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The TRUE

HISTORY

OF THE

Great St. *Atbanasius,*

Bishop of ALEXANDRIA;

And of his

Famous CREED.

Mark vii. 7. *Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

I Cor. iv. 6. *Ut in Nobis discatis, ne supra quod scriptum est sapere, (i. e.) That by us you may learn, not to be Wise above what is written.* Beza.

Address'd to the TRINITARIANS.

L O N D O N,

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IT is by the most considering Part of Mankind, look'd upon with Wonder, that the Gospel, which at its first Appearance in the World made such great and speedy Conquests over its opposite Powers, should, in these latter Ages, be so far from making such large Strides, yea, or the least Step of farther Progress, that it hath been driven out of all the Eastern Provinces it had gain'd. But if, on the other Side, they would give themselves Time to reflect, that the Modern Gospel differs as much from the Primitive in its Doctrines, as it doth in its
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Successes: If it be so chang'd, that were any Apostle to return into the World, he would be so far from owning, that he would not be able to understand it; the Change of God's Providence in such a Change of the Gospel, ought to admonish us to turn our Zeal against those second Causes; which, as they have provok'd our Lord to divorce himself from his Churches, so did they encourage and impower that false and lewd Impostor *Mahomet* to seduce and ruin them.

The Faith which at first prevail'd over the World, was no less suitable to the Nature, than to the Needs of Mankind. That every Man needed a Mediator between a holy God and himself, every Man's own guilty Conscience convinc'd him; that the Son of God came into the World to perform that necessary Office, promising Pardon and everlasting Life to those that would believe in him as such, was a Doctrine so easy to the Understanding, so welcome to the Desires, and so obligingly offer'd, that as soon as it courted the World, it won upon it.

But had the Apostles brought the modern Gospel either to the learned *Greeks* or rude *Barbarians*; told them, that God had sent his Son into the World to save them that would believe him that he was such, and not only the Son, but that he was also the Father himself, and the

the other new impos'd Articles of Faith, in the *Athanasian* Polytheism ; should they then have open'd their Packs of impertinent Mysteries, declar'd that some Men thereto first qualify'd by a few Words, should afterwards, by other five Words, turn a bit of Bread into the Body of God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, according to the *Athanasian* Doctrine, which himself and others must first worship, and then eat, &c. If such Stuff as this had been preach'd, and such Credulity as cannot be justify'd from Folly and Nonsense, made the Condition whereon Men must hope to be justify'd from all their Sins ; what considering Man would not rather stick to the Religion of his Fathers, whatever it were, than change it for one so much worse ?

Thou shalt have no other Gods but me, saith God himself in the Words of the first Commandment : And again, by the Prophet *Hosea* xiii. 4. *Thou shalt know no God but me.* The same plain Truth is as expressly deliver'd in the New Testament, *Mark* xii. 32. *There is One God, and there is none other but He ;* *1 Cor.* viii. 4. *There is None other God but One ;* *Gal.* iii. 20. *God is One.* This therefore is the Scripture Proposition, *That there is no other God but One,* or that *God is One.* But to this some Novelists have oppos'd a contrary Proposition, *That there is more than*

One, who is God, or that God is Three. There is, say they, a Father, his Son, and a Holy Spirit, distinct from both, each of which is God, and a God.

Now since the first of these Propositions has been judg'd by God himself to be so important, and so necessary to be believ'd and profess'd, that He has made it the very first of his Commandments to Men ; and since the other is inconsistent with it, and contradictory to it, we must have as clear a Commandment and Revelation from God, to believe and profess the second (which is to suppose, that God can make contrary Revelations concerning an unchangeable Truth) as 'tis evident we once had for the first : And we the rather demand this, because those whom the Novelists have superadded to the One true God, are in Holy Scripture as plainly deny'd to be Gods, or God, as the Father is affirm'd to be that One true God : *Mark x. 18. Why callest thou me Good (saith our Lord Christ) there is none Good save One, that is God. Ephes. iv. 4, 5, 6. There is one Spirit, one Hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all.* In the first of these Texts, the Lord Christ denieth himself to be God, in the other, the one Spirit, and the one Lord being without doubt the Holy Ghost or Spirit, and the Lord Christ, and they being here distinguish'd

guish'd from and oppos'd to the One God, 'tis evident, they are as much deny'd to be the One God, as the one Hope, one Faith, or one Baptism are deny'd to be that One God.

The Truth is, the Holy Scriptures are so copious and plain in this Matter, that the more learned *Trinitarians* confess, That the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is not founded on the Scriptures, but on the Tradition of the Church; so say all the Catholick Doctors. Some of them have not scrupled to own, That this Doctrine is contrary to Reason, and that such as have pretended to prove it by Scripture, *Suo artificio vincuntur*, are beaten at their own Weapon by their Adversaries the *Unitarians*, so saith D. *Petavius*, the most learned Writer of the most learned Order.

