

Sidney, " *can give what he has not.* Whoever therefore will pretend, that the King has bestowed this (landed) property, must prove, that he, first, had it himself. I confess, that the Kings of Spain and Portugal obtained from the Pope, grants of the territories they possess in the West Indies; and that this might be of some strength, if the Pope, as Vicar of Christ, had an absolute dominion over the whole earth; but if that fail, the whole falls to the ground, and he was ridiculously liberal of that, which no ways belonged to him." Patents however for promoting discoveries and settlements in America were afterwards granted by queen Elizabeth, and king James and his successors, who all denied the Pope's authority over countries, on account of their being inhabited by infidels; yet, as some pretence was necessary to justify these usurpations, they, after the example of king Henry the Seventh, adopted the exploded distinction between the rights of Christians and those of Infidels, and made it the only foundation of their respective American grants; all of which contained *this, and only this* provision, that the territories and districts so granted, *be not previously occupied and possessed by the subjects of any other Christian prince or state.*" But if the princes and people of Europe, in more ignorant and superstitious ages, were so far misled by the emotions of avarice, ambition, or religious pride, as to believe it justifiable for them to cross the Atlantic, and usurp the possessions of unoffending nations, only because they did not believe in religious doctrines, of which they had never heard, yet the pervading liberal influence of philosophy, reason, and truth, has since given us better notions of the rights of mankind, as well as of the obligations of morality and justice; which certainly are not