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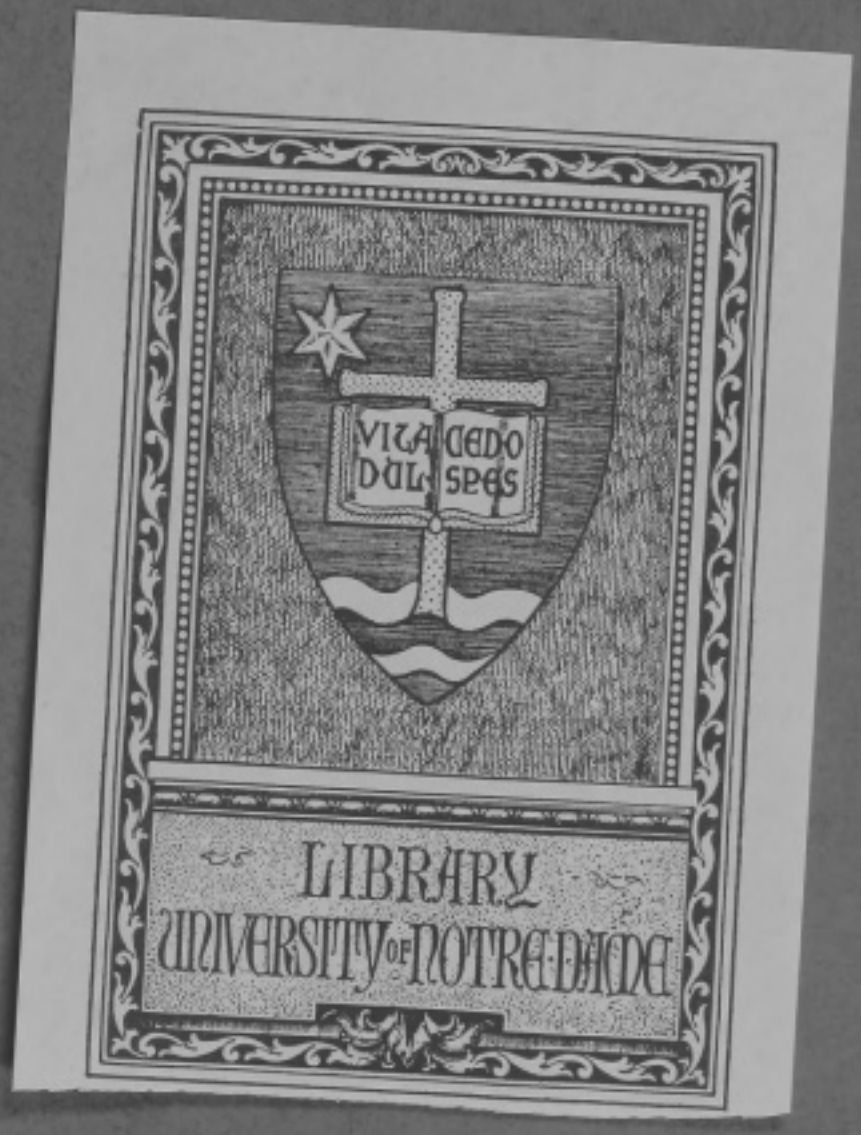

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A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE

DEVOTIONS

OF THE

Church of Rome,

Especially, as compared with those of the

CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

In which it is shewn,

That whatever the *Romanists* pretend, there is not so true *Devotion* among them, nor such rational Provision for it, nor Encouragement to it, as in the Church established by Law among us.

LONDON,

Printed for *Benj. Tooke* at he Ship in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1685.

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A DISCOURSE

Concerning the

DEVOTIONS

OF THE

Church of Rome, &c.

IT is certainly one of the greateſt Commendations that can be given of any Church, or Body of Chriſtians, that a man can with Truth affirm of it, that the Doctrines which they profeſs, the Rules and Orders under which they live, that the Frame and Conſtitution of the Church tendeth directly to make men more pious and devout, more penitent and mortified, more heavenly minded, and every way of better Lives than the way and profeſſion of other Chriſtians: For to work men up to this holy Frame and Diſpoſition was one of the main deſigns of the Goſpel of Chriſt, which intends to govern mens Actions, and reform their Temper, as well as to inform their Underſtandings, and direct their Belief. And in this particular it differs much from all the *Ethicks* of the learned Heathen: For whereas they deſign'd eſpecially to exalt the Paſſions, and to raiſe up the Mind above it ſelf, by commending the high and pompous Vertues, thereby to ſtir men up to great Deſigns, and to appear bold and braving in the affairs

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of this Life; the Gospel is most frequent in commendation of the humble lowly and mortifying Vertues, which would reduce the Mind to it self, and keep Men within due Bounds, and teach them how to behave themselves towards God, and to live in a due regard to another Life.

Now there is scarcely any thing which the Church of *Rome* doth more often urge for her self, or with greater Confidence pretend to excel the Church of *England* in, than by endeavouring to perswade, that the Frame of their Church is more fitted *for the exciting of Devotion* and a good Life than ours is. And so they will boast of their Severe, Rules and Orders, the Austerities of their Fasts and Penances, the strict and mortifyed Lives, the constancy and incessancy of Devotions used among them; and would thence inferre, that that must needs be the best Religion, or way of serving God in which these Practises are enjoyn'd and observed, That *the Tree must needs be good by such excellent Fruits*; and that if all other Arguments fail, yet they say they have this to show for themselves, that in their Communion there is at least somewhat more like that great Self-denial and Mortification so often made necessary under the Gospel, than is to be found in the Reformed Churches, or particularly in the Church of *England*. Now laying aside all Disputes concerning Points of Doctrine, in controversie between them and us, in which it hath been abundantly shewn, that they err in *matters of Faith*; and that in what they differ from us, they differ also from the Scripture, and the true Church of Christ in all the best Ages; I'll confine my self to examine their *Pretence to Devotion*, where I doubt not but it will sufficiently appear, that they are as much deficient also in *Regularity of Practice*; that there is not that true Foundation laid for such Devotion as God accepts, nor that strict Provision made for it, nor that real

real Practice of it which they would make us believe; but that even the beſt which they pretend to, is ſuch as doth by no means befit a truly Chriſtian Spirit,

I'll diſcourſe in this Method:

1. I'll inſtance in the ſeveral Expreſſions of Devotion, the Motives to it, or Aſſiſtances of it, which the Church of *Rome* pretends to, and on which ſhe is uſed to magnifie her ſelf.

2. I will alledge the juſt Exceptions which we have againſt ſuch their Pretences.

3. And then ſhow that they are ſo far from encouraging true Devotion, that many things both in their Doctrine and Diſcipline directly tend to the Deſtruction of it.

4. I'll ſhew what excellent Proviſion is made in the Church of *England*, for the due exerciſe of all the parts of Devotion, and what Streſs is laid on it, and on a good Life among us.

Firſt, Though Devotion is properly and chiefly in the mind, a due ſenſe of God and Religion, yet it is not ſufficient if it ſtop there: For there are certain outward Acts which are either in themſelves natural and proper Expreſſions, or elſe are ſtrictly required of us by God, as Duties of Religion, and Evidences of the devout temper of our Minds; and theſe are called Acts of Devotion. And all the Commendation that can be given of any Church, on Account of Devotion, muſt be either, that there is a true Foundation laid for it in mens Minds, or conſtant Proviſion made for the due Exerciſe of it, all neceſſary Encouragement given to it, and a ſuitably, ſtrict and regular Practice of it obſervable among them. And there are ſeveral things which are not at all inſiſted on by us, which they of the Church of *Rome* boaſt of, as ſerving to ſome or all of theſe purpoſes, which I ſhall repreſent as fairly as I can, that we may ſee what there is in that Church that doth anſwer ſuch great pretences.