Thus the *Trinitarians* owning themselves, that the Scriptures are not so favourable to them as to their Adversaries, and not being able expressly to deny the Scriptures; yet what is next to it, they elude the plainest Texts by Scholastick and Metaphysical Subtilties; and then framing their Creeds out of these last, they absolutely refuse a Subscription to the Scriptures, and require Men to subscribe and swear to those Creeds that are contrary to the first Commandment of Scripture, to the Apostles Creed, and to
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that short Creed which the zealous and faithful *St. Paul* gave to the *Romans*, exclusive of all Carnal Rites or Ordinances, and yet inclusive of Salvation, *where none of those weak and beggarly Elements to which ye desire again to be in Bondage*, Gal. iv. 9. are made the Terms of our being fav'd, or the Motives of our Zeal for the Truth of God. The great *St. Paul* tells us, Rom. x. 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Here are but few Words, a short Sentence, as it were; but the Promise is full and great, *viz.* the Salvation of our Souls. Here is requir'd our confessing the *Lord Jesus*, so as to bow down under his Power; a believing in the Heart, that God rais'd him from the Dead, that we through the Faith of the Operation of the Great God of Heaven and Earth, may also be rais'd up with him to the Possession of eternal Life.

As this is a Truth beyond all Contradiction, great must be the *Athanasian* Uncharitableness and Presumption, who have taken other Measures, and set another Rule of Christianity, than *Jesus* and his Apostles gave. This sincere Confession contented *Christ* and his Apostles; but it will not satisfy those that yet pretend to believe them; 'twas enough then for a Miracle and Salvation, but it goes for little

tle or nothing now. A Man may sincerely believe this, and be stigmatiz'd for a Schismatick, an Heretick, and an Atheist: But I may say (as *Christ* did to the *Jews* in another Case) *from the Beginning it was not so.*

The most famous of their *Creeds* is that of *St. Athanasius*; I will say something of the *Creed*, and then of the *Man*.

As to the *Creed*, the latter Ages, disputing the Question in the Schools with less Heat, but more Subtilty, have determin'd the Question quite otherwise than *Athanasius* had done: For thus in his Dialogue on this subject: *The Divine Nature is common to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the Human Nature is common to Peter, James, and John*; and when the Adversary objects, that then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must be three Gods, as *Peter, James, and John* are three Men; he denieth that *Peter, James, and John* are three Men, if they be of one Mind, because then they are one in the Lord; but a Heathen, a *Jew*, and a Christian are three Men, because of three several Minds. And with a nearer Resemblance he addeth, *the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are as Bishop, Priest, and Deacon*; but *Bishop, Priest, and Deacon* are ὁμοῦσιον, so therefore are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Athanasius. Dial. de Trinit.*

At this rate a Heathen may by the same Rule justify Polytheism, provided his Gods disagree not amongst themselves. The School-men therefore will not stand to this State of the Question, but distinguish between *Person* and *Suppositum rationale*; which (yet) they cannot so do as to satisfy themselves, and therefore shelter themselves in their impregnable Fort, *Mystery*, and thence thunder upon the Adversaries both of this and of another no less belov'd *Mystery*: For they make this their Cock-argument for *Transubstantiation*, That since the Scripture is no less express for the one than the other, and the Contradictions no less gross in the one than in the other, therefore we must embrace the one as well as the other.

Now such Doctrines as these may be profess'd by the *Roman* Political Church, because it gives Countenance to their other Absurdities, and cunning Traditions added to Scripture; by which they have gain'd considerable Veneration, and consequently Dominion and Riches to their Clergy: But in a Reform'd Church, where the Scripture is held to be a compleat Rule of Faith and Manners, and also to be clear and plain in all Things necessary to Salvation, even to the meanest Understanding, that reads it or hears it with Sobriety or Attention; such a

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Confession of Faith must be look'd upon intolerable, as being utterly inconsistent with those Principles, and reducing us back to the *Roman* Bondage.

St. *Paul* gives this his Apostolick Rule to the Bishop and Ministers of the Gospel, *That they should hold fast the Form of sound Words, in Faith and Love, which is in Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. i. 13, and Chap. iv. 6.*

By *holding fast*, I understand not to deviate or depart from it in any Measure: For by prevaricating from this Rule, these Errors and Schisms, and heterodox Opinions have been brought into the Church, to the great Prejudice of Christianity. Men have had Liberty to *sow Tares amongst the good Wheat*, and Darkness and Night have gradually encreas'd, and spread over the holy Religion of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. And under this Veil of strange Words, Metaphors, Figures, and Barbarisms, Men have introduc'd their own Fictions, instead of the Truth of the Word; and preach'd up their own Imaginations, Thoughts, Inventions, and Doctrines, instead of the saving Doctrine of the Gospel. What are these foreign Words, such as *Clergy, Confession to Priests, Eucharist, God-fathers and God-mothers, Hypostatick Union, Laity, Litany, Liturgy, Pardons, Penance, Purgatory, Sacraments, Trinity*, with many other like Words,

