's  
and Irenæus's  
*Vindic. Const.*  
with the Sup-  
plement.

short, without any proper Regard to Christ, and to the Apostolical Appointments in the Case, we have our recourse to the Canons of some Modern Popes, or later Synods, not yet abrogated; to the Civil Laws of the Realm now in Force; to the King's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs, which, without all Pretences that I can see in Christianity, our Laws have given to the Crown; to the Forms of Subscription and Swearing, appointed by the Civil Power; and according to these Laws, not to those of Christianity, are all our Bishops now made in *England*. And the Case is in a manner the very same elsewhere, and on other Occasions also; such as the Ordination of Priests and Deacons; the Distribution of their several Offices; the governing them, and the People committed to their Charge; the preferring or punishing all sorts of People; our Liturgies or Forms for Prayer, Praise, the Administration of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Lord's Supper; with every other Part of our whole Ecclesiastical Settlement: All is guided by the Laws of the State, and the Papal or Synodical Decrees; to which the Precepts in the *New Testament*, with the Rules laid down in the *Constitutions*, and *Canons* of the Apostles are not to be oppos'd; and this frequently under no less Penalty than a *Premunire*, or utter Ruin in this World. If this be the *Admission*, or even open *Toleration* of the Laws of Christ, I am much mistaken: Nay, if it be not a plain Sign of Opposition to them; and in Effect,

Effect, saying with the *Enemies* of our Saviour in the Gospel, *We will not have this Man to reign over us.* May God avert what follows! *But those mine Enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*

Luc. xx. 14.

v. 27.

(6.) I come now to shew, that the several Princes and States of *Europe*, do not Admit or openly Tolerate the true *Christian Practice* in their Dominions: I do not mean that they openly discourage the known Laws of Nature, or the *Living* in general, *Godlily, Righteously, and Soberly* in this present World; for without some support to these Foundations of all Society, Government it self could not long subsist in the World. But I mean, that in several particular, and eminent Instances of Christian Duty, they are often so unconcern'd, or so little Christians, that they sometimes discourage, nay hinder the Observation of them. Thus, for Example, 'Tis a certain Duty of Christianity, to pay the greatest regard, and reverence possible, to the Solemnity of an *Oath*; and never to make use of that important Appeal to the Supreme Being, but on a very few, and those very necessary, and very momentous Occasions. Yet how sadly do several of the States of *Europe*, abuse and profane this *Sacred Law of Christianity*? Every little Tax and Payment must be levyed upon *Oath*;

Tit. ii. 12.

Mat. v. 33, 37.

Jam. v. 12.

Constit. II. 36.

V. 12. vi. 23.

vii. 3.

*Oaths* ; every Merchant or Trader must compute his Customs *upon Oaths* ; every Party at the Helm must serve their little Turns and Aims by imposing *Oaths*, and those sometimes very long, sometimes very doubtful, and sometimes plainly unlawful ones on the several Occasions of State Policy ; for their own Support, and the Exclusion of their Antagonists. And indeed, the great Profanation of Religion in the way of *Oaths*, as they are made Religious *Tests* about Civil Affairs, on purpose to keep out some, and bring in others into Publick Secular Employments, and their Use on every trifling Occasion, is, here especially, become so frequent, and so universal, as well deserves the Consideration of all Christians among us. For the Consequence is not only very sad, as 'tis an open Testimony of the little regard we have to this solemn Piece of Religious Worship, and to the Christian Religion, which makes it so peculiarly Rare and Sacred ; but as it tends to render all Securities given in this way utterly vain and ineffectual ; to the great Danger of common Justice in our Courts of Judicature, and to the deceiving our Governors both in Church and State ; I mean, by the ready taking, and almost as ready breaking, of all such Oaths and Obligations whatsoever. In short,

as the Prophet says, *Because of*

Jer. xxiii. 10. *Swearing our Land mourneth* ; and will probably have still cause to mourn, till our Ministers of State, and our Senate, have more regard to God, and his Providence and Worship, than they

they have of late had ; and in particular, till they take away the Occasions of that horrid Profanation of his Holy Name by numerous Oaths, of which we of this Nation seem of all others to be most guilty.

'Tis also the certain Duty of every Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, personally to *take heed to themselves, and to all the Flock over the which the Holy Ghost bath, in any Degree, made them Overseers ; to feed the Church of the \* Lord, which he has purchased with his own Blood : Not to be entangled with the Affairs of this Life, that they may please him who has chosen them : and to give themselves wholly to the Duties of*

Act. xx. 28:

2 Tim. ii. 4:

1 Tim. iv. 15.

their Function. And this is in some Degree own'd to be their Duty by the Form of Ordination of Presbyters in our Church, where the Person Ordained is thus exhorted by the Bishop : “ Ye ought  
 “ to forsake and set aside, (as much as you may)  
 “ all Worldly Cares and Studies.--We have good  
 “ Hope, that — You have clearly determin'd,  
 “ by God's Grace, to give your selves wholly  
 “ to this Vocation whereunto it hath pleased  
 “ God to call you ; so that (as much as lyeth  
 “ in you) you apply your selves wholly to this  
 “ one thing, and draw all your Cares and Studies this way, and to this end. Yet does the present Settlement of Affairs here almost render

\* N. B. This is the true Reading in the oldest MSS, and Citations.

that Personal Care, and entire Application of the Clergy to their Holy Function, in many Cases utterly impracticable. For not to say, that Clergymen are sometimes so set upon Wealth, and Riches, and Ease, that Two or Three good Livings or Dignities will hardly satisfy them ; 'tis plain, that not a few Cures with us are so small, that there must be more than one united, or else they will not provide a tolerable Maintenance for the Incumbent. The Christian Bishops are here Temporal Lords, directly contrary to the *Constitutions*, and *Canons* of the Apostles ; as we have seen already ; and are obliged or invited to attend the Court and Parliament about Secular Matters ; and this sometimes so long, as greatly hinders their Residence upon their Dioceses, and their Spiritual Inspection over them. Nor do the tempting Prospects of farther Advancement from the Court, which has once prefer'd them,

Can. 31: (tho' in direct opposition to an Apostolical Canon, which, as we have already observ'd, forbids the use of such Secular Interests under the highest Penalties) with many other Circumstances of Ecclesiastical Persons now, do other than *secularize* the Clergy, and render them much liker *Civil Officers* depending on the State, and designed to make a Figure in *this World*, than *Spiritual Ministers* of Religion, to prepare themselves and their People for *another*. In short, the present Constitution of *Europe*, is so naturally framed, to support *Pluralities*, and *Non-Residence*, those Scandals to Christianity ;

and



and to divert the Studies, and Aims, and Labours of the Clergy from their Spiritual Duties, and Hopes, and Rewards, to Temporal ; or from Heaven to Earth ; while Christianity is wholly designed on the contrary to raise Men from Earth to Heaven ; that those Princes and States which support these Settlements, cannot, I think, be properly said to Admit, or openly Tolerate this Part of the Christian Religion in their Dominions.

It is moreover, the known Duty of every Clergy-man to *search the Scriptures*, to study the Bible, and all other Authentick Records of the Word and Will of God, and of the Laws of Christ : It is his known Duty, upon such Search sincerely to profess himself, and honestly to teach, and instruct his Flock in those Doctrines and Duties, which thereupon *he is persuaded* are true, and of Divine Authority. This is plainly the Duty of every Clergyman ; and owned to be so in our Articles and Office of Ordination. Yet is this Duty render'd impracticable by the present Ecclesiastical Laws ; which will not generally so much as Admit any one into that Sacred Function, till he has signed several, not only human and uncertain, but sometimes false Articles, inconsistent with the Gospel ; *i. e.* till he has openly own'd the Churches Authority to be Superior to that of our *Blessed Saviour* or his Apostles ; and has, *under his Hand*, re-

1 Tim. iv. 13.

2 Tim. ii. 45.

iii. 14. 17.

Tit. i. 9.

Const. t. ii. 5.

Artic. 6. 20.

21. Ordering of Priests.

nounced some Doctrines and Duties of Christianity.