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For it is obſerved that they of the Church of *Rome* oftentimes inſtead of *diſpute*, endeavour to work on our People, and too often prevail, by appealing to matters of *Practice*, viſible to every ones Eye; an Argument to which men need not uſe their Reaſon, but their Senſe; and this will, (ſay they) ſufficiently convince any of the excellency of our way. "For here "are ſeveral things uſed as Inſtances and Expreſſions of "*Devotion*, very acceptable to God, and ſuitable to a good "Chriſtian Temper, which are either not at all uſed in "the Church of *England*, or at leaſt not in that De-"gree and Meaſure, and yet all thoſe that are uſed in the "Church of *England*, ſay they, are uſed among us: "For we not only enjoyn, and practiſe conſtant uſe of "Prayers public and private, together with Reading "and Preaching of the Word, Sacraments, and what "ever is uſed in the Church of *England*; but we have "beſides ſeveral things which are as well proper Expreſ-"ſions of Devotion, as Helps and Aſſiſtances which are "not uſed among the Proteſtants: The Principal things which they urge are ſuch as theſe:

1. They blame the Reformation in general, as well as the Church of *England*, for the want of Monaſteries and ſuch other Religious Houſes, which are ſo numerous in the *Popiſh* Countries, where Holy Men and Women being ſhut up, and having bid adieu to the World, live as in Heaven in conſtant Exerciſe of praiſing of God Night and Day, and of praying to him for the Church and State, and particular Chriſtians, as well as themſelves; and who are not only ſo beneficial to the World, by the conſtancy of their Prayers, but alſo by their Example putting others in mind of Religion, and of *doing likewiſe*; and by the ſeverity of their lives, as to Diet, Garbe, and other Circumſtances, live in a conſtant Practice of that ſelf-denyal which is commanded in

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in Scripture, and was ſo practiſed by Holy Men almoſt from the beginning of Chriſtianity; and are as it were conſtant Preachers of Holineſs and Mortification, who tho' they do indeed ſtay here in the World below, yet converſe not in it, but are in ſome Senſe out of it, and live above it.

2. They ſometimes alſo boaſt of the extraordinary Charity, and Liberality to all good and Holy Uſes preſſed and practiſed among them, which is but ſparingly uſed, ſay they, among the Proteſtants; Eſpecially their exceſſive Expence and Coſt in building and endowing Monaſteries, erecting Churches, Chappels and Croſſes, their ſo pompous adorning the Places dedicated to the Worſhip of God, beſides their Charitable Aſſiſtance, and relief which they afford to the Bodies of the Living, and the Souls of the Dead; and no Man can deny but Charity is a certain Evidence, as well as a great branch and duty of true Religion and Devotion:

3. Sometimes they glory in the great number of Saints commemorated in their Church, and dying in the Communion of it, and urge them as a forcible Example to others, and a mighty incentive to Devotion; they think alſo it redounds much to the Honour, and Commendation of their Church to have had ſuch glorious Members of it, and twit us as they think ſeverely, when they ask us what Saints we have of our Church, and wonder eſpecially that we ſhould obſerve ſo few Feſtivals and Holidays; whereas the very many days ſet apart in their Church in memory of their ſeveral Saints, they think not only afford proper Occaſions, for all Acts of Religion; but are a ſign of their being leſs addicted to this World, when ſo great a part of their time is ſpent in the Service of God, and that Piety and Devotion are a conſiderable part of their Buſineſs and Employment.

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4. They urge also the multitude of Pictures and Images of several Famous Men and Women, who have in an eminent manner served and pleased God, and been instrumental in converting the World, as very proper Assistances of a Mans Devotion; instructing some, they being the Books of the Unlearned, and sensibly affecting and alluring all to the Imitation of the Persons whom they represent.

5. Sometimes they commend their Church for the Fastings, and other Acts of Severity and Mortification, used not only by the *Monks* and Regulars, but by all sorts of Men, according to the Rules of their Church, on set days of the Week or Seasons of the Year; as well as such Austerities as are enjoyned by their Confessors, by way of Penance; their going bare-foot and bare-headed in Processions, their whipping and lashing themselves, their drawing great Chains and Weights after them, as great and proper Instances of Self-denial and Devotion.

6. They place also a great Deal of Religion in Pilgrimages, which the more Devout sort take, and spend their Estates, and sometimes their Lives in, to *Jerusalem*, *Rome*, *Loretto*, *Mount-ferrat*, to St. *Thomas*, at *Canterbury* St. *Winefrid's* Well, or some such other places where some extraordinary Person hath lived, or some strange Relique is left, or where they reckon God hath on some Occasion or other wonderfully manifested himself; and they reckon that the very visiting or kissing these, are either an Argument of truly Devout Minds, or that which will make them so. And their Manuals or Books which their Priests give into the Peoples Hands, do not fail by all the art imaginable, to endeavour to screw up Mens Devotion, even to rapture and extasie in Commendation of these Practises and Orders, even as if they would have us believe that there is no true Religion and

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and Devotion without theſe, and that where there are theſe things practiſed, it is a certain Sign that the mind is affected as it ought, and Piety flouriſheth in the higheſt Degree.

And beſides theſe Matters of Practice, there are alſo ſeveral Doctrines, and Opinions peculiar to themſelves, whichthey reckon do naturally tend to the Advancement of true Devotion. As,

7. Their Doctrine concerning the Interceſſion of Saints for us, and the Advantage of Invocation or Prayer to them, and that we of the Church of *England* want one of the greateſt Encouragements to Prayer and Devotion that can be, who neither own nor make uſe of theſe Helps, and therefore that we cannot have ſuch hope of Succeſs and Bleſſing as they have.

8. Their Doctrine concerning the Merit of Good Works and Supererogation, is of the ſame Nature, in their eſteem: For the more Worth you ſuppoſe in any Action, the greater Incouragement is there to the Performance of it, and therefore ſurely it muſt be a moſt irreſiſtible motive to Devotion, to perſwade men that the worth and value of it is ſuch, as that you may by it purchaſe Heaven not only for your ſelves, but for others alſo.

9. Their belief of Purgatory, and of the validity of Prayers for the Dead, doth naturally tend to excite men to Devotion, ſay they; for here is a greater Scope and Occaſion for our Prayers, we may hope to be inſtrumental to more good, more Perſons to be relieved and helped by our Prayers, than are ſuppoſed in the Devotions of the Church of *England*.

10. And eſpecially their Doctrine and Practice of Confeſſion, Penance and Abſolution, they look on as ſo neceſſary to Devotion, that it is a wonder with them that there ſhould be any ſhow of it, where theſe are not

not received and practiſed : For a particular Confeſſion of all Sins to a Prieſt being ſo ſtrictly required, they ſay is the readieſt way to bring men to a Senſe of and ſhame for their Sins; and Penance being alſo impoſed preſently on them, will ſurely make Men to be more afraid of ſinning again when they ſee it muſt coſt them ſo dear, and that they may not deſpair or deſpond, by Reaſon of the Multitude or Weight of their former Sins, but may be encouraged to ſtrive more earneſtly againſt Sin for the future, the Prieſt gives them Abſolution of what is paſſed, at the ſame time encouraging their hope, as well as exciting their fear, and endeavouring by the ſame Method both to allure, to force and to ſhame Men into Amendment.