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not so much as once used in Scripture, or by any of the primitive Christians; but Words and Terms invented by Men estrang'd from the Truth, in the dark Night of Apostacy, which overwhelm'd the Christian World; borrow'd from Heathen and Popish Authors, and rak'd out of the Cages of such unclean Birds, to the almost effacing the sacred Face of Truth, which shin'd with exceeding Splendor and Glory in the primitive Christianity. The holy Apostles and primitive Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, divulg'd and preach'd the Gospel in its full Extent and Latitude, discovering the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God, without any of these barbarous, borrow'd, and obscure Terms. They could preach *Jesus* without any of that Rubbish, and why should not the Ministers of *Jesus Christ* do the same still? Is the Face of Truth alter'd? Is the Gospel chang'd? Is the Way of declaring and preaching it become a new Thing, that they should not rather use the Words which the Holy Ghost teaches? For what Reason is the Introduction of this Darkness and Novelty in our holy Religion, unless it be to obfuscate or hide the Truth, darken its Light and Splendor, induce Doubts and Errors into the Understanding, and keep Mankind in Ignorance, so as to be always learning, but never able to come

to the Knowledge of the Truth. This is a Consideration worthy the Thoughts of all such as love the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and are affected with the Holiness and Purity of the Gospel, that they may avoid the Snare, and not be taken in the Net, which the Enemy of Man's Soul has spread in the Way to eternal Life.

If any Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about Questions and Strife of Words, whereof comes Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmisings, perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt Minds, and destitute of Truth, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. And the Apostle advises Titus to hold fast the faithful Word, as he had been taught, that he might be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainsayers, Tit. i. 9.

The Apostle Peter has also told us, that no Prophecy of Scripture is of any private Interpretation, because it came not by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

If the private Interpretations of Men about the Meaning of the Scripture be once admitted, there will then be no End of their various Meanings and Prevarications from the Truth, according to the

Suggestions of each Man's corrupt and deprav'd Mind: I say, if this be once admitted, where then shall we set up our Rest? How easily may Apostates and false Teachers introduce their erroneous Opinions and false Doctrines; make Prevarications from the Truth; force upon Hearers Meanings, not according to Godliness; which cherish Licentiousness and evil Works, and indulge their darling and belov'd Sins?

But this shall suffice concerning *St. Athanasius's Creed*, which *Vossius de Tribus Symbolis*, *Carnerarius*, and *Ell. du Pin* in his *Bib. des Aut. Eccles.* do ingenuously confess was drawn up by God knows who, above six hundred Years after that Age, in which Time a profound Ignorance had overspread Christendom; however, the *Eastern Churches* would never own it, no, not at this Day.

Now, as to the Great *St. Athanasius* himself, his first Preferment was Deacon to *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*; which, as the Discipline of the Church then was, is as much as now to say the Bishop's Man. Accordingly he waited on his Master to the *Nicene Council*, which assembled to judge of the Questions between *Arius* and the said *Alexander*. In this Council *Athanasius*, sometimes interposing, was noted to talk both so impertinently and so erroneously, that the Council thought

thought fit to check him, and censure his Heterodoxy.

When the Council was ended, *Alexander* return'd to *Alexandria*, where he died in the Year 326. The See of *Alexandria*, the second in the World for Authority and Riches, being thus vacant, there was a long Contention by several Competitors for the Succession; and the People were so wearied with Expectation, that at Length a Part of the Rabble cry'd up *Athanasius*; and he and they getting into the Church of St. *Dionysius*, forc'd two Bishops there and then (being the Night-time) to ordain him Bishop of the Patriarchal See of *Alexandria*.

The Bishops of *Egypt*, who were conven'd on this Occasion to *Alexandria*, and without whose Approbation no Election to the Patriarchal or Metropolitan See was valid, by the Canons and Customs immemorial of the Catholick Church; the Bishops (I say) of *Egypt* not only disapprov'd this Election and Ordination, but immediately anathematiz'd *Athanasius*. But *Athanasius* and his *Homousians* were too crafty for the honest and legal Party: For they presently dispatch'd a Messenger and Letter to the Emperor *Constantine*, in which they notify to him the Election of *Athanasius* by the *Alexandrians*, and pray his Majesty's Ratification thereof. *Constantine* knowing nothing of *Athanasius*,
and

and thinking the Letter to be written by Consent and Direction of such as had the Right of Election, approv'd by his Letters again the Election of *Athanasius* by the *Alexandrians*, and orders him to be own'd Bishop and Patriarch of *Alexandria*, *Athanasius* immediately presents the Imperial Letters to the Viceroy or Governor of *Egypt*, and especially to his Opposers, who durst now make no farther Words of the Matter. Thus, as was said of one of the Popes, *Intravit ut Vulpes*: But how did he govern? Why, he out-did the rest of that Pope's Character, *Regnavit ut Leo*.