But farther: 'Tis the certain Duty of every Bishop, with the Priests and Deacons of his Church, to govern their People by the Laws of Christ, and by the Constitutions of the Apostles; and so to Guide, and Exhort, and Reprove, and exercise Discipline over their Flocks, as those Laws and Constitutions do require. But now the several Princes and States of *Europe*, do not Allow, or openly Tolerate, the Exercise of this even purely Spiritual Power; nay, the Laws of their several Countries will usually punish such Exercise of it, and will ruin those Christian Clergymen who shall attempt it. For Example, suppose a Presbyter, or Deacon, or Lay-man, be accused to the Bishop of his Diocese, for any notorious Crime against the Laws of Nature or Christianity; and that the Bishop, as his Duty is, after private previous Admonitions, according to the excellent Method prescrib'd in that Case by our Lord, does convene him before the *Church*, or Assembly of Presbyters, Deacons, and People; and upon the hearing of the Witnesses of the Crime, and his own Defence, does, with the whole Churches Consent, upon Conviction, Deprive, Suspend, or Excommunicate him, as the Circumstances of his Case does require. What will be the Consequence of such a Just, and Regular, and open Exercise of Christian Discipline,

Matt. xviii. 15,  
20.

Confit. II. 37,  
38.

pline, in most of the Kingdoms and Countries of *Christendom*? Why, the Legal settled Courts, I mean those that are every where established to take Cognizance of such Matters, *instead* of those appointed by our Saviour, will issue out a Process, not against the Offender probably, but against the Bishop and his Assessors: And 'tis well, if it do not either end in their Renunciation of that Christian Power, and its Exercise; or in their utter undoing in this World; and this, because, in a Christian Country, as they took it to be, they presum'd to do their real Christian Duty, and to exercise that truly Spiritual Authority which Christ had intrusted them withal; and the Case would be the very same upon a great Number of other the like Occasions also. And can those be esteemed properly *Christian Governments*, which are so far from Enforcing, Establishing, Admitting, or openly Tolerating such a *Practice of Christian Duty*, that will often publicly Prosecute those who endeavour conscientiously to discharge it? I doubt not.

(7.) I come to prove, that the several Princes and States of *Europe* do not Admit, or openly Receive, all the Old *Sacred Books of Christianity* in their Dominions. 'Tis evident in Antiquity, that there were several Sacred Books, allowed for such in the first Ages, and some of them publicly read in the Churches accordingly, which we have not now in our New Testament; and some of them such as are exceeding useful and necessary for the guidance

Vol. III. C. I.  
§. 3. 6.

guidance of our Faith and Practice ; for the full understanding of the true Nature and original Settlements of the Religion of our Blessed Saviour and his Holy Apostles ; and for the preventing of Errors, Heresies, and Schisms, in Christianity ; most of which are indeed at this Day extant, and read sometimes by the Learned ; but very little known by the Body of Christian People among us. Now it is withal evident in Antiquity, that the Exclusion of these Books from the Catalogue of those that are to be esteemed in some Degree *Sacred*, which we now call our *Canon of Scripture*, was owing to the Ignorance Ibid. or Boldness of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries of the Church ; and particularly to a *Canon* of the Council of *Laodicea*, about *A. D.* 364, which forbid them to be read in Churches with the rest, as till that time several of them, as I have already observ'd, had commonly been. It is also evident, that the Church of *Rome* happened to comply with the Ignorance and Boldness shew'd in that *Canon*, and so never delivered those Books to the Church, as at all *Sacred* or *Canonical*, but rather despis'd and suppress'd them. It is Lastly, evident, that the first Reformers among the Protestants, happening not to examine that Matter with due Care, the same *imperfect Canon*, or Catalogue of the Christian Books, was delivered to the Reformed Churches also ; to the great Harm and Damage of Christianity, and its Settlements among them. Now certainly, this is but a poor Sign of the real Admission of  
Christianity

Christianity into the several Countries of *Europe*, that no small part of the Ancient Christian Records, wherein the Faith, the Worship, the Discipline, and the Government of Christian Churches were most plainly contain'd ; and this in Agreement with the known Books of the New Testament, and whereby the present Disorders and Divisions in the Church were most effectually to be healed, are by the means of Publick Authority, and an established *imperfect Canon of Scripture*; concealed from Christian People, and indeed rendered difficult, if not impossible, to be well known, and duly esteemed by them. I desire to know, whether this Procedure be not like that *taking away* from the Divine Predictions in the *Apocalypse*, to which so terrible a Threatning is annex'd ; that *if any one do so, God shall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and* Apoc. xxii. 19. *from the Things which are written in that Book ?*

(8.) I am to shew, That the several Princes and States of *Europe* do not Admit, or openly Tolerate the due Administration of the *Christian Sacraments* in their Dominions. I mean here, by the Term *Sacraments*, a Word unknown to the oldest Christians in this Ecclesiastical Sense ; those Holy *Mysteries* of the Christian Religion, which were so peculiar to it, that the Church never allowed either Heathens, *Jews*, or even bare Catechumens, to be present at the Administration

stration of them. And tho' there were more of these in the first Ages than two, yet since those two were the principal and most necessary, I mean *Baptism* and the *Eucharist*, I shall confine my self under this Head to those two Solemnities, which are now most generally known by the Name of the *Two Sacraments*. Now it is here manifest in Antiquity, that the first of these Sacred *Mysteries* of our Religion was originally done in a manner so different from the present, that a sober Christian who compares them together, would hardly take them for the same Ordinance. None were then, in the settled Course of the Church, admitted to Baptism till they were fully instructed, as to the *Doctrine*, and thoroughly tried, as to the *Practice* of Christianity; *i. e.* not till after some three Years Catechizing for the Youth, and three Months for the grown Men: There was then, I am well assur'd, no Allowance of Sureties and Sponsors, to do that for Infants which they were not able to do for themselves. Nor was there any Notion of Children having either Faith or Repentance by *Proxy*. Nor indeed do we, I think, ever hear of such Proxies, or such Baptizing upon them, but from *Africa* in *Tertullian*, (who yet himself disapprov'd of them) for near four entire Centuries of the Church. *Confirmation*, which all own is to be reserv'd to Years of Discretion, did then ever accompany

Constit. II. 32.  
 III. 16, 17.  
 VI. 15. VII. 22,  
 42, 43, 44.  
 St. Clem. and  
 St. Iren. Vind.  
 Suppl. and Prim.  
 Infant Baptism  
 reviv'd, per tot.

company Baptism, as a Part of it; and the Eucharist did follow immediately, as the Baptized Person's constant Duty after it. As the Preparation was solemn, so was the Administration also. Before *Easter* the Church had her Publick and Stated Fasts, which were particularly observed by the Candidates for Baptism. On the *most Holy Night* of the Year, that which preceded *Easter-Day*, this *most Holy Institution* was at first publickly and devoutly celebrated, with the Anointing with the Holy Oyl *before*, the Trine Immersion into the Water *at*, and the Seal of the Cross by the Holy Ointment, with the Imposition of Hands, *after* Baptism; and this as including the Candidates own solemn Profession of Faith, his Renunciation of the Devil and all his Works, and his Consecration of himself to Christ and his Service. Nor was any Person, under the Degree of a Priest, allow'd to perform so great and important a Solemnity. This was, in short, the Original *Christian Baptism*: But how widely it differs from, how vastly it is superior to, the Modern Forms of what we call Baptism, every one that knows them both will easily pronounce. For my self I profess, that I am affrighted at the Comparison; and did I not find Reason from God's general Goodness, and merciful Revelations of his Will, to hope that Ignorance and unwitting Mistake will be allow'd for in such a Case; and very *irregular* Administrations admitted as not entirely

Constit. III. II,  
20. VIII. 28,  
45.

Argument.