Laſtly they inſiſt much alſo on the Validity of their Ordinations, the Truth and Succeſſion Unity and Authority, of their Church, and the Obedience that is payed to the Rules and Orders of it, as mighty Helps and Aſſiſtances, and Encouragements to Devotion ; when they are ſo ſure of the Sacraments being duly adminiſtred, and all other Acts of Authority rightly performed, when the Laws of the Church, for the Puniſhment of Offenders are duly executed, and when the Church hath Power to oblige all to an Uniform and Regular Practice.

All theſe things, ſay they, do either encourage and excite men to Devotion, or aſſiſt or direct them in the exerciſe of it, give more room or afford better Occaſions for it, or elſe ſhow more fully the Neceſſity of ſuch and ſuch parts of it then what is received and practiſed in the Church of *England* ; and therefore the Church of *England* that wants theſe wanteth alſo much of the *Occaſion, Matter*, Opportunities and Arguments for Devotion : ſo that laying aſide all diſputes concerning Articles of Faith, they doubt not but it will be readily granted, that at leaſt,

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they are a more *devout People*; whatever their *Belief* is, their *Practice* is more agreable to that Self-denial and Mortification commanded in Scripture; that God is more constantly and reverently ſerved among them than he is among us; that they take more Pains, are at more Coſt and Trouble in the Worſhip of God, which they think is an Inſtance of a good religious mind, and will be moſt ſecure of God's Acceptance.

Theſe are, I think indeed, the moſt that they do urge for themſelves in this point, and there is ſomething of appearance of Truth in all this. Moſt of theſe Inſtances are ſuch as may perhaps be very taking at firſt ſight with ſome people, they having a ſhew of Regularity, Strictneſs and Severity, or elſe of being proper Helps and Aſſiſtances of Devotion: For Men are wont to admire any thing that looks odd or big, eſpecially if others have but the Confidence highly to praiſe and extol it. But if we examine them, we ſhall find them to fall infinitely ſhort of ſuch ſpecious Pretences; ſome of them to be unlawful, and thoſe that are good in themſelves, to be ſome way or other ſpoiled in the uſe of them; always they err in ſome material part or Circumſtance; and taken all together, they have nothing in them which evidence any true devout Temper, either deſigned to be wrought by the Church, or actually working in the People: Much leſs do they beſpeak greater Devotion than is required and practiſed in our Church.

For it hath been well obſerved by the judicious Sir *Edwin Sandys*, that the Church of *Rome* hath ſo contrived its Rules and Orders, as rather to comply with, and fit every Temper and Inclination good or bad, than to work any real good effect on any. And therefore as it hath ſeveral things which openly agree with, and pleaſe the profane and debauch'd; ſo it muſt be granted, that it hath ſomewhat alſo to ſuit with and gratifie the

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melancholly Temper, where the devoutly diſpoſed may find ſomewhat an agreeable Retreat: And therefore one would be apt to ſuſpect that the moſt ſtrict and ſevere of their Orders, were kept up rather out of a politick end, to pleaſe and quiet the People, than really to advance true Piety to God and Devotion. But however it is plain, that taking the whole Frame of that Church together, it doth not deſign to promote ſerious and true Devotion; but only to make a Noiſe, and to appear ſo to do. For when I ſee the ſame Church, tho' ſometimes ſeeming to countenance the utmoſt Severity as neceſſary, yet at other times to give all Liberty, and let the Reins looſe to all kind of Debauchery, I have juſt reaſon to fear they are not in earneſt for Religion: For all ſuch irregular Heats, are a ſign of bad Principles, or a diſtemper'd Conſtitution. Juſt as if I ſhould ſee the ſame perſon ſometimes deſperately diſſolute and debauch'd, and at other times intolerably ſtrict and ſevere, and this interchangeably and often, I ſhall much queſtion his ſtrictneſs, whether it be ſincere: If his Senſe of Piety were real, it would be more laſting and uniform; and therefore without Breach of Charity, I think I may look on him in his greateſt Severity, rather to act a part on a Stage, and to ſerve a preſent Turn and Occaſion, than to be really in his mind what ſuch Strictneſs would repreſent him. And therefore whatever true Devotion is in any of that Communion, ought to be aſcrib'd to ſomewhat elſe, than to the Conſtitution of that Church: For even thoſe things which they are uſed to boaſt moſt of, which I have mentioned already, we ſhall eaſily find to have little that is truly commendable, much that is greatly faulty in them; and if their beſt things are no better, what are their worſt? If the Subject of their *Glory is ſhameful*, what will become of the reſt?

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2. And therefore I'll now ſhew what we have juſtly to except againſt their fore-mentioned pretences to Devotion.

1. As for Monkery in general, which they boaſt ſo much of, calling it *Status Perfectionis & religioſus*, as if beſides the State of Men in Holy Orders, that were a State of *Perfection*, and nothing elſe worthy the Name of *Religious*. We confeſs, that ſcarcely as to any thing concerning the Externals of Religion, doth the Church of *England* diſtinguiſh it ſelf from the *Romiſh* Church ſo much, as that there is not any Proviſion made, or ſo much as a Suppoſition of ſuch Monaſteries, or religious Houſes, or publick places of Retirement for devout People, as they are called, being again ever ſetled among us. For tho' we are not ſo raſh as utterly to abhor and throw away every thing that at any time had been abuſed to Superſtition, yet we are very well contented that Monaſteries ſhould never be rebuilt among us. For we do not look on the Life of Monks as any great help to Devotion, or an inſtance of true Religion prevailing where they are found; much leſs that they are neceſſary in the Chriſtian Church.

For it is evident that the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Church did not know any thing of them: Almoſt three Centuries paſſed without any mention of them in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. *Antony* and *Paul* in the Diocleſian Perſecution, being taken notice of as the firſt of that Way. We read indeed of ſome that did lead a more than ordinary ſevere Courſe, and denied themſelves much of the (perhaps) lawful Pleaſures of this Life, in reſpect to Religion and the other Life; but theſe were not *Monks*, or the modern *Aſceticks*; tho' it hath been the way of the Church of *Rome* in more inſtances than this to impoſe ſome new thing on the World upon the Reputation of ſome good and reverend Old Name: For

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the Lives of the ancient *Aſceticks*, or mortified Men, differed much from the preſent *Monks* of the Church of *Rome*. We find not that they engaged themſelves in a ſolemn Vow, diſtinct from, or above that of their Baptiſm. For whatever their general Courſe of Life was, they would take the Liberty to break their Rule ſometimes in order to extraordinary Charity, or when an occaſion offered it ſelf of doing more good; as is recorded particularly concerning *Spiridion* a Biſhop in *Cyprus*. Nor do we find that they always continued in the ſame State of Life; but took ſuch a ſevere courſe on themſelves at ſome particular times, and on ſome ſpecial occaſions, (as the *Nazarites* of old did) to humble, and bring their Bodies under, and as St. *Paul* adviſeth the married; but not to continue always ſo, leſt Satan ſhould tempt them; and they reckoned it in an higher degree praiſe-worthy for every Act of Mortification to be voluntary, than that they ſhould once for all force themſelves to it: And therefore ſtill retained a Power to themſelves, and did vary from this Method ſometimes, and on occaoſin would indulge themſelves a greater, tho' ſtill a lawful Liberty. They took not on them the Vow of *Poverty*, nor placed Perfection in Beggery, but reckoned every Creature of God to be good; and even the outward good things of this Life to be *the Gift and Grace of God*, if they be well employed, according to 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. and remembred that Saying of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Acts* 20,35. *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive*. Nor did they vow what the Church of *Rome* now calls *Chaſtity*, but reckoned themſelves as chaſte in Wedlock; and as for *Obedience*, the third part of the *Monks* Vow, they thought it ſufficient to obey the Commands of God, and knew not of any other Obedience due from them, but only to their Governours in Church and State, whoſe lawful Commands they reckoned themſelves obliged to, in order

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der to the more regular Administration of Affairs, and the more peaceable Government of the World; much less had they any distinct Rules to be set up in Competition with the Laws of God, and urged as necessary to Salvation, making even the Commandments of God of none effect, as many of the *Monks* Rules apparently do, as might be easily made to appear. Such religious Men as these, there were in the first Ages, who practised a stricter Devotion than others, that God's Name might be the more hallowed by them, the more it was profaned by the rest of the World, and who were more than ordinary instant and constant in Prayers for a Blessing on the Church and State, of which they were Members; and by the Strictness and Severity of their Lives, made some amends for the Negligence and Viciousness of the Age in which they lived.