First, he procur'd the Governor to force the People to hear him, and to communicate with him. He put several of the *Alexandrian* Clergy into Prison, and even into Irons. He beat some of the *Egyptian* Bishops with his Fists: He came into the Churches of others, where he broke the Altar and Communion-Cup, burnt the Common Bible, and (finally) demolish'd the Church it self. He depos'd some Bishops, and put into their Room Persons who had been degraded for their flagitious Lives by his Predecessors. He conspir'd with one *Philumenus* against the Emperor, and consulted how to stop the yearly Fleet of Corn from *Egypt*, on which the Armies and *Constantinople* depended: He committed Fornication, and that
with

with a Nun. These, and abundance of the like and great Enormities, provok'd at length the Bishops of *Egypt* to write to *Eusebius*, Archbishop of *Nicomedia*, to apply the Remedy provided by the Canons, a Council of Bishops. (*Vide* the Letters of *Eusebius* and *Theognis* to the Emperor *Constantine*, &c. *Sozom. Lib. 2. 28. Socrat. lib. 1. cap. 35, 36.*

Hereupon a Council was call'd at *Cæsaria*, and the 'fore-mention'd Crimes were sworn against *Athanasius* by the Clergy of *Alexandria* and Bishops of *Egypt*. The Names of some of the Bishops were these; *Eusion, Eudemon, Callinicus, Ischyras, Euplus, Pachomius, Isaac, Achilles, Hermeon, Admantius, Arbathton, Annubion, Peter, Theodorus.*

The Council summon'd *Athanasius* to appear, and to answer concerning the Manner of his Election, and to the objected Irregularities; but he, knowing his Guilt, thank'd them for their Love, and staid at Home: Therefore the Council petition'd *Constantine* to command *Athanasius* to present himself to the Council, which he appointed to be held at *Tyre* the next Year, being the Year after Christ 333.

At *Tyre* *Athanasius* appear'd, and brought with him some Bishops of the *Homousion* Faction: He deny'd all that had been objected to him, and hir'd a Whore to accuse

cuse *Eusebius*, President of the Council, of Fornication with her; but *Eusebius* intrapp'd and convinc'd her in such Manner, as Dr. *Sherlock* (out of the Lives of Dr. *Cave*) has ascrib'd to *Athanasius*, in pag. 31 of his *Vindication*. So many Accusations were daily brought into the Council against *Athanasius*, that the Fathers thought fit to search into the very Bottom of *Athanasius's* Matters; and therefore sent a Deputation of six Bishops into *Egypt*, with *Ischyras* his Accuser, (and whose Chalice he had broken) to inform themselves by Sight, and from the Mouths of all Persons concern'd, about the Election and whole Carriage of *Athanasius*. These came back loaded with such and so many Accusations, charg'd by Oath on *Athanasius*, that the Council gave Sentence against him, That he had slighted the Emperor's Orders, and had made the Assembly wait for him in an indecent Manner: That he came to *Tyre* with a great Multitude of People, and endeavour'd to make a Disturbance there: That he had for some Time refus'd to purge himself of the Crimes laid to his Charge, and utter'd Injuries to divers Bishops: That he would not submit to their Judgment: That he was convicted of breaking a Chalice, by the Informations made against him at *Alexandria*: Whereupon the Council, for the Honour of the Christian Name, and
to

to purge the Church of such a Scandal, first Synodically declar'd his Election and Ordination void, and then order'd that he should no longer live at *Alexandria*, to infect the Place.

What should a lost Man do? His desperate Case admits of nothing but a desperate Remedy; and however that happens to succeed, he cannot be worse of it than he is: Therefore *Athanasius* takes Post for *Constantinople*, applies himself to some great Courtiers of the *Homousian* Faction, and by them represents to the Emperor *Constantine*, that the Council of *Tyre* was wholly *Arian*; that they had believ'd all Things against him, merely out of Hatred to him for his Zeal to the *Nicene* Faith; that therefore it was reasonable his Cause should be heard before some other Judge or Judges.