*Invalid*, I should hardly think that what of late has been done in this Matter, could be at all esteem'd *Christian Baptism*: And I Declare, that tho' I was my self so imperfectly Baptiz'd, yet I dare not now venture to Baptize any others in the same manner, upon any Consideration whatsoever. However, it is plain upon the Comparison, That this Human Appointment of the Modern, Imperfect, and Corrupt Administration of Baptism, to poor insensible Infants, without either Faith or Repentance, without the Seal of Confirmation, and without the Ancient Ceremonies of the Trine Immersion, &c. and sometimes by a mere Deacon also, is so great a Deviation from the Primitive Pattern, and Apostolical Rules, and this in the important Solemnity of Initiation it self; and does so fatally prevent or destroy the main Ends of Christianity, both as to Faith and Practice, that the Princes and States of *Europe*, which support and establish the same, without the Admission or Reception of the other, can hardly, in a strict Sense, be said to Admit or openly Tolerate *Christian Baptism*. Nor can the same Princes and States pretend to be wholly innocent, as to the other Sacred Solemnity, or *Mystery* of Christianity, the *Holy Communion*. For altho' the Forms for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, establish'd by Authority among several of the Modern Churches, be not near so much corrupted as those about Baptism; yet are they too different from the Original Laws and Practice of Christianity, to be esteemed, strictly speaking,



speaking, *Christian Communions*. In the first Ages, the Qualifications of the Communicants were Three, *Faith, Baptism, and a good Life*. None of which are directly taken care of by several, at least, of the Modern Churches. *Unbelievers* themselves are now, in some Places, permitted to receive the Communion, in order to qualify them, not for *Heaven*, but for a good Place here on *Earth*. *Impenitent Sinners* are frequently allow'd to come also on the same Design: And if a conscientious Clergyman should refuse either an Infidel, or a plainly Vicious Person in such a Case; he must expect to be at least disturb'd, if not ruin'd by a Suit in Law immediately; merely for presuming to put in Practice so *uncivil a Constitution of Christianity*. And as for the *Unbaptized*, if we remember that *Confirmation* is a principal Part of the entire Solemnity of Baptism, the greatest Part of our Communicants are so far *Unbaptized* also. Nor can it well be otherwise, till Presbyters as well as Bishops are appointed to compleat Baptism by Confirmation. Besides, this Holy Ordinance was originally appointed, especially to us *Gentile Christians*, as an Oblation or *Unbloody Sacrifice*, as a solemn Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross for our Redemption; whereby we are, in the most solemn Manner, to represent his powerful Intercession, founded on the

*St. Clem. and  
Iren. Vind.  
Suppl. p. 3, 4,  
6, 7.*

*Constit. VIII.  
12. St. Clem.  
and St. Iren.  
Vindicated,  
p. 19, &c.  
Mede Op.  
p. 451—499.*

Sacrifice of his Body and Blood upon the Cross, to God the Father; in order to the more effectual obtaining of the Blessings we beg at his Hands, both for the Saints departed, and for all Christian People throughout the World. Which Sacred Intention has been so miserably perverted in the Modern Church of *Rome*, as, without sufficient Reason, to have affrighted no small Part of the Reformed Churches themselves from any direct Regard to it, in the Forms of its Celebration. To say nothing here of the taking away the Cup from the People in the *Roman-Church*: and in all other Churches, the Rareness of its Administration; the Fewness of the Communicants, or the Novelty of its Forms; while the Noble, the Divine, the Original, and the Apostolical Form it self, which is evidently still extant among us, is despised and neglected.

Constit. VIII.  
*St. Clem. and*  
*St. Iren. Vind.*  
*Suppl. p. 1-25.*

These and the like Deviations from the Old Christian Settlements, all Established or Admitted by the Princes and States of *Christendom* at this Day, are so notorious, that till they are corrected, the present Eucharistical Solemnity cannot, in a strict Acceptation, be said to be a *Christian Communion*.

And thus I have demonstrated the Truth of my first Grand Proposition, *That none of the Princes and States of Europe do, properly speaking, Admit or openly Tolerate the Christian Religion in their Dominions at this Day*; by an Induction of Particulars, *viz.* That they do not Admit, or openly Tolerate,  
 either

either the *Christian Faith*, or *Worship*, or *Government*, or *Discipline*, or *Laws*, or *Practice*, or *Sacred Books*, or *Sacraments*: I call this Paper a *Demonstration*, tho' it be only here set down by way of *Affertion*, because I have all along refer'd to such Places of my own or others Writings, where those *Affertions* are already in part demonstrated from the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament*, and from the other original *Monuments* of *Christian Antiquity*; And, because I am ready to demonstrate the same more fully as there shall be occasion: I now proceed to my next general Head, which is to shew;

II. The several Occasions, why the Princes and States of *Europe* do not at this Day Admit, or openly Tolerate the *Christian Religion* in their Dominions. And I take the Occasions hereof to be principally these Three following:

(1.) They do not Admit, or openly Tolerate, *Christianity*, because they are seldom or never particularly *Instructed in that Religion* in their Youth.

(2.) Because they are seldom, or never afterward moved or assisted in the *Introduction of that Religion by the Clergy*.

(3.) Because *the Clergy* about them, do generally make them and others believe, though without, nay, against all Original Evidence, that those *other Schemes of Religion*, which they have been Educated in, and do already protect, is the *true Christian Religion*.

(1.) One

(I.) One great Occasion why the Princes and States of *Europe* do not at this Day Admit, or openly Tolerate the *Christian Religion*, I take to be this, that they are seldom or never particularly *Instructed in that Religion* in their Youth. Princes are usually Educated, like most other Men, in the *Religion of their Country*, in the Doctrines of the *Churches* every where *established by Law*; *Popish* Countries bring them up in *Popery*; *Lutheran* Countreys in *Lutheranism*; *Episcopal* Churches in a Veneration for *Episcopal*; *Presbyterian* in an esteem for *Presbyterian* Church-Government; and so in the like Cases. The Modern Tutors and Governors of young Princes read, if any, the Modern Catechisms, and Confessions, and Systems to them, for their Instruction in Religion: And if they be so honest as to lead them through any Parts of the *New Testament*, and of the *Primitive Writers* themselves, it is done usually with such a regard to Modern Comments and Expositions, written generally by those of their own Party, that they are pretty well *guarded over* those Texts and Testimonies, which would otherwise discover how little they have of true Christianity: So that they are thereby rather confirmed in the Truth of their own, and prejudic'd against the supposed Errors of other Churches, than made to understand Christianity it self. For certainly, this is not the Education of a Prince in *Christianity*, but in the *State Religion*; 'Tis not the Instruction of them in the proper Doctrines, and Duties, of  
*Christ*

*Christ Jesus*, and his *Apostles*, whose Writings they care not to trust in the Hands of their Disciples without their own Explications and Comments, but in those of their own *Leaders and Guides* only. Thus did the Scribes and Pharisees of old teach Men the Religion of their Country, the Law of *Moses*, according to the Explications and *Traditions* of the *Elders*; while they would not bear with Men's drawing that Religion themselves originally from the Fountain-Head, though it were commonly much more intelligible there; especially, as expounded and enforced by the old true Prophets of that Nation, than it could ever be made by all their corrupt Rabbies and Doctors afterwards. And as it was then, that these pretended Expositions and *Traditions of the Elders*, made the Genuine MAT. xv. 2, 6. Meaning and Purport of that *Law of none Effect*, and caus'd many to *transgress the Commandments of God* by such Procedure; so is it now, that the present Expositions of the later Party Commentators, and Systematical Writers, have in a great many Points, made the Original Laws of the Gospel *of none Effect*, and caused many to *transgress the Commandments of Christ thereby*. So that, under the Notion of giving Princes a *Christian Education* in the Modern Sense, their Instructors do generally take effectual Care, they shall not be too well acquainted with our *old, genuine, uncorrupt Christianity*. 'Tis not therefore to be much wondered at, if Princes and Governors do not generally Admit, or openly

openly Tolerate the *Christian Religion*, when they never in their Youth were sufficiently instructed in that Religion.