And many such as these, we doubt not, are now among us, who yet utterly dislike the *Popish* Mankery. And if by the Monastick Life all this were done, and nothing else designed, it were justly to be commended: For let Men deny themselves as much as they will, and use their Christian Liberty to the Restraint of themselves by a voluntary Self-denial and Mortification, to keep their Bodies under, and thereby get a better Temper of Mind. But all this will not suffice in the Church of *Rome*: For it is not enough for a man to live so strict and holy a Life, unless he enter into a Vow particularly to this purpose. Nay, though a man do take on him all these Vows of *Chastity*, *Poverty* and *Obedience*; and tho' they be made to his Bishop or Confessor, who one would think were the propereſt persons in the Case, yet still it is not sufficient; he cannot be said to be in this *religious State*, unless he vow Obedience to another kind of Spiritual Jurisdiction. So that it is neither the living so strictly, nor vowing

to

to live ſtrictly, as the moſt ſevere *Monks*; but it is their being of a particular Order, and living under ſuch and ſuch Rule, that is ſo meritorious; ſo that by Monkery indeed, Monkery is encouraged, and ſome politick and Secular Deſigns anſwered; but the Advancement of Piety and Devotion is not principally deſigned or intended. But to diſcourſe more diſtinctly of it;

In a Monaſtick Life theſe three things are eſpecially remarkable,

Firſt, The ſecluded, and perhaps Eremetical way of living which they lead.

Secondly, The Conſtancy and Regularity of Devotions practiſed there.

Thirdly, The Severity of their Rules, and Auſterity of their Lives.

But I muſt needs ſay, that there is little of true Devotion, that I can diſcover in any of theſe:

Firſt, Their being ſhut up from the World, or living in Deſarts, is no very proper Inſtance of their Devotion, or agreeable to the Deſign of Chriſtianity.

For a man ſhould converſe in the World, elſe he cannot ſo well underſtand it, what is amiſs, or wanting in it, nor how even to apply and place the Emphaſis of his Prayers.

A man that lives in a Wilderneſs, or ſhut up always in a Monaſtery, it is poſſible that he may keep himſelf free from the Defilements of the World; but yet it muſt be looked on as much more noble and commendable to converſe in the World, and yet to avoid the Pollution of it.

And tho' by ſuch a ſecluded Life he may eſcape one kind of Temptation, yet ſtill he will be at leaſt as liable to the two others, that ariſe from the *Devil*, or his own *Fleſh* and *Temper* as ever. And if he avoid ſome Sins, yet ſtill he will be more ſubject to others, Sowerneſs, Moroſe-

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Moroſeneſs, Melancholly, Cenſoriouſneſs, ſpiritual Pride, and other Sins of as high a Nature as thoſe, which by being ſhut up from the World he pretends to avoid. And yet ſuch as theſe are generally legible and obſervable in the very Looks, Converſation and Carriage of *Monks* and *Hermits*.

Indeed Retiredneſs ſometimes is an excellent help to the Mind, by giving it time to recollect it ſelf, and to reflect on its former Miſcarriages, and the better to prepare it ſelf for its future Encounters in the World. But a man may exceed in the Meaſures and Degrees of this, as well as of other Conveniencies and lawful Enjoyments; and ſo it may become a Snare and an Evil to him: For the mind will naturally be as much tir'd with Solitude as with Buſineſs: Beſides, that the Devil is always moſt buſie when men are idle, and Diverſion and Recreation is as neceſſary to moſt Tempers, as Health and Cheerfulneſs are; and fits a man even for the Duties of Religion. For the keeping the Mind in a conſtant Bent, tho' of Devotion, will in a ſhort time weaken its Spring and dull its Edge; and the Acts of Devotion in ſuch a mind, will, it's to be feared, be rather a formal piece of Drudgery than a reaſonable Service. And though we ſhould grant, that by being confined to a Monaſtery, a man might better eſcape the Defilements of any kind of Sin; yet it muſt be granted, that he cannot be in ſo much capacity of doing good in the World as if he converſed freely with it:

And *Sozomen* quotes it as a moſt remarkable Saying of ſome of the firſt Monks, That he that abſtains from Evil, but doth no Good, ought to be eſteemed a very bad Man; and ſo the Commands of Scriptnre enjoyn us to take Care to do Good, as well as to abſtain from Evil, elſe we ſhall be reckoned among the unprofitable Servants. We are ſure that publick Service ought to be preferred before private, the Glory of God, and the *Soc. l. 1. c. 12.*

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the Good of Men being more advanced by it; and therefore, though that man that lives in a Wilderneſs, and ſerves God there when he is forced to it by Perſecution, may hope for a Bleſſing, tho' he be alone, and neither worſhippeth God in Publick, nor gives a good Example to the World; yet he that runs into a Wilderneſs to be wondred at and admired, and neglects the ordinary and moſt uſeful way of ſerving God, there is too much reaſon to fear *he hath his Reward*. At leaſt how far ſoever it may pleaſe God to pardon his blind Zeal, and want of Diſcretion, yet certainly this Example of his ought not to be recommended to all, as a Rule for them to walk by. The firſt Monks we grant, were very good and pious Men, and were compelled to forſake their Houſes, and live in Solitude; but it is very unreaſonable to make their manner of Life a Pattern to be followed in the quiet and peaceable Ages of the Church. For this would be to ſhew our ſelves inſenſible of the goodneſs of God to us, in giving us the Liberty of ſerving him freely and openly, and that we dare profeſs our Religion without fear of loſing our Lives. And for the ſame reaſon we ſhould ſtill chuſe to celebrate the Sacrament in an *upper Room*, becauſe our Bleſſed Saviour, and his Holy Apoſtles did ſo; and ſhould have our religious Aſſemblies in *Crypts* and Vaults under Ground, becauſe the firſt Chriſtians, in times of Difficulty and Perſecution, often durſt uſe no other.

And as the Solitude of a Monaſtick Life is no proper Aſſiſtnce or Expreſſion of true Devotion, was not known in the firſt Ages of the Church, and afterwards was not taken up of Choice, but by Neceſſity: So alſo in the *laſt* place, I obſerve, that the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the Rules of Living, which are given us by himſelf, and his Holy Apoſtles, never enjoyn or ſuppoſe any ſuch thing. We are always ſuppoſed to live in Company and Society; and

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and accorpingly the Precepts of our Saviour and the Apoſtles are adapted to the common Caſes of Men, and the Concerns of ſuch as converſe freely in the World. And therefore I muſt needs ſay, that it hath been very wiſely ordered, that there ſhould be new and diſtinct Rules made for thoſe that delight in this ſolitary and Monaſtick way of Life: For they are ſuch a kind of men as the Goſpel of Chriſt hath no proper Rules for.