Constantine, willing to do Justice, and desirous also to find *Athanasius* innocent, because himself was a *Homousian*, calls the Cause to his own hearing, summons the Witnesses on both Sides, and begins the whole Cause anew, being assisted by a Council of Bishops, whom he call'd to *Constantinople*. But both he and the Council having heard the Accusers, and the Defence made by *Athanasius* and his Friends, he not only approv'd the Sentence of the Council of *Tyre*, but banish'd *Athanasius* to *Treves* in *Germany*. It was
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thought it should seem he could do least Hurt in this City, he being a *Greek*, and the City *Latin* and *German*, distant from *Alexandria* more than two thousand Miles, and the utmost Border of the *Roman* Empire on the barbarous Nations. *Sozom. lib. 2. 28. Socrat. lib. 1. cap. 35, 36.*

From this Time forward *Constantine* became an *Unitarian*; for having discover'd so much Wickedness in the chief Asserter of the *Nicene* Faith, he began more strictly to examine the Reasons of that Faith, and finding them invalid, and that all Antiquity was on the other Side, before he died he made Profession of the *Unitarian* Doctrine, and was baptiz'd by *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia*, principal of the *Unitarians*. The Baptism and Death of *Great Constantine* happen'd in the Year 337, Vid. *Euseb. in Vit. Constant. &c.*

As for *Eusebius*, he also was by Churchmen call'd *The Great*, for his Piety, Miracles, and such a Sweetness and Dexterity in Business, that he liv'd and died Chief Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs to the Emperors *Constantine* and *Constantinus*. In the Person of this *Eusebius* ceas'd the Power of Miracles in the Christian Church. There was at the same Time another *Eusebius*, an *Unitarian* also, Archbishop of *Cesaria*; he is call'd *The learned Eusebius*, and is Author of the celebrated *Ecclesiastical History*, and other Works.

Cujus

*Cujus erudito nomini et olim et hodie as-
surgit totus pene Orbis literarius*, saith the
late Author of the *Historia Literaria Scrip-
torum Eccles.* p. 129. But to return from
these admirable Men to the no less ad-
mirable *St. Athanasius*.

Constantine the Great was succeeded by
his three Sons, *Constantine*, *Constans*, and
Constantius: *Constantine* had for his Share
France, *Spain*, and *Great Britain*; *Constans*
had *Italy*, *Sicily*, and *Africa*; *Constantius*
had *Asia*, *Egypt*, *Greece*, and Part of *Illyri-
cum*. Of these *Constantine* and *Constans* in
the *West* were *Homousians*; *Constantius*
in the *East* was an *Unitarian*. I said the
two first were *Homousians*; I use that
Term, because there was yet no such
Thing as a *Trinitarian*, the Divinity of
the Holy Ghost not being yet believ'd by
any. Upon the Death of *Great Constan-
tine*, all banish'd Men (by the accusom'd
Clemency of new Princes) were permit-
ted to return to their Homes; therefore
Athanasius also return'd to *Alexandria*.
But he behav'd himself so much worse
than ever, that the *Alexandrians* wrote to
Constantius, humbly and most earnestly
petitioning, that *Athanasius* might be ei-
ther put to Death, or banish'd. Upon
this *Constantius* call'd a Council at *Anti-
och*, in the Year 341, at which were pre-
sent ninety-nine Bishops; these again de-
priv'd

priv'd *Athanasius*, and substituted in his Room *Gregorius*.

Athanasius fled to *Rome*, to Pope *Julius*, where 'tis said he wrote his *Creed*, which he presented to a Council sitting there; yet *Baronius* says, that that *Creed* was not publish'd 'till above three hundred Years after, in the *Toletan Council*; nor can any one tell us what that *Creed* was. -

Pope *Julius*, being a great Asserter of the *Nicene Faith*. wrote to the Bishops of the *East*, that *Athanasius* might return to his Episcopal Charge at *Alexandria*. The *Eastern Bishops* therefore conven'd to *Antioch*, and return'd Answer, ' That they were
 " very sorry *Julius* should take Part with
 " Murderers, Demolishers of Churches,
 " Corrupters of holy Virgins, Robbers of
 " the Church Plate, Inventers of un-scrip-
 " tural Words and Forms in Matters of
 " Faith, Traitors to the Emperor and to
 " their Native Country'; they said, the
 whole *East* was Witness of these Things, and therefore desir'd *Julius* not to transgress the Canons of the Church, by receiving or favouring such Persons.