(2.) Another great Occasion, why the Princes and States of *Europe* do not Admit or openly Tolerate the *Christian Religion* at this Day, seems to be this, That they are seldom or never afterward Moved or Assisted in the Introduction of that Religion by the Clergy. It is plainly the peculiar Business of the Clergy, who are the Priests, Ministers, and Guides instituted in that Religion, to keep the sincere Knowledge of it; and it is highly reasonable for the Laity, both Prince and

Mal. II. 7. People, in this Case, to seek the Law at their Mouth, as being the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts. Nor can it easily be supposed, that Christianity can be lost or corrupted among its Followers, while the Clergy are truly skilful and faithful in their Holy Function. But then, if, as it follows in the Pro-

v. 8. phet Malachi, They are once departed out of the way, and have corrupted the Covenant of Levi; they will soon cause many to stumble at the Law. Princes and People must then, of course, be ignorant in Christianity, when once the Bishops, Priests and Deacons are ignorant or unfaithful therein.

Mat. v. 13. They are the Salt of the Earth; which if once it lose its Savour, all that should be seasoned by it, must needs be unsavoury. Now that many of the Clergy themselves, even

even in Protestant Countries, are often either not skilful enough, or not enough faithful to discover and to endeavour to Retrieve the *Primitive State of Christianity*; to Persuade and Assist the Princes and States *in its Restoration*; is too sadly and notoriously true. Nor is it doubted of by those, whose Judgment is of any Value in such Matters. And indeed most of them are under greater Temptations than others, in the present Condition of Religion, to know as little as may be of Primitive Christianity themselves; or at least to conceal such their Knowledge, and run along with the Princes, States, and People in their Modern Errors and Corruptions: I mean this, Because a through Reformation, according to the Original Pattern, would tend more to the Diminution of the Secular Power, State, Riches, and Authority of the Clergy, which they are at present in Possession of, than of any others whomsoever. But since I am not now Addressing my self to the Clergy, or giving an Account of their Corruptions, (which yet I have had some Occasion elsewhere to do, and have done it with the utmost Freedom and Sincerity,) I am only to observe here, How natural it is for the Errors and Corruptions of *the Clergy*, to spread among the *Princes and Rulers* also; and how necessary a Consequence it is, that where *they* mistake, or oppose a Reformation, and discourage the Restoration of Christianity, (which many of them do, and that more zealously and effectually

*Reflexions on  
Free-Thinking;  
in calce.*

than any other Order of Men whatsoever;) the Princes and States, as well as the People, must also generally mistake or oppose the like Reformation, and *discourage the Restoration of true Christianity.*

(3.) Another great Occasion, why the Princes and States of *Europe* do not at this Day Admit, or openly Tolerate the *Christian Religion*, appears to be this, That the Clergy about them do generally make them and others believe, tho' without, nay against all Original Evidence, that those *other Schemes of Religion*, which they have been educated in, and do already Admit and Protect, is the *True Christian Religion*. Now this is the Pretence of every Party in *Christendom*, that Theirs is *alone the True Christian Religion*; and that no other Parties can lay the like Claim to it. Every *Church*, especially if it has been once *Established by Law*, presently looks very big, and makes great Pretences to be alone *Catpolic*, alone *Orthodox*, alone almost *Infallible* in its Determinations. The State can no sooner have given leave to some of the Bishops and Presbyters to meet any where in a *Synod*, but that *Synod*, whether it consist of Persons Holy or Unholy, Learned or Unlearned, presently becomes an *Holy Synod*; and if it be numerous, an *Holy and Oecumenical Synod*; and its *Votes* become almost *Articles of Faith*; and its *Canons, Laws of the Church*, if not *Laws of Christ*, immediately. Nay, if any of them appear to contradict



tradict the *Apostolical Rules*, the Advantage is still given to the Churches Decrees and Determinations; and it must be readily suppos'd, that the *Synod* is in the right, let *Peter* or *Paul*, *Clement* or *Ignatius*, speak never so plainly to the contrary. Accordingly it is now supposed, that the Ancient Rules and Canons of the Church, even of the Apostolical Age it self, as to Points of Discipline and Order at least, were mutable; and that the *Church* in her *Synods* has Power to set them aside, and to introduce others in their stead; contrary to all the Ancient Practice of Christians, and Primitive Records of Christianity; and without the least direct Proof of any such Authority from Christ, or any of his Apostles to support it. For how plausible soever the Reasoning may seem for that Claim to a Power of *making Laws by Synods* in Ecclesiastical Matters, from the great Conveniency of the Church's having such a Power, I desire any of the Patrons of the same to shew me one plain Text, or Canon, or Decree of any Apostle or Apostolical Man, or even of a Council in the Three first Centuries, which either Convey'd, Establish'd, or Justifies such a Power. Nay, this has been the grand Method of Corrupting the Church; to make Laws for Practice, or Determinations, whether Original or Declaratory, about Opinions and Matters of Faith; and then to persuade the Princes of *Europe*, That these *Laws* and *Determinations* are Obligatory by the Command of God; and that what frequently

proceeded only from weak, ignorant, and prejudic'd *Churchmen*, has such Authority as to oblige, in Point of Conscience, as if it were a Branch of the *Gospel* it self: Thus those Princes that live in Popish Countries are unjustly made to believe, that the Canons of the Supreme Pontiff at *Rome*, and the Decrees of General Councils, especially if confirmed by him, are equivalent, if not superior, to the Christian Laws: That accordingly, by obeying the Pope and the Council, they virtually obey Christ and his Apostles; and that this will be accepted by God as such, without any farther Examination,

Artic. xx.

Thus also the Kings of *England* are told, That the Church, [I should say the Clergy of the Church,] has *Power in even Controversies of Faith*; and therefore much more in Points of Order and Discipline. By this means we are trained up in *Human*, and disused to *Divine* Authority: And by this means we gradually leave our Bible, and Old Christian Records; which ought to be our proper, our only Guides in Matters of Reveal'd Religion. Nor can we be surprized, that the *European* Princes and States do not Admit or openly Tolerate *Real Christianity*, while those who pretend to be the Ministers of that Religion do falsely assure them, that those very imperfect Settlements in Church-Affairs, which they not only Tolerate and Admit, but Support and Patronize in their Dominions, is entirely agreeable to such *real Christianity*. I proceed now,

III. To give some Reasons why the several Princes and States of *Europe* should *Admit*, or at least openly *Tolerate* the *Christian Religion* in their Dominions. But before I produce those Reasons themselves, give me leave to explain my Meaning as to the *Admission*, or open *Toleration* of *Christianity* by the Civil Magistrate ; and why I do not plead rather for its *Establishment*, or *Legal Settlement*, than for its bare *Admission* or *Toleration* among us. Now here I beg it may be considered, that I cannot desire any such *Legal Establishment* of any, no not even of the *True Christian Religion* it self, by the Civil Power. *True Religion*, especially the *Christian*, is a *Spiritual* and *Voluntary Thing* ; and the *Christian Church* is a *Spiritual* and *Voluntary Society*, and is by no means capable of *Temporal Settlements* ; of either *Temporal Rewards* or *Punishments* in this Way. *Christ's Kingdom* is not of this World, but in the Hearts John xviii. 36. and Consciences of his Subjects :

And when once the Motives to embrace Christianity, or the Means to establish it are Carnal and Earthly, the true Spirit of the Gospel is lost thereby. When this Religion was first Preach'd, and most purely Practis'd, I mean in the earliest Ages of it, the Powers of this World were against it, and persecuted it. When *Constantine* the Great, and his Successors, became Christians ; and instead of Admitting or openly Tolerating, the *Christian Church*, with taking care that the *Laws of Christ* should be exactly observ'd therein, which

which is to be sure, the utmost of their Power, they began to *Establish* and *Support* it by *Temporal Methods*, by Worldly Advantages bestow'd on those they stiled *Orthodox*; and Worldly Penalties inflicted on those they called *Hereticks*; Christianity was immediately corrupted, both in Faith, Discipline, and Practice; and an Antichristian, Idolatrous, Persecuting, Worldly Polity, in great measure subverting the real Designs of the Gospel, soon came in its Place. For the Emperors were not able always to judge on which Side Truth and Christianity lay; nor could they, frequently, at all tell, which Party were really the *Orthodox Christians*, and which were really the *pernicious Hereticks*. So that it very frequently happen'd that the Hereticks were advanc'd, and the Christians persecuted. It soon came to pass, that the Laws of the Gospel gave place to the Edicts of the Emperors; and Truth or Falshood in Christianity were determin'd by the secular Views of the Civil Powers, and the Intrigues of the Courtiers. Then it was, that Shoals of real Unbelievers, or Persons of wicked Principles and Lives, pretended to be Converts; and the Baptism of uncapable Multitudes *fill'd* indeed, but *disgrac'd* and *corrupted* the Assemblies of the Faithful. Then the Christian Church was forc'd to see Civil Magistrates presiding at the Election of its Ecclesiastical Governors; and the State took care, as well it might, that Persons of so much Authority, who were now admitted to Secular Dignity and Preferment, should not be distastful to the Court