Secondly, And I am afraid that there is as little true Devotion in their ſo frequent and conſtant Prayers enjoyned and practiſed in their Monaſteries, though this be confeſſedly what is moſt commendable in their way of Life, and is the only way by which they themſelves can pretend to do any Good in the World. (If I except thoſe, which are but very few, that work with their Hands.)

Praiſe and Prayer is therefore acceptable with God, as it is in the volunrary Expreſſion of our Souls, a Free-will Offering and Sacrifice which we offer to God, in conſideration of his infinite Excellencies and Perfections in himſelf, his former undeſerved Goodneſs to us, and our Liableneſs to him. Now the conſtant Prayers uſed in their Monaſteries, in more particulars than one, come ſhort of that true Devotion due from Men to their Maker: For firſt, they are as much as can be *forced* on a rational Being, and on that acccount muſt needs loſe much of their Worth and Acceptableneſs. The *Monks* are obliged by the Rules of their ſeveral Orders to ſay ſuch and ſuch Prayers, and juſt at ſuch and ſuch times, whatever Devotion or Intention of Mind they have; and they are ſeverely puniſhed if they fail of them. Exactly at Midnight, at two or three a Clock in the Morning, ſo very often, and at ſo very unſeaſonable times, that many have confeſſed this ſtrictneſs of their *Devotions*, to be of all the greateſt Burden of their Lives;

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And yet this they must do in Imitation of some holy Man of Old, who is recorded to have pray'd at these Houres; whereas these Mens Devotions is not warm enough to keep them awake when they are at Prayer. And therefore these Prayers not being the free Emanations of their own mind, methinks the praise of them is not so much due to the *Monks* themselves, as to the head and founder of their Order, who obliged them to such Rules.

And their Devotion is little more praise-worthy than that of the *Jews* at *Avignon*, and several other Places, who are once in a Week forced to go to Church and hear a Sermou, (as these *Monks* are) at least to sit there whilst a Sermon is preached, and return home as good Christians as they went thither.

But then they are not only thus strictly obliged to such Hours of Prayer, for that were somewhat tolerable, they might possibly be intent on their Prayers, notwithstanding. But they are at the same time taught, that they need only say the Words with their Mouths; it is not absolutely necessary that their mind should go along with them, and this together with the other must needs spoyl all true Devotion. The frequency and unseasonableness of their Prayers, will make it very difficult for them to attend as they ought, and their Doctrine concerning the No-necessity of attention at Prayers, will certainly make them to yield to these difficulties, and so there may be abundance of *Words* said, but no *Devotion* perform'd.

Besides all this, they have a way of being eased of this trouble of the Prayers, for according to their Casuists, it is allowable for a man to get or hire another to say his Prayers for him. At least he may be dispensed with by his Superiour, and this Dispensation is good, whether there be a just Reason or Occasion for it or no, accord-

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cording to an excellent Maxim of theirs, *Non ad Valorem, ſed ad Juſtitiam requiritur Cauſa.*

And if after all this, Men ſtill will be more than they need ſtrict in their Prayers, according to the Rules of their Orders, they almoſt conſtantly offend in the End, and Deſign of their Devotions. For they do them not ſo much to benefit the World, or work themſelves up to a better temper of Mind; But to perform a task impoſed on them, and which they have vowed to perform, or eſpecially to merit by their works. For they do not ſo much as pretend that this ſtrictneſs in Devotion is abſolutely Neceſſary for their Salvation, (for elſe why do they not enjoyn it to all, ſeeing all have the ſame need of Salvation?) and therefore the ſole end of all this ſtrictneſs and conſtancy in Prayers, is only to get Heaven for others. Which Opinion, beſides that it will mightily diſcourage Men of an ordinary Charity, from being very intent on what they do, when they are ſenſible they Labour only for another; It countenanceth alſo a falſe and dangerous Doctrine concerning the Merit of good Works, and incourageth all vicious practiſes in other Men, who will hope to be ſaved, tho not by their own Prayers, yet by the Prayers of theſe holy *Monks* ſaid for them.

So that on many accounts, there is little of true Devotion to be found in that conſtant courſe of Prayers, ſaid ſo regularly by the *Monks* and *Hermits*; Not to mention ſeveral other particulars, concerning the *Frame* and *Language* of their Prayers, the *Object* or *Perſons* worſhipped or prayed to, the *Perſons prayed for*, and the like, which I may have Occaſion to mention afterwards, which being put together, do abundantly ſhow the impropriety, and the worthleſsneſs of ſuch Devotions.

Thirdly, And as to the *Auſterities* of the Lives of their *Monks* and *Nuns*, the Puniſhments which they inflict

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on themſelves, as they profeſs for the ſake of Religion, by *coarſe* and *uneaſie Garments*, *ſcanty Food and Fare*, *long and tedious Watchings*, *frequent and cruel Whippings*, *and Laſhings*, and other ſuch Courſe and Harſh Treatments, which they uſe towards their own Bodies. I confeſs I pity them, but can diſcern little or no true Chriſtian Devotion in them.

For *all Severity* to our Bodies is not Devotion, or any part of that Self-denial which the Goſpel requires; nor is this of theirs, though they pretend it to be *for the ſake of Religion*; but their inſiſting ſo ſtrictly on it, and valuing themſelves ſo much on it, is of very *bad Conſequence* to Religion.

All Puniſhment which men inflict on themſelves is not Religion, nor commendable, nor is the patient bearing of it always a Sign of a true Chriſtian Temper. Chriſt hath no where told us, that he that can faſt longeſt, or endure moſt Laſhes is the beſt Man; but he that governeth himſelf and his Life beſt. We have ſtrange Inſtances of this Inſenſibleneſs of Pain in many of the worſt Principles and moſt profligate Conſciences: The Devil hath his Martyrs as well as God; and if the voluntarily inflicting Puniſhment on themſelves be a Sign of Devotion, the Prieſts of *Baal*, 1 *Kings* 18. muſt have been a very devout Generation of Men. Therefore it is not any religious Commendation of a Man, that he can ſtoutly whip, or laſh himſelf, or bear it from another without flinching: Such a man might have made a good *Gladiator*, but ſeems not ſo well qualified for a *Chriſtian*.

Nor is all Puniſhment which Men inflict on themſelves, and ſay they do it for the *ſake of God and Religion*, always a Sign of true Devotion: For in other Caſes, it is not Men's Saying that they deſign well, which will make their Actions acceptable with God; but it is their doing what he hath commanded, and for the ends which he

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he designed and intended, with which he is well pleased. And it too often happens, that men do Actions having a show of Sanctity, and of great Self-denial, which yet are received by God only, with a *who hath required this at your hands?*

Self-denial indeed is commanded in Scripture, and is necessary also to many and excellent Purposes, to subdue a man's Passions and Affections, and to bring him to a right understanding of himself; to put a man in mind of leaving the pleasant things of this World, sensibly to affect him with the Condition of those that are in Misery and always want them, and to inure him to bear patiently the adverse things, or whatever it shall please God to lay upon him. It is necessary that a man should have a mind always ready and prepared to lose all for Christ; and therefore he ought often to deny himself somewhat for the Sake of Christ, that he may give full proof to himself, that his mind is affected as it ought to be: And by voluntary Acts of this Nature he preserves a Power over himself, and is much the more fitted for all the Accidents of Life, and for the Exercise of Devotion.