In the mean Time the *Homonian* Brothers, *Constantine* and *Constans*, fall out: *Constantine* was vanquish'd and kill'd, and *Constans* immediately seiz'd his Part of the Empire, and added it to his own; so now *Constans* was Emperor of the whole *West*, and *Constantinus* of the *East*. *Athanasius*
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apply'd himself to *Constans*, tells him, that he had suffer'd so much and so long for the *Nicene Faith*; that all the rest was Calumny invented by Adversaries, and believ'd in the Councils because the Fathers were *Arians*; and therefore prays that he may be restor'd to his See and Authority. *Constans* upon this writes to his Brother *Constantius*, that a Council might be held at *Sardica* in *Illyricum*, that should consist of the Bishops both of the *East* and *West*. Accordingly a Council is call'd there, *Anno 347*. The *Western* Bishops arriv'd first, and knowing the Mind of *Constans*, took *Athanasius*, and all other depos'd and excommunicated Bishops into Council with them, and even communicated also with them, contrary to the Canons of the universal Church. Therefore, when the *Eastern* Bishops arriv'd, before they would enter into the Sessions Place, they desir'd of the *Westerns*, that *Athanasius* and other condemn'd Persons might withdraw, and not sit in Council as Judges, or as having Right of Suffrage, till they should be legally and juridicially restor'd. But the *Western* Bishops having committed a Fault, resolv'd to stand in it; and accordingly answer, That they knew no Fault by *Athanasius* and the rest, and therefore would not remove them from their Session. The *Easterns* reply'd, that then the *Eastern* Bishops would hold

a Council by themselves, and admonish the *Westerns*.

First, That it was contrary to Canon and Custom, that an *Eastern* Bishop (as *Athanasius* confessedly was) should be judg'd by any but *Easterns*.

Secondly, That it was strange they should know no Fault by *Athanasius*, whom all the World knew to stand depriv'd by the Councils of *Tyre*, *Constantinople*, and *Antioch*, and by *Great Constantine*.

Thirdly, That *Athanasius* would not have dar'd to appeal from these Sentences, but that his Person and the Proofs of his Crimes were unknown to the *Western* Bishops, and many of his principal Accusers either so far distant in Place, that they could not be call'd, or after so long Time (twelve Years) wholly withdrawn by Death. Notwithstanding,

Fourthly, They offer'd that a Deputation of *Western* and *Eastern* Bishops should be sent into *Egypt*, to examine all Matters afresh. And whereas six Bishops had been formerly deputed by the *Tyrian Council*, and had brought back the Testimonies and Evidences of the Crimes charg'd on *Athanasius*, five of these Bishops (the sixth being dead) offer'd to be condemn'd and depriv'd, without appealing either to the Emperor or to a Council, if the new deputed Bishops (that should

should be appointed by the *Western* as well as the *Eastern* Bishops, and should consist of both) did not confirm the whole Charge formerly brought out of *Egypt*, and on which *Athanasius* was condemn'd by *Great Constantine*, and by the *Tyrian* and *Constantinopolitan* Councils.

But the *Western* Bishops knew the Mind of the Emperor *Constans*, and therefore refus'd this and all other Offers; nay, they proceeded so far, as to procure a menacing Letter from *Constans* to the *Eastern* Bishops, to terrify them into a Compliance with him and with the *Westerns*. But the Letter had no Effect upon them.

For the *Eastern* Bishops assembled in Council in a Place by themselves, and protested against the *Western* Conventicle, as made up (for the most Part) of Persons uncapable of Session or Vote in Council: Afterwards they declar'd *Julius* of *Rome*, *Paulus* of *Constantinople*, *Athanasius* of *Alexandria*, *Hosius* of *Cor-duba*, excommunicate and depos'd, and wrote an Encyclical Letter of all their Decrees to all Bishops and Churches. The Proceedings of the *Eastern* Bishops, and their Offers and Reasons, had been so fair and clear, that all Men were satisfy'd with them, and therefore all the Churches every where own'd the *Eastern* Bishops to be the true and only Council of *Sardica*.
Even

Even St. *Austin* does more than once profess, that he knew no other Council of *Sardica*, but that of the *Arians*: For he was (it should seem) ashamed to call that Convention of *Western* Bishops (who had observ'd no Conciliary Method, and had trampled upon all the Canons) a Council.

For all this, the *Western* Bishops went on in their Design, or rather the Design of their Emperor *Constans*, which was to pick a Quarrel with his Brother *Constantius*. They restor'd all the depos'd and excommunicated Bishops, and chiefly *Athanasius*; and made those famous Decrees and Canons, on which all learned Men know that the Supremacy of the Bishops of *Rome* is solely founded, and which, from that Time forward, the Bishops of *Rome* have ever practis'd: So that at the same Time these Fathers restor'd *Athanasius*, they set up Anti-Christ. I challenge all his Vindicators to deny, (if they can) that the Pope's Supremacy was first decree'd and ordain'd by this *Sardican Conventicle* of *Western* Bishops, that restor'd *Athanasius*; and consequently, that *Popery* and *Athanasianism* were introduc'd at the same Time, and by the same Persons.

This Conventicle having done what their Master requir'd of them, *Constans*
not

not long after wrote this complementary Brotherly Letter to *Constantius*.

“ *Athanasius* has prov’d, that the Bishoprick of *Alexandria* belongeth of Right to him : Therefore let him be by you restor’d, or I will restore him by Arms.