Court or the Ministry. Then the Bishops were taken frequently from their own Dioceses, and the regular Exercise of Discipline there, according to the Ancient Laws and Rules of Christianity, to Assemble in Synods, and there to Cabal, and Dispute, and Anathematize one another about uncertain Notions; and to make New Party Canons; while the true Religion of Christ, the plain Faith, holy Life, strict Discipline, and ardent Charity, of the former Ages did gradually decay and wear away. In short, the *Secular Establishment* of the outward Powers and Privileges, and Preferments of *Church-men*, has ever since much enervated the inward *Power of Godliness*, and hindered the Great and Spiritual Designs of the *Church* and of *all Christianity*: so that I cannot at all desire any such Civil or *Legal Establishment* of the *Christian Religion* in the World. But then, it is by no means reasonable, that in Countries professing Christianity, the Christians should be Discourag'd or Persecuted for their Religion: That those many Laws, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, which, as we may gather from the two former Heads of Discourse, are now every where in Force, and almost every where executed against the Profession and Practice of Christianity, should continue to be so any longer. This is such a Piece of Wickedness, for *pretended Christians* to Fine, and Imprison, and Banish, and sometimes to Burn those that are *really so*, *i. e.* those, that upon the *maxim*

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turest Examination of this Religion, endeavour to *believe* and *live*, as exactly as possible according to it ; that it is certainly indefensible ; and, if it were known, would be abhor'd by all Mankind. Upon which Account, I hope I may justly take it for granted, that none of the Princes and States of *Christendom*, if once they are made sensible of it, will continue to *persecute Christianity* any longer. However, to give all the Weight I can to this Address, I presume to urge the following plain Reasons to them, for the *Admission*, or at least, for the open *Toleration* of *True* and *Genuine Christianity* in their Dominions. They ought to do it, because the *Christian Religion* really is, and is own'd by all the Religious Parties now in *Christendom*, to be,

(1.) The only *True Religion*.

(2.) The only *Important Religion*, as to another *World*.

(3.) The most Beneficial, Peaceable, and Advantageous Religion, as to their *Government* ; and the Happiness of them and their Subjects in *this World*.

(1.) I move for the Admission, at least for the open Toleration of the *Christian Religion*, because it really is, and is own'd by all the Religious Parties now in *Christendom* to be, the only *True Religion*. No one sure can so far put off Human Nature, as to Discourage and Persecute *Truth*, when he knows it to be so : Much less can any Man of ordinary Integrity be so profligate,

gate, as to Discourage and Persecute the *True Religion*, and its Professors, when once they are satisfy'd that they are such. Now that it is the *Christian Religion*, and not that of the *Papists*, or *Lutherans*, or *Calvinists*, or the Religion of the *Church of England*, or of the *Church of Scotland*, or of the *Church of Holland*, &c. which is the true Religion, might be easily demonstrated in this Place, if there were any Occasion for it. But since this would look like an *Affront* to the several Princes and States of *Christendom*, to suppose them to stand in need of Proof for the Truth of that Religion which they all do profess, and many of them glory in, even in their very Titles; (the One taking the honourable Appellation of the *Most Christian King*; another of the *Catholick King*; and our own, of the *Defender of the Faith*;) and since all the several Sects and Parties of *Europe* before-mentioned, do allow, that 'tis not the *Pope*, or *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or *Cranmer*, or *Knox*, &c. but only *Jesus Christ*, that was the *True Prophet*, and his Religion the *only true Religion*; I shall not here set about the Demonstration of it. That which I would therefore beg of the Christian Reader in this Place, what Modern Form of Religion soever he be of, whether *Established*, or only *Tolerated*, or indeed *Persecuted* among us, is this; That he will always really consider and bear in Mind this Concession, which he will never refuse in Words to make, *viz.* THAT 'TIS THE RELIGION OF CHRIST, AND NOT THAT OF HIS

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OWN COUNTRY AND PARTY, WHICH IS THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION; that he will accordingly imprint this Notion deep in his own Mind; and endeavour to imprint it in like manner as deeply in the Minds of the rest of his Party; that he will, in consequence thereof, carefully and impartially examine every Doctrine and Practice taken up by himself, as well as those taken up by others, by the *Original Standards*, by the *New Testament*, and all the other Genuine Remains of the Christian Religion, before he is positive that they are true, and agreeable to Christianity; and that he will then fairly and honestly pronounce, upon such a Comparison, whether every Particular does so agree or not; and as to so many as he find does not so agree, he will not only seriously endeavour to put others of his Friends on the like Examination, but that he will also openly declare the Result of his Enquiries, and in his own Practice will set about the Reformation of what he has so discovered to be disagreeable to Christianity immediately. This Procedure, how new or unusual soever, is yet nothing but the natural Result, with every Person of Integrity, of the former Concession; that 'TIS NOT THEIR OWN, BUT CHRIST'S RELIGION WHICH IS THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION. And as I beg for this of all my Christian Readers, so particularly of all those among them who are Princes and Governors; and this, because much more depends on their acting in this Way than any others. Emperors, Kings, and Princes, draw Multitudes along



along with them, which way soever they go : And as their Delusion is of the most fatal Consequence to the Delusion of others ; so would their Discovery of the Truth be attended with the like Discovery in Millions besides. If the Princes and States of *Europe* had once examined, found out, and admitted the True Christian Religion, the several Orders of Men in their Dominions, even the Clergy themselves, would soon be oblig'd to examine, and so would soon find out and receive the same. For if once Men seriously examine, I do not doubt of their finding out Christianity. But then, if it be thought a little unreasonable, that Emperors, Kings, and Princes, should themselves examine, and study Christianity, in order to its Admission, or at least its open Toleration in *Europe*, I shall have occasion to shew the contrary under the two next Particulars : For they as well as others are to consider,

(2.) That the *Christian Religion* is the only *Important Religion as to another World* ; and therefore most highly worthy of their Examination, in order to its Discovery, its Admission, or open Toleration in their Dominions. 'Tis certain that Kings and Princes must Die as well as other Men ; that Kings and Princes, which are so highly exalted with respect to their Subjects, are yet *nothing, yea* 1st. xl. 17. *less than nothing and vanity*, with respect to the great God of the Universe, their common Creator, and supreme Governor ; that they are equally subject to the Divine Laws, and must equally

give an Account of their Stewardship to their Lord and Saviour at the great Day, with the meanest of their Vassals ; that they, as well as all others, are under the common Obligations of Men and Christians, to enquire after, and Obey the Will of God, and the Laws of Christ ; that they, as well as all others, have Immortal Souls, which must be either Happy or Miserable in the other World, according to their Behaviour in this ; and that as the Highness of their Station, and Wideness of their Influence, renders what good *they* do, under their very great Temptations, more meritorious, more generally useful to Men, and more highly rewardable by God ; so does the fatal Mischief of *their* Sins reach so far, as to expose them to no small Degree of Punishment hereafter. These Things being certain, and confess'd by all, I think there can be no Reason given why *the Kings and Princes of Christendom*, should not take care of *their own Religion*, and of *their own Salvation*, as well as others ; and, by Consequence, there can be no reason why they should be excus'd from Enquiring into, Believing, and Practising the Christian Religion, upon which *their own*, as well as *their Subjects* Eternal Salvation does entirely depend. I hope, therefore, they will not be offended, if, for a Conclusion of this Particular, I shew them, in a parallel Case among the *Jews*, what it is that God expects of Kings and Princes themselves, relating to Religion : Nay particularly, to their not taking it at second Hand from others, but their own especial Know-

Knowledge and Practice thereof, according to the Original Standard, the very Law of God it self: Hear the Words of God to *Moses*, concerning the Kings of *Israel*, and their Obligations in this Case : It

Deut. xvii. 18,  
19, 20.