But let a man have a care that he keep within due Bounds: He may exceed and transgress both in the *Measure*, and in the *End and Design* of such Mortification. He exceeds in the *Measure* of it, when he inflicts such Severity on himself as shall render him unfit for the Service of God, and useless in his Place. God delights not in the Punishment of his Creatures, but desires their Good here as far as it is consistent with their greater Good hereafter. And though he requires Self-denial of us, it is only in such a measure as is for our Good, in order to the bettering of our Temper, and to cut off the Occasions of Sin in us. And therefore it is a great fault in any man on this pretence to render his Life so uneasie to himself, as that he shall not be able to serve God

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contentedly, cheerfully, and without Diſtraction: As a Man may be to blame alſo for his Charity, when without a juſt Occaſion he throws, or gives away all; For if this Courſe were allowed or followed, the worſt People, and they that know leaſt how to uſe an Eſtate well, would be the richeſt and Owners of all, and the only perſons in Authority and Power.

And he tranſgreſſeth alſo in the *End and Deſign* of ſuch Severity, when he pretends to merit by it, and hopes to buy Heaven (which is the Gift of God) with a few Laſhes, or a little Money.

And I have too much reaſon to undervalue and diſlike the Severity of the *Monks* on both theſe Accounts. They *often* tie themſelves up to ſuch Degrees of Strictneſs as are above the Meaſures of a man, and conſequently not to the purpoſe of Religion and Devotion. And they *always* deſign to purchaſe Heaven for themſelves or other, by the Merits of ſuch Sufferings: At the ſame time undervaluing the Sufferings of Chriſt, and over-valuing their own; and yet making them of leſs worth in God's Eſteem than elſe they would be, by their own ſetting ſo high a price upon them.

And beſides all this, their inſiſting ſo ſtrictly on theſe pieces of Auſterity, and placing ſuch Religion and Perfection in them, is of very ill Conſequence to other purpoſes.

It makes men to acquieſce in the *means* as the *end*, to content themſelves with having performed their Faſts, their Number of Prayers and Laſhes, without ever aiming at any Reformation and Change of Temper and Practiſes; than which nothing can be more abſurd in it ſelf, or more contrary to the Deſign of Chriſtianity.

It makes men alſo to eſteem this or that kind of Meat and Drinke, Condition or Courſe of Life, to be unlawful or ſinful, which really is not; which doth much harm, even to Religion: For it diſparageth God's Creation and

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and brings an *evil Report* upon the Land. It neceſſarily makes Men querulous and cenſorious; and is the very thing which our Saviour took ſuch pains to correct, and did ſo often rebuke the *Phariſees* of his Time for.

And this extraordinary pretence to Severity, brings the Perſons of ſuch Men into Eſteem, whatever their Principles, Opinions and Practices otherwiſe are, and ſo injures Religion. For ſo *Eccleſiaſtical* Hiſtory tells us, That thoſe *Hereticks* that have moſt hurt the Church, were ſuch kind of pretended mortified Men, as *Montanus*, *Pelagius*, &c. *So that what do theſe more than others? Do not even the Publicans ſo?*

And therefore however praiſe-worthy the *Monaſtick* Life may have been formerly, and what ever good may have been done, by ſome of that Order: Yet this is no Plea for the *Monks* at this time. For the *Ancients* were very Inſtrumental in converting many to Chriſtianity; but *theſe* only live on the ſpoil of Chriſtians already made ſo. And conſidering the preſent poſture of Affairs in the World, this *Monkiſh* way of living is very improper, and the abuſes that are made of it in the Church of *Rome*, are plainly intollerable. Where Men are taught to place Religion in a certain Way and Trade of Life, rather than in a truly Chriſtian Converſation. It ſtrikes at the very Foundation of our Religion, for Men to be made to believe, that the living or dying in the Habit of this or that ſevere Order of *Monks*, will have an Influence on the Soul, and give it a better Title to Heaven. And yet it is too notorious that theſe things are confidently taught and believed among them.

In ſhort, let Men deny themſelves as much as they will, for the ſake of God and of Religion, to humble themſelves for their Sins, and to keep their Bodies and Paſſions under. Let them uſe their Chriſtian Liberty to the reſtraint of themſelves, by a voluntary ſelf-deny-

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al, as far as they find it neceſſary or expedient; But for this to be brought into a trade, is the moſt prepoſterous thing in the World. Eſpecially, let them have a Care of cenſuring and judging others, who tread not exactly in their Steps, or of over-valuing themſelves, on account of this ſevere and ſtrict courſe of Life. For it is evident that for the moſt part it is not Religion brings them thither, or any extraordinary love of Devotion; but their Parents ſend them thither as a pretty cheap way of providing for their younger Children, that ſo they may be able the more honourably to diſpoſe of the reſt agreeably to the Grandeur of the Family. Therefore if they will commend the Inſtitution of Monaſteries, as a good and frugal way of breeding up of Youth, or of providing for a ſpare Child or two, let them do what they will. But it is not to be ſuffered, that when they ſerve eſpecially, or only to ſuch Politick ends; yet that they ſhould be boaſted of as the beſt, or only Chriſtian and Religious way of Life, as if the Perſons in them were the only *Religious*, and all others were *ſecular*, and in ſome Meaſure *Profane*.

Beſides it is very *unreaſonable* for Perſons to be ſhut up in Monaſteries, ſo as they are, when they are young, and before they can have fully conſidered what Temptations they may have, or how they ſhall be able to bear and withſtand them; and yet if they have but once, though of a ſudden, through their own Melancholly, or the Inſinuation of others, take the vow on themſelves, there is ordinarily no revoking or drawing back for ever.

It is very *cruel* alſo for Perſons to be put there, without any Conſideration of their ſeveral Tempers, and Circumſtances. For inſtead of benefiting the Publick, which they pretend, it robbeth the World of many an one that would have been uſeful to it in an Active Life and Station. And ſome by their Tempers do not need

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ſuch Mortification, as the melancholly and dejected. Others cannot bear the Strictneſs and Confinement, the weak and ſickly. And now to force this ſame courſe of Life on all, or ſuch a number of Men, indifferently, is like the Cruelty of that Tyrant that would make all men of the ſame length: And the beſt that can be ſaid in the caſe, is, that the Perſons who thus confine and ſhut up their Children and Relations, are like to the Perſecutors, who in the like manner ſhut up St. *Cyprian*, which certainly was Cruelty in them, tho by ſo doing, they gave him a greater Opportunity for private Devotion. So that in truth I look on the Monaſteries, as they are now ordered, to be rather a kind of Priſons, and places of Puniſhment, than convenient places of Retirement in order to the freer and more undiſturbed Exerciſe of Religion and Devotion. And if I am not miſtaken, the Church of *Rome* her ſelf, whatever ſhe pretends, really thinks ſo of them: For the worſt Puniſhment that ſhe inflicts on a Prieſt for one of the worſt of Offences, *viz.* for his violating the Seat of Confeſſion, is, that he ſhall be condemned to be ſhut up in a Monaſtery; and I dare ſay, that he and I agree in thinking that to be a ſevere Puniſhment, rather than an Help to Devotion.

Secondly, And if the Multitude of Monaſteries in the Church of *Rome* is no certain Sign of Devotion flouriſhing among them, they have little reaſon to boaſt of their *works of Charity:* For it is moſt plain, that the biggeſt part of their Charity is turned this way, to the building and endowing Monaſteries, and to the Encouragement of the Monaſtick way of living.

But beſides this, though I am very loth to find fault with any pretence to Charity, yet I have too much reaſon on many accounts to think very meanly of all that which is practiſed in the Church of *Rome:* For whatever hath been given to that Church under the Name of

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Charity, and is now enjoyed by it, hath for the moſt part been ill gotten, and is as ill employed.