Constantius being at that Time engag’d with the *Persians*, judg’d it not for the Safety of his Empire, to have to do at the same Time with them and with his Brother, and therefore agreed that *Athanasius* should return to *Alexandria*. The next Year (being *Anno* 350 after Christ) God rais’d up an Enemy to *Constans* ; for *Magnentius* slew him, and possess’d himself of the *Western* Empire. But *Anno* 353, the Emperor *Constantius*, in Revenge of his Brother, fought and overcame *Magnentius*, and made himself absolute Lord both of the *East* and *West* Empires. The same Year a Council was held at *Arles*, in which *Athanasius* was again condemn’d. And in the Year 355, the Council of *Milan*, consisting of three hundred Bishops, did also condemn *Athanasius* and his few Adherents. So *Athanasius* fled from *Alexandria*, and *St. George* was appointed by the Council to succeed him.

This is that *St. George*, the Honorary Saint of *England*, whose Anniversary-Day is here kept on *April 23*. Some of our late *KINGS* have chosen to be crown'd on this Day. The Sovereign, and Knights of *the most noble Order of the Garter*, are from him call'd *Knights of St. GEORGE*. Many honourable Families of this and other Nations, are furnam'd from him. His Memory is yet so famous over all the *East*, that the very *Turks* do honour him as an Hero and Saint, by the Name of *Gerges*. He died a Martyr under the Reign of *Julian* the Apostate.

St. George was born a Gentleman, and was in his younger Years a Soldier; and having been a brave Officer, was in Time of Peace advanc'd to be Treasurer of the Imperial Exchequer at *Constantinople*. He is commonly pictur'd on Horseback, arm'd and fighting with a Dragon in Defence of a Virgin Lady, because, when he was a Tribune or Colonel, he had rescued a Maiden Lady from a Dragon with his Spear and Sword. But this Popish Legend has been ridicul'd sufficiently by the learned Men in several Ages; who say, that this Part of *St. George's* Story is only a Moral, and that this Victory was obtain'd by *St. George* in his old Age. The Dragon (say they) was *Athanasius*, and the Virgin was the *Church of Alexandria*, which he by his Eloquence, Learning, and

and Piety, defended from the venomous and mortal Breath and Corruptions of *Athanasius*: Wherefore 'tis the more to be lamented, that these Corruptions should so far prevail over the Reason of this Nation, who having made Choice of this Great *St. George* for a Pattern and Glory to their Kingdoms, should thus persecute and anathematize one another, in Vindication of that Dragon which their Saint had destroy'd.

But however that be, 'tis certain our *George* apply'd himself very hard to his Study, after he was made Treasurer of the Exchequer, and gain'd the Reputation of the most Learned of all Men of his Time in the *Trinitarian* Questions. When therefore he came to *Alexandria*, sent by the Council of *Milan*, he was receiv'd with so much Honour and Respect, that the Emperor *Constantius* was extreamly pleas'd, and wrote a Letter to the *Alexandrians*, in which he calls their Bishop the most Venerable *George*; a Man (saith he) the most skilful of all Mortals in these Questions, in whom the noble *Alexandrians* may confide, as in a sacred Anchor. Then the Emperor thanks them for deserting (they are the very Words of his Letter) that Impostor and Conjuror *Athanasius*, and for adhering to holy *George*. He assures them, he should think himself in a Fault, if he did not exceed

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their

their Founder, Great *Alexander*, in Kindness to and Esteem of their Royal City, and their Persons. But to resume the History of St. *Athanasius* and his Doctrine.

In the Year 357, a General Council was call'd at *Syrmium*: Here *Hosius* (who had been President of the *Nicene Council*, and of the *Sardican Conventicle*) and the other Fathers who had compos'd the *Nicene Council*, and that were Authors of the *Nicene Creed*, did now make a contrary Creed; in which they forbid all Mention of *Homo-ousios*, and declare that the Son had a Beginning, and was inferior to the Father in Godhead, Power, and all other Respects.

In the Year 359, all the Bishops of the World assembled to the Council of *Ariminum*. And whereas it had been hitherto said by some, that the Son is *Homo-ousios*, (i. e.) of like and equal Nature and Substance with the Father: By others, that he is *Homoi-ousios*; that is, tho' not of equal, yet of like Nature and Substance with the Father, because he has a Spiritual, and in some Sense a Divine Nature; the Council at *Ariminum* did not think fit, that the Son should be at all compar'd with God, nor yet meer and common Creatures, and therefore rejected both *Homo-ousios*, and *Homoi-ousios*, and requir'd that it be only said, *The Son*

Son is not a Creature like unto other Creatures. This was the very Doctrine of *Arius*, and seems to have been taken out of his Writings ; for in his Letter to *Alexander* he saith of the Son, “ He is a
 “ perfect Creature of God, but not like
 “ any of the rest.” And again, “ Made, but
 “ not like other Things that are made.”