*It shall be when He sitteth upon the Throne of his Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of this Law in a Book, out of that which is before the Priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the Days of his Life ; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the Words of this Law, and these Statutes, to do them. That his Heart be not lifted up above his Brethren ; and that he turn not aside from the Commandment, to the right hand or to the left ; to the end that he may prolong his Days in his Kingdom, he, and his Children in the midst of Israel.* Which last Words bring me directly to my next Reason. For,

(3.) I move for the Admission, at least for the open Toleration of the Christian Religion, by the Princes and States of *Europe*, because 'tis the most beneficial and advantageous Religion, as to their *Government*, and the Happiness of them and their Subjects even *in this World*. It has been the Complaint of not a few Observing Men of late, that the Christian Religion has been the Occasion of so much Mischief in the World ; of so many Wars, Persecutions, Rebellions, and Massacres ; of so much ill Will, Hatred, Enmity, Injustice, Uncharitableness, and Disturbance to *Christendom*,

dom, since it has been established, under several Denominations, there; that it seems no way agreeable to good Government, in no sort adapted to the Peace and Welfare, and Civil Advantages of Society. Now in Answer to this modern Plea against Christianity, I alledge, that it is entirely false; that the Accusation is utterly ill-grounded, and without any Foundation; because the true Christian Religion *has not yet been tried* by the several Princes and States of *Europe*; nor has it yet been openly Tolerated, much less Admitted into their Dominions: And if Tryal has not yet been made of this Religion, How is it possible, *without such Tryal*, to know what its Consequences would be in this respect? I know that *Europe* has long admitted and been enslav'd by Popery; and that of late the several Churches that were set up by *Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Knox, &c.* have been Established or Admitted in several of its Countries; which Churches have so divided and subdivided, have been so bitter one against another, and have occasioned so many Persecutions, and Cruelties, and Mischiefs, as is deplorable so much as to think of. But that the *Christian Religion* has caused any of those Mischiefs, or has been ever so far admitted into *Europe*, as to afford us any *Experiment*, whether it would have such mischievous Effects or not, I utterly deny. Nay, I think I may venture to affirm, that the very Occasion of those Miseries has been this, that several in great part mistaken, or *Antichristian* Schemes

Schemes of Religion, have been Admitted *instead* of Christianity; and for this very Reason it is, that I earnestly desire that *Christianity it self* may, at least for some considerable time, and for *Tryal sake*, be Admitted, or at least openly Tolerated among us. I am sure the Christian Religion is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy*; that it recommends *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance*; that it is so far from encouraging Wars, Persecutions, Massacres, and the Causes of them, Hatred, Envy, and Malice, that its peculiar Characteristicks are *Love and Kindness, Good Will, mutual Forbearance, and Charity*. Obedience to Magistrates, and Submission to those in Authority, are its known Doctrines and Practices; Fidelity, and Justice, and Equity its known Precepts. Nor has any Nation, that I know of, been ever made miserable by *True Christianity*, but by its opposite, direct *Antichristianism*; by those that under the Venerable Name of *Christianity* set up partial, and uncertain, and factious Models of their own; which still end, as well they may, in Disorder, and Confusion, and every evil Work.

Jam. iii. 17.

Gal. v. 22.

John xiii. 35.

Jam. iii. 16.

This would be a large, but a sad Field of Discourse; to trace the History of the Church from the Beginning of its corrupted State, and of  
Anti-

Antichristianism in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, till this very Year 1716 ; and to observe the woful Condition it has it self been brought to, and the dismal Effects it has had upon the State, with the numerous Calamities it has brought on the true Christians, and indeed upon the general Body of Mankind. In order therefore to put an end to this miserable State of Things, let us cast out all those Antichristian Errors, and Factions, and Persecutions, &c. which have been so fatal to the Peace and Happiness of our Societies ; and let us at last *Admit*, or at least openly *Tolerate* the *True Christian Religion* among us. Let us entirely separate the Church from the State, which have so long been troublesome and fatal to each other, in this odd way of their Conjunction ; let us put a Difference between the Laws of Christ, and the Laws of Men ; the Discipline of the Gospel, and Temporal Penalties. Let us take away all that Power which is Secular and Worldly from the Clergy ; and in its stead, permit them freely to exercise that truly Spiritual Authority, which, and which alone Christ has intrusted them withal. Let us abrogate those Laws of our several Countries, which are contrary to those of Christ Jesus ; and leave the Execution of the latter to those with whom he has intrusted them. In order to which, let us give Liberty and Encouragement to all Christian People to Search into the Truths and Duties of the Gospel ; and let us desire the most Learned and Skilful

to

to give us an Account, what Laws of every Land are contrary to those of Christianity, in order to their Abrogation. Let us no longer make the *Christian Mysteries, Tools of State, or Tests of Parties*; but reserve them entire to those Sacred Purposes for which they were ordained. In short, Let us take away all that is Additional, which has been introduced in the later Ages; and restore the Faith, Worship, Discipline, and Practice of Christianity, to that Condition of Simplicity, Seriousness, Purity, and Charity, in which it was originally left by Christ and his Apostles. And if then, after all this, we find upon Tryal, that the *Christian Religion* it self is as mischievous, as *Antichristianism* has long been, I have no more to say on this Head; but must give up the State of Mankind, as, in these Respects, utterly deplorable and desperate: Because I am very sure, that if the Christian Religion, as it was believ'd and practis'd in the first Ages, is not able to procure the Temporal Ease, and Peace, and Welfare, and Happiness of Kingdoms and Societies, of Governors and Subjects, of Church and State; no other Form of Religion, or Irreligion, (for that begins now to put in its Claim also) will ever be capable of doing it better. I come now directly,

IV. To *Address* my self, with all becoming Humility and Seriousness, to the *Princes and States of Europe*, from the Consideration of the Premises; and to beg of them, with the utmost

Earnestness, That they will now *Admit*, or at least openly *Tolerate* the *Christian Religion* in their Dominions.

Accordingly, To you, *Most Potent, and most Excellent Emperors, Kings, and Princes, and High and Mighty States*, do I Apply my self; not on any Worldly or Political Account, with which Addresses you are but too well acquainted; but in behalf of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, and his Holy Religion. *Seeing by you it is that we commonly enjoy great Quietness, and that very worthy Deeds are done unto Europe by your Providence; which ought to be accepted always, and in all Places, most Noble Princes, with all Thankfulness; I implore it at your Hands, that you will, in this momentous Concern, hear me of your Clemency a few Words.* I have already proved, tho' with great Regret at the Occasion, or refer'd to such Books where it is proved, That you have not, any of you, hitherto Admitted, no nor openly Tolerated the *Christian Religion* in your several Dominions; neither as to the *Christian Faith*, nor *Worship*, nor *Church-Government*, nor *Discipline*, nor *Laws*, nor *Practice*, nor *Sacred Books*, nor *Sacraments*. "And if this be not yet sufficiently proved, I am most willing and ready, in what Manner, and before what Assembly you please, more largely and particularly to Demonstrate the same", I have also, in the second place, assigned what I look upon as the principal Occasions, why

Acts xxiv.  
2, 3, 4.



why you have not hitherto Admitted, or openly Tolerated the same Religion; and shewed that it has not been so much your own Crime, as the Crime of others; not so much your *Fault*, as your *Unhappiness*. And that we have Reason to hope, 'tis not commonly for Want of good Will, or Inclination, that you have not Admitted or openly Tolerated Christianity in your Dominions; But Because your Tutors and Governors were themselves frequently unacquainted with that Christianity, and so did not *Instruct* and *Educate* you in that *Religion* in your Youth, as they ought to have done: Because you have not been afterward moved or assisted in the Introduction of *that Religion by your Clergy*, as you ought to have been: and, Because *your Clergy* do still, tho' without, nay against all Original Evidence, commonly make you believe that those *other Schemes of Religion* which you were educated in, and do already protect, is the *True Christian Religion*. I have also, in the *Third* place, produced some plain Reasons and Motives, why you all ought to Admit, or at least openly to Tolerate this Religion in your Dominions; *viz.* because 'tis really, and is by all *Christendom* allow'd to be the only *True Religion*; the only *Important Religion*, as to another World; and the most *Beneficial, Peaceable, and Advantageous Religion*, as to your *Government*, to the Happiness of *your selves*, and of *your Subjects*, in *this World* also. And now, from all these Premises, *most Excellent Princes and States*, What is the natural Conclusion?