And here I will not treat of the temporal Power of the Pope himſelf, and of the ſeveral Principalities which he ſtands poſſeſſed of in *Italy* and *France*; for they cannot be ranged under the Head of *Charity*, according to my acception of the Word; though it might be eaſily made to appear, that they have generally been gotten by unjuſt and unlawful, or at beſt by harſh and cruel Means, and ſuch as one would not expect from the Succeſſor of St. *Peter*. But I concern my ſelf with ſmaller and more private Benefactions and Gifts, though theſe are ſo conſiderable, that generally a third part, often half the Lands of a Country are the Propriety of the Church, Now all this is gotten chiefly from men that are dying, who can keep their Riches no longer, and therefore who do not ſo much give this from themſelves as from their Heirs; and is eſpecially, as it were, to buy Heaven; and a man muſt have a moſt deſpicable eſteem of Heaven, who will not give all the good things of this Life, when he can no longer uſe or enjoy them, for the Purchaſe of it: And what is given from ſo bad a Principle, is commonly applied to as bad a purpoſe. It is a common Obſervation, that in all the Popiſh Countreys the Poor are the moſt miſerable in the World; and their Secular Prieſts too are generally in a ſad Condition, notwithſtanding the infinite Riches of that Church: And ſo the Regulars only have any conſiderable advantage by them; and they alſo, as it were, club together to ſet up one great Man as Cardinal, or Head of their Order, in mighty Pomp and State; and heap Riches and Preferments on him till he can hardly bear them. So that one can ſcarcely ſuppoſe ſo great Riches as that Church is in common endowed with, to be gotten into fewer Hands, or do leſs Good than it doth amongſt them.

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them. Let them not therefore boast of their *Charity*, whilst amidst so great Plenty, they suffer the Poor to want so extreamly; and yet to make a Show build a fine Hospital in two or three of their chief Towns: For perhaps no where in the World do the Rich more exalt themselves, and tyrannize over the Poor, no where is there a greater inequality of Conditions; no where is there so much given to the Church and Charity, and no where is the Estate of the Church engrossed into so few Hands, to maintain Grandeur, rather than to be a Relief to Poverty. For the Cardinals above Seventy in number are maintained out of the Church-Revenues, and yet are by their Creation equal to Kings, and superior to Princes. Now if this be Charity to have a prodigious Revenue for the Maintenance of the Church and Poor, and yet to employ this to the Luxury of a few, and to let the rest perish, I will acknowledge the Church of *Rome* to be the most charitable Church in the World. And if it be said that a great deal indeed hath been given to good and truly charitable uses, but is now perhaps misemployed: I answer, it is possible it may be so, yet still I have some reason to question it; For their Doctrines of Merit, and of buying Souls out of Purgatory, *&c.* are enough to spoil their works of Charity, and make them to be rather esteem'd a Bargain of Sale than a free Gift. And yet their Donations run commonly in this Form, *I give this to such a Monastery for the good of my Soul, or of the Souls of other persons deceased, or for the Honour of such a Saint*; but seldom for the good of the Poor, the Maintenance and Support of true Piety and Religion; or for the Glory and Honour of God: And yet in my Opinion such as these are the only ends for which a Gift ought to be esteemed *charitable*, or will be accepted by God as such.

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But now on the other side, though the Church of *England* own not either *Purgatory*, or any other of their Pick-pocket Doctrines, yet *Charity* urged by us from truly Christian Principles, hath had more force, and done more good than all their Tricks and Devices put together: For so Dr. *Willet* hath in part shewn; and it might be more fully demonstrated, that in these last 120, or 130 Years, since the settling of the Reformation among us, there hath been more and greater *Churches*, *Schools* and *Hospitals* built and endowed, better Provision made for the Poor; more and better care taken, not only for the Maintenance, but especially for the Instruction of the ignorant and meaner sort of People; In short, all parts of *Charity* more fully exercised, than can be shewn in any the like number of Years since Christianity came into this Countrey. Indeed the general Strain of our Peoples *Charity* runs to the doing of more good, and is more properly expressed than theirs is. The *Papists* build Monasteries, in which Provision is made for a few people to live in Idleness and Luxury under pretence of Devotion and Retirement: Ours relieve the Sick and Needy (tho not Regulars) and think it better Charity to preserve a poor Family from starving (of which so many thousands die in Popish Countreys) than to maintain an idle *Monk* or *Nun*, or to make a Present to the Lady at *Loretto*, or offer Candles and Tapers to the Image, or Saint of the Town in which we live. We, by so bestowing our *Charity*, both *honour God*, and *do good to Men*. They do neither, but do Homage to a Saint that neither knows them, nor receives any Good by the Honour which they give them.

It is indeed confessed, that our Churches are not so adorned as they ought sometimes: But that is no Fault of our Church, but of the Iniquity of the Times, and of those Dissentions which they raise among us; but generally

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nerally they are decently grave, and as well fitted to assist a devout mind without Distraction as can be. We love to have our Churches neat and handsom, to shew we do not grudge whatever may be required to make them in some measure a fit place for Divine Worship; but we see not any necessity of having them so splendidly rich and fine; we think it would rather divert mens minds from the Business of the Place, than assist them in the Duties of it.

In short, in no part of *Charity* can they pretend to exceed us, considering our Circumstances, unless it be in that of Prayer for the Dead, when they hire so many Masses to be said for them; but we think not this so much *Charity* to the person deceased, as to the Priest; for he doubtless receives most Benefit from it.

Thirdly, And whatever they pretend, the great number of Saints canonized and commemorated among them, is neither a Sign of their good State and Condition of their Church, nor is their keeping so many Holydays in remembrance of them any instance of true Devotion.

As for many of the Saints which they commemorate we own as well as they, and can pretend as good a right in them as they can, because we own, and will submit to whatever can be urged from them; such are the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles and Evangelists; and after them also the Bishops, Martyrs and Confessors in the Primitive Church: But we confess that we have not the same esteem of many whom they commemorate as Saints, and utterly disallow of their Canonizing or Sainting of them: For many of them (I believe) never had any Being, but in the Fancy of these Saint-makers, who yet are commemorated, and prayed to as well as any others. Such are St. *Longinus*, under which name they have made a Man of the Spear which pierced our Saviour's Blessed Body.

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Body. St. *Almachius*, on *Jan.* 1. which only comes from the Corruption of *Almanack*; St. *Amphibalus*, who was only St. *Alban's* Cloak; St. *Ursula*, and her 11000 Virgins, of whom no Foot-steps can be found in true History. Many of them, I fear, it had been better that they had never been, as being notoriously vicious and scandalous in their Lives. And others, though more innocent, yet if we believe what is written in their Lives, were so prodigiously ridiculous, that a wise and religious man would be asham'd of such Company. To hear Men in an Extasie of Devotion to talk Nonsence, or to preach to Birds and Beasts, to run naked, to wander voluntarily in Desarts, *&c.* is more likely with sober men, to bring their Persons and Actions into Contempt and Scorn, than to affect them with any quick Sense of Religion; at best it will excite Men only to that extatical and enthusiastical kind of Devotion, which was in vogue among the Heathens, whose Priests were besides themselves, when they spake in the Name of their Gods; and their most celebrated Exercises of Religion were such kind of irrational Actions; but there is nothing of this at all countenanced under Christianity: For the Gospel would make us wise as well as devout; and it is not required that we put off the Man, but the Old Man and its Vices when we become Christians.