But the Reader may possibly say, this is a Tale of *Athanasius*, so every Way contrary to the Vindications which have been written in his Behalf, that of Necessity one of them is not only false, but a wilful Forgery, at least in the first Authors ; and 'tis not obvious, how an unlearned Man should judge, with any Certainty, which of them is true and which false. I answer ; A judicious Person may fully satisfy himself without being at the Trouble of a laborious Search. For,

First, The Offer of the *Eastern* Bishops at *Sardica*, while the Emperor *Constans* was yet alive, That a new Deputation of Bishops should be sent into *Egypt*, and if they found that the Depositions brought to the *Tyrian* and *Constantinopolitan* Councils were in any Particular false, that then the five surviving Bishops would be depos'd, without appealing to *Cæsar*, or to a Council : This Offer, I say, was such, as did then satisfy all honest and considering Men, and in all Ages to come will satisfy all such. It also demonstrates the
 Falshood

Falshood of what all his Vindicators, from their Legendary Authors, says, That at the Council of *Milan*, *Constantius* drew his Sword, and scar'd the Fathers into a Compliance: For what need that, when the Evidence against *Athanasius* was so undeniable, that *Constans* and the Conventicle of *Sardica* durst not suffer the Cause to be re-examin'd, or permit a Deputation of Bishops to be sent into *Egypt*; but acquitted *Athanasius* without any Trial, only because the Emperor *Constans* wanted a Quarrel with his Brother *Constantius*?

Secondly, Who that considers at all, can give Credit to one or two partial Historians of the *Nicene* Faction, and who liv'd an Age after *Athanasius* and all these Councils, against *Constantine the Great*, a Prince the most Just and Honourable that (perhaps) ever manag'd the *Roman* Empire, and an *Homo-ousian* (by Confession of all Parties) at what Time he condemn'd *Athanasius*, and banish'd him to *Treves*; also against so many and great Councils of learned and holy Bishops, in some of which Councils the President and all the *Nicene* Fathers were present, and consented: Lastly, Against Historians that were contemporary to *Athanasius* and to these Councils? We have the Calumny of divers of his Vindicators,

dicators, that the Fathers at *Ariminum* were in a manner starv'd into a Compliance, which is so false, that all the ancient Historians, of both Parties, witness, that the Emperor not only bore the whole Charges of all the Bishops, to and from the Council, but also allow'd to each of them a very honourable Salary during all the Time of their being there. But the *Nicene* Faith being given up at *Ariminum* by the *Nicene* Fathers themselves, it was necessary for the Men of that Perswasion, in After-ages, to devise something to ward off so great a Blow, as the Authority of the greatest Council that ever was; a Council consisting of all the Bishops of the whole World.

Thirdly, Whereas this is the Question between the Vindicators of *Athanasius* and the *Unitarians*, Whether or no *Athanasius* was as vicious in his Life, and his Doctrine as erroneous, as it is said to be; and whether the before-mention'd Councils did freely so judge? I say, this being the Question, because the Vindicators cannot deny the Matter of Fact, That *Athanasius* was often condemn'd by these Councils, and that his and the *Nicene* Doctrine was not only rejected, but a contrary Doctrine advanc'd; therefore they pretend that the Fathers in these Councils were for the most Part good, honest,
Catholick

Catholick Bishops, and only aw'd into a Compliance by the Emperor *Constantius*. To this I say therefore, let these Gentlemen take their Option, either St. *Athanasius* was thought as guilty, and his Doctrine judg'd as erroneous, as has been hitherto said; or all these Gentlemens good honest Catholick Bishops were a Pack of the greatest Villains in Nature, in condemning a Person whom they believ'd to be most innocent, and a Doctrine which they held to be fundamental and necessary to Salvation. In a Word, these Vindicators must either give up their dear *Athanasius*, or the Bishops of the whole World, whom they pretend to have been Catholick.

Now, having hereby given a sufficient Relation concerning *Athanasius*, and the Countenance which he and his Doctrine found in the Catholick Church in that Age, I will only say some few Words concerning the Gain which the Bishop of *Rome* also made of the Entertainment which he so often gave to *Athanasius* and his Party, and then conclude.

For he thereby took Advantage to claim a *Negative* in Councils, and afterwards the *sole Power* of determining Controversies out of Council. And by farther Changes and Additions made since in the Faith of the Gospel and the Disputacities

putacities of Doctors thereupon, hath thereby made an *Infallible Chair* appear necessary; and those who sit in that Chair, have so far made it *more Infallible*, as to determine what is most advantageous to themselves; for they have thereby gain'd Honour and Power, boundless as their *Matters of Faith*, and incredible as their *Mysteries*.

F I N I S.