But that 'tis your plain Duty, and truest Interest ; will be for your greatest Glory, and your highest Happiness, both in this and another World, to use that mighty Power God has committed to you for this noblest of Purposes : That His *Most Christian* Majesty may really answer so Glorious a Title ; and no longer suffer his Subjects to be ignorant of, or hinder, or persecute *Real Christianity*. That the *Catholick* King may use his Authority, in order to the Admission, or open Toleration of the true Ancient *Catholick Religion* ; and not suffer his Subjects to be over-run with Modern Ignorance, Cruelty and *Heresy*. That the *Defender of the Faith* take care, that what he Defends and Patronizes may not be the Mistakes or Errors of Men, crept in in the Ages of Ignorance ; but the *True and Uncorrupt Faith of Christ Jesus, and his Apostles*. That all the rest of the *European* Princes and States, professing the *Religion of Christ*, take care that they do not any longer unwittingly support the *Errors and Tyranny of Antichrist*. Most of the past Ages, since the Three or Four first Centuries of the Gospel, have been, generally speaking, very *ignorant* of True, Genuine, Primitive Christianity ; and have accordingly admitted great Errors, and gross Corruptions ; have set up fatal Tyranny, and cruel Persecutions about Religious Matters, to the great Hindrance of the spreading of the Gospel ; to the hardening of *Jews, Turks, and Infidels* against it ; and to the Reproach and Shame of our common Christianity. The Sixteenth

teenth Century was comparatively a Learned Age, but still in some measure unacquainted with the Original State, and many of the Original Books of Christianity; and so made some honest, but very imperfect Attempts for its Restoration. But the present Age is become, by God's good Providence, and Blessing on the Labours of the Learned, much more intelligent, and much more acquainted with the State and Books of Primitive Christianity. We may therefore now justly say with St. Paul, *Tho' the Times of that former Ignorance, or imperfect Knowledge, God winked at; yet* Acts xvii. 30. *does he now, in these Days of much clearer Light and greater Learning, Command all Men every where, professing Christianity, to Repent, and Re-establish that Holy and Divine Religion more compleatly among them. I do not desire, most Serene Princes and States, that you would take my Word, or Admit my Notions for Original Christianity: This is, I am sure, very far from my Thoughts or Wishes. For tho' I have done my utmost to enquire into, and understand the True and Genuine Religion of our Lord and Saviour; and have thereupon, with the utmost Freedom and Sincerity, proposed my Thoughts, and the Result of my Studies to the Christian World; yet is this every where meant, and frequently express'd by me to be meant only so far as future more exact Enquiries and Examinations shall Confirm and Attest to, or Correct and Improve those Thoughts, and not otherwise.*

To

I assure you : 'Tis not, *Most Excellent Princes and States*, any private Discontent or Peevishness of Temper, but a hearty Concern for Truth and Christianity, which obliges me to deal thus freely with my Superiors both in Church and State. It does not arise from any Envy or Ill-will to either of them ; but from the sincere Desire of their real Good and Happiness ; and from a Sense of my Duty to God and my Blessed Saviour ; and from a Resolution of faithfully discharging the same, especially in this great Affair, of the *Revival of Primitive Christianity*. 'Tis not the Effect of Rashness, or Precipitation, but the Result of a sober and thorough Enquiry into the Primitive State of the Church, and a deep Sorrow for the Greatness of its present Errors and Disorders, together with an ardent Desire for their Correction. 'Tis not out of the least Disrespect to *Luther*, or *Cranmer*, or any of our first Reformers, whom I own to have generally been, in their Times, very great, and very good Men, and the Instruments under God of much benefit to the Church of Christ among us : but out of a desire of imitating them, and of using my honest, my utmost Endeavours to perfect and compleat that Reformation, which they so honestly and couragiously begun. 'Tis not out of an over-weening Conceit of my own Learning and Penetration beyond theirs ; but the Effect of that great Improvement in the Knowledge of Christian Antiquity which Providence has afforded the World since their Time ;

which

which all of us ought certainly to make use of, not for Ostentation of Learning, but for the more compleat Discovery and Restoration of our Holy Religion. 'Tis true, some of the Records which I depend on in this Address and elsewhere, are not yet generally allow'd to be Genuine and Authentick: But 'tis withal true, that I have throughly examined them, and satisfy'd my self about them, before I make use of them: 'Tis true, that the farther Enquiries I make, the greater Evidence do I still discover for them: 'Tis true, that many others besides my self, upon the like Examination, do begin to see, that they are, for the main, Genuine and Authentick: 'Tis true, that I have done what possibly I can, to invite the rest of the Learned to assist me in this Examination: And 'tis lastly true, that, as to the principal Points by me insisted on, they are so fully attested to, and confirmed by the New Testament, and the other Records of Antiquity, which are allowed by all for *Undoubted*, that they ought so far themselves to be acknowledg'd as *Undoubted* also. However, if it be meerly the real *Uncertainty* of any Records, that prevents the Church from setting about the Review of its present State, in order to its Amendment, why is there not a fair Examination appointed concerning them? And why is there not a Reformation set about in such Points,

Ignatius's  
*Larger Epistles,*  
and the *Apostolical Constitutions and Canons.* See Dr. Cave's *Primitive Christianity.*

as,

as, without all peradventure, do highly require it at their Hands? For, permit me to ask; Do any of the truly Learned and Pious, among those that call themselves Christians, now doubt,

whether the *Athanasian Creed* be Spurious, and ought to be laid aside, or not? Do any of them now, since

See Cave, du Pin, &c.

See Enquiry into 1 Joh. V. 7.

the late Discoveries about it, in earnest believe, that the famous Verse in the first Epistle of St.

*John*, which has for many Ages been a grand Support of *Athanasianism*, is Genuine? *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One*; when it appears never to have been in the Text of any one *Greek Copy*, nor ever heard of by any one *Ancient Greek Writer* in the World? Do any of the Learned, who have made the strictest Enquiries into the Ancientest Forms of Publick Worship, deny, or even doubt, whether that in the Eighth Book of the

See Dr. Grabe's Notes in my St. Clem. and Iren. Suppl. and my Prim. Christ. Reviv'd, Vol. III.

*Apostolical Constitutions* be the best, the most Ancient, and most pure *Liturgy* now extant in the Church?

Is it a Question among Christians, whether the Church ought to exercise a *Spiritual Discipline*, or not?

Or do they so much as imagine, that our present *Ecclesiastical Courts* do in any degree supply the Want of it among us? Is there any room for Dispute, whether, in the earliest

Times

Times to which we can trace the compleat Settlement of Churches, they were not generally governed by *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, as Sacred Officers distinct from the State, chosen by the Body of the Faithful, and wholly appropriated to those Holy Functions? Is it possible to be a Dispute, whether *Christ's Church* should be govern'd by the *Laws of Christ*, deriv'd down from his Apostles, and their Companions, or by those of *bare Human Original*? And whether it be not worth while to search for such *Laws of Christ* in Christian Antiquity? Or can any stand in doubt, whether the concurrent Testimony, of at least Three entire Centuries, that the Church was still govern'd by such Laws, be not the most satisfactory Evidence in that Case? Do any of the great Masters of Christian Antiquity deny or doubt, that the Body of the present *Apostolical Constitutions and Canons*, does agree to the Ancient Testimonies? and that, for the main, they contain a Faithful and Authentick Account of such Laws and Rules, as those Centuries ever attested to have been *deriv'd from Christ by his Apostles*? And, by consequence, can any Christian Man believe, that the Church is *better* governed, and more *according to the Will of Christ*, and the *Designs of Christianity* by the Modern Rules, established frequently under the Ignorance and Tyranny of Popery, or at best in the first Dawn of Learning at the Reformation,

See Vol. III,  
and Cotelerius's  
Notes on the  
Constitutions;  
with Bishop Be-  
veridge on the  
Canons.

See that Great Man Grotius's Notes, on the Consultations of Cassander.

Eph. iv. 3.

mation, than by such as come fully recommended to us, as *most Primitive and Apostolical*? Can any one think, that 'tis equally possible to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, under the present divided State of *Christendom*, as it would be if all Parties could unite upon the Foot of *most Primitive Christianity*? Or does any one in earnest think, that the late Settlements can be compared, either for *Goodness* or *Authority*, with those obtaining among the first Christians? And then, if the present Churches will not be persuaded, to endeavour at the Amendment of Things so gross and indefensible as these are, what Hope is there, that they will examine into Points more doubtful, in order to their Correction? But to leave this Matter, and to proceed:

I beg leave farther, *Most serene Princes and States*, to assure you, that the Intention of this my Address, is not to Depretiate your Persons, or weaken your Authority among your Subjects; This would be directly to contradict that Holy Religion I plead for; which plainly affirms, that *Your Power is of God*; and that *every Soul*, whether of the Clergy or Laity, is strictly bound *for Conscience sake* to be *subject* thereto. On the contrary, I apprehend that your *Admission* of the *True Christian Religion* would best support your Crowns and Dignities, and render the Burdens necessarily



rily adhering to your high Stations more easy and agreeable to you. When once you resolve to use your Authority for the Advancement, not of particular Sects and Parties; but of our *common Christianity*; when once you pay a due Reverence to Him *by whom Kings Reign, and Princes Decree Justice*; when once you resolve to join a strict regard to true Religion, with your Worldly Prudence; and never permit *Politicks* to supersede *Truth and Sincerity*, and a *good Conscience*; when once you look upward in the first Place to *God*, and resolve to be before all Things, *His Ministers for good to Christendom*, in these most Sacred Concerns of Christianity: From that Time may you date your *Peaceable Reigns*, and *Quiet Governments*: From that Hour may you look upon your selves as peculiarly under the *Protection of Divine Providence*; without which, notwithstanding all your outward Splendor and Glory, your Reigns will be unhappy, and your Subjects miserable. Some of your present Legal Rights, as to Ecclesiastical Affairs; which ill Men, and worse Christians abuse to the detriment of true Religion, and the excluding of no small Part of Christianity out of *Europe*; permit me to say it, stand upon so weak a Foundation, depend upon such Novel Settlements, and bring upon you so much needless Trouble and Uneasiness perpetually, that it seems to be as much your *Interest*, as your *Duty* to get clear of it: I

mean only of that Part of it which is purely Spiritual; and which Christ intrusted, not with the Temporal Rulers, but with the Bishops and Pastors of his Church: While still both they, and all the Body of Christian People under them, are to be entirely subject to your just Civil Laws, and Obedient to your just Sovereign Authority in all Temporal Concerns whatsoever. I do not mean that you should Resign your Legal Rights into the Hands of the present Churches and their Governors, as now Established by Law. No, I fear that Resignation would, in our present Circumstances, rather do harm than good to true Christianity; since those Legal Churches, and their Legal Governors, are so far from being strictly *Christian Churches*, and *Christian Governors*; and the Body of People now in *Christendom* are so far from being properly *Christian People*, that, as I have prov'd but too plainly already, they have never been either of them, fully and compleatly, according to Christ's Laws, Admitted into these Offices, or indeed into that Religion. Nor, as I fear, are they yet at all willing to renounce those Secular Powers and Preferments, or to submit to that Faith and Discipline, to those Laws and Ordinances; their Consent to which is still suppos'd as previous to such Admissions. But this I hope I may humbly Insist upon, in behalf of Christianity; That you will, in the mean time, at least freely Permit, and openly Tolerate the Setting up truly Christian Societies and Congregations among

us; that you will prevent all Prosecutions and Violence against such Societies and Congregations; and that you will use your Royal and Supreme Authority for the Abrogation of those Laws, by which such Christian Societies and Congregations are now liable to perpetual Vexation and Persecution; which when it is once done through *Europe*, I shall look on it as a very great Step to the *Restoration of Primitive Christianity in Christendom*; as a sure Prelude to the Completion of that Glorious Prediction in *St. John*, which to be the Means of Fulfilling would be to you the greatest Glory:

*The Kingdoms of this World are* Apoc. xi. 15.  
*become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

Give me leave also, *Most Excellent Princes and States*, to use another Motive to induce you to Admit and Encourage the *One True Christian Religion* in your several Dominions, which was before omitted, but is of the highest Consequence; and that is, the Prospect of the *Enlargement and Diffusion* thereby of *Christ's Holy Religion* over the rest of the World. For then certainly, and not till then, may we expect that *Christianity* will spread, as it did at first, into still farther Regions and Countries, when once the several States in *Christendom* have really embraced it, and are jointly concern'd for its *Universal Propagation*: While the *Unanimity, and Zeal, and good Example* of the *Christian*, will then certainly have quite another Effect than the *Divisions,*

ons, Lukewarmness, and wicked Lives of many of our *Party-Missionaries* now have. You do, not a few of you, already encourage, and to your high Commendation be it spoken that you do encourage, many Noble Societies for the Propagation of what you severally take to be the *One True Christian Religion* over the World. But then, I am forc'd to say it, 'tis not really and strictly either *One Religion*, or the *True Christian Religion*, which those Societies now usually propagate; but they are the *several Religions*, or *Schemes of Religion*, falsely stiled by the Modern Parties the *One True Christian Religion*, which they spread abroad in the World: And this commonly, not so much to the real bettering, and improving, and edifying of the rest of Mankind; as to the enlarging the several Factions and Parties now obtaining among us; nay, sometimes, to the great Disturbance, and Perplexity, and Confusion of the several Unbelieving Nations; to the Hindrance of their proper Conversion to our Holy Religion; and to the great Reproach of the Gospel it self. We must, for certain, be our selves *Converted*, before we can justly pretend to *Convert others to the Christian Religion*. Nor can we ever, upon good grounds, hope for any signal Blessing from our *Lord and Saviour* on the Endeavours of such our Religious Societies, till it appear that 'tis in good earnest *his own Genuine Religion* that they promote among Mankind.

I shall therefore take leave now, after several Years, by way of Conclusion, to Address my self particularly to our most Excellent King GEORGE, and that in the Words I formerly made use of on this Subject; “ O that I might live to see

*Serm. and Essays, p. 280.*

“ that happy Day here in *Great Britain!* when Publick Authority, Ecclesiastical and Secular, should depute a Committee of Learned, Impartial, and Pious Men, with this Commission, That they diligently, freely, and honestly Examine her present Constitution, in all its Parts; and bring in an unbyass'd and unprejudic'd Account of her Defects and Aberrations, whether in Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline, of all Sorts, from the Primitive Standards; in order to their effectual Correction, and Reformation. Then would our *Sion* be indeed a *Praise in the Earth*, the Darling and Pattern of all the other Protestant Churches in the World. And by such an illustrious Precedent would effectually recommend the like Reformation to all the other Churches; and so become the Foundation and Center of their Unity, Love and Peace; and thereby most effectually hasten *the coming of that Glorious Day of God*, when, according to our Lord's most sure Promise, and that of the Father also, we look for *New Heavens and a New Earth*, a new and better State of the Church here on Earth, wherein *Righteousness* will

2 Pet. III. 12.

Ver. 13.

“ *will dwell*, till it end in the Glorious *Millen-*  
 “ *nium*, the Kingdom of our Lord, advanc’d to  
 “ its highest Perfection, and spread over the Face  
 “ of the whole World, till the Consummation of  
 “ all Things! *To which earnest Wish and Desire*  
*may the King’s most Excellent Majesty, with*  
*all his Royal Family, Senate, and Ministers, say*  
 A M E N !

Yelvertoft, Northamptonshire,  
 May 8. 1716.

WILL. WHISTON.

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F I N I S.