And though we are sensible of many among us that have been very exemplary for Vertue and Piety, and have no reason to doubt of their Salvation; but have as full Assurance of it, at least, as they have of their Saints; yet we are very shy of canonizing or sainting of them, because we know not Mens Hearts, nor dare we to presume to dispose so absolutely of Heaven as the Pope doth. We thank God for those that have lived and died well among us, and exhort our people to imitate all the Good which shewed it self in them; but

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But we know not to what purpose Canonization is. If it be only to recommend their Vertues to Example, the Canonization of them will signifie no more than the bare History of their good Lives faithfully recorded would do; but if it be in order to praying to them we utterly condemn it. And it is too plain, that this is the end of their being canonized: For from that time solemn Prayer and Invocation is allowed and offered up to them. And this I believe hath been an occasion of their falling from the Truth of Christian Doctrine as well as Practise: For they taking such a man to be a Saint, think themselves obliged to follow and vindicate whatever he either did or said, as holy and true, not considering that the best of meer Men have been guilty of Mistakes and Imperfections; and then much more may we suspect the Judgment and Understanding, the Vertue and Piety of many of those that fill up the bigger part of the *Romish* Kalendar.

And for the same reason we think there is not much Religion or Devotion expressed in the keeping up the Memory of such Saints, by so many Holydays observed among them.

If they commend their Holydays for the opportunities afforded in them of serving God in publick, we have such Conveniencies in many places every day.

If they commend them as days set apart to Rest and Idleness, we are not altogether of their mind; for we think we have as many as our Poor can well spare; and are sure that they have more Holydays than their Poor can afford to observe. So that their Holydays are no Advantage to any. The Rich need them not; because if they have Abilities, they may be idle and luxurious every day: But they are a great Evil and Burthen to the Poor, when they are forced to lose so many days from their Work, by which they should maintain themselves and their Families. And though the Popes, by reason of this Cry of the Poor, have been prevailed

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prevailed with to cut off many of those days of Idleness, yet still in most places the Number of them is intolerable.

Fourthly, As for Images, I should have thought it more proper to range them among the *Hinderances* of Devotion, did I not see the Men of *Rome* to plead earnestly for them, as *Helps* and *Assistances*, and to blame us for not using them, and paying no respect to them.

I confess my self not acute enough to discern how they can any ways advance Devotion: For their paying such Honour and Respect to them *as they do own* and acknowledge, must needs be a great Distraction, it diverting the Mind, and making Men spend their religious Reverence on that which is exposed to their View: but their paying such Worship to them as *they do pay, but are ashamed to own*, is flatly destructive to all true Devotion.

They indeed plead the Ignorance of the People for the necessity of Images, and call them the Books of the Unlearned: But they must *first* suppose their People insufferably ignorant to need such Helps as these are. And to give the Priests their due, if any Ignorance would suffice to justifie such a Practise, they take care to keep their People in Ignorance sufficient: And *then* if they are so ignorant that they cannot worship God without an Image, the Church cannot be secure, but these so silly People may worship the Image for God or Christ; or at least as having some extraordinary Vertue in it, and so make an Idol of it, especially when they see the Eyes and Hands of the Image to move, and see Miracles wrought by the Touch of it, as is frequently pretended and believed to be done: So that either there is no need of Images, or great danger in the use of them.

I confess, I am not of Mr. *Baxter*'s Mind, who thinks that they may be properly or safely used to excite Devotion; at least I must confess my self of a different tem-

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per from him. Methinks I repreſent God in greater Majeſty to my ſelf, when I conſider him in his Works of Creation and Providence, than to ſee him pictured, as in the Clouds, though with Thunder in his Hand. And my Saviour appears more lovely to my mind and thoughts when I conſider him as coming into the World and dying for us, than when I ſee him pictured and carved on a Crucifix. For it is more uſeful to ſee him with the Eye of Faith than of Senſe, and it is not the Proportion of his Body repreſented to my Eyes, but the Dignity of his Nature, the Love that he bore me, and the Paſſions of his Soul for me, that I admire moſt, and which no Pencil can draw.

Beſides, a Picture or Image tells me nothing but what I knew before; and it is by what I knew before that I can make ſenſe or any devout uſe of this Picture; for elſe I might take it for another profane and idle Story. And I would fain know whether the reading conſiderately the 26, and 27*th.* Chapters of S. *Matthew* will not affect any pious Heart much more than the ſeeing and contemplating a Picture. Certainly if this will affect the Senſe and bodily Paſſions, the other will more work on our Reaſon, and that will be to better purpoſe. Nay, the ſeeing of any Picture often will naturally make it *familiar*, and not at all affecting to us.

5. And if the ſeverity of the *Monks* to their Bodies is not any great Sign of *Devotion*, much leſs can the Auſterities uſed by the common People turn to any great Commendation of the Church. It is true, they are forced to keep Faſts, but it would make a Man laugh to read how their Caſuiſts have defined concerning the *modus*, the Meaſure and End of Faſting. *Eſcobar* hath reſolved it, "That no Drink breaks a Faſt, be it Wine "or Chocolat; and becauſe it is not wholeſom to drink "without eating, you may eat two Ounces of Bread:

" For that is but a quarter of a Meal; and if a man ſhould " chance to break his Vow of Faſting thus, he is not bound " to faſt another day for it, unleſs on a new Obligation: " And if all this be too hard, you may be diſpenſed with " for your whole Life, and that whether there be any juſt " cauſe for it or no. Nay, Servants, tho they eat ne- " ver ſo gluttonouſly of the Scraps, they break no Faſt. Indeed there need be no Rules ſet down concerning the Poor Peoples obſerving Faſting Days: They are kept low enough without them: And as for the Rich, their Faſting is Mock-faſting, to faſt to Luxury, with Wine, and Fiſh, and Sweet-meats. Is not this great Self-denial? If any therefore are ſtill truly mortified, when they can thus help it, I muſt rather commend their own Piety, and devout Temper, than the Rules and Orders of their Church, which give ſo much Liberty, that a man muſt have a very croſs-grain'd Appetite, or be in the higheſt degree ſenſual, not to be willing to comply with it. We find then no Fault with Faſting being enjoyn'd, and at ſet Seaſons: For we our ſelves commend and practiſe it; but let it not be to play tricks, but for true and real Mortification, and for the proper Ends of Mortification, to humble the Body to the Soul, and to bring the Mind to a better Temper; and to theſe ends is Faſting commanded by our Church; but not as if we looked on this or that kind of Meat to be unholy, or deſign'd to purchaſe Heaven by our Abſtinence, as the Church of *Rome* doth.

6. And as for their Pilgrimages, and Worſhip of Reliques, they muſt needs have leſs pretence to Religion: For their Faſts, and other Auſterities ſomewhat reſemble true Chriſtian Duties; but theſe have no Show that way. If Pilgrimage *be enjoyn'd for Penance*, then there is no Thanks due to the Perſon performing it.

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If it be *voluntary*, there is no true Devotion in it: For the Worth of it muſt conſiſt in ſome of theſe Reaſons, *viz.* either, Firſt, That *God* is more preſent, or Secondly, more propitious in one publick place of Worſhip than another: both which are contrary either to the Nature of God, or his Declaration in Scripture, when he ſays, *In every place a pure Offering ſhall be offered to him*, Mal. 1. 11. And *Where ever two or three are gathered togein Chriſts Name, he is in the midſt of them* Matt. 18.20. And the teaching otherwiſe is in ſome meaſure to revive *Judaiſm*, which allowed God, as to ſome caſes, to be ſerved acceptably only in one place; or Thirdly, That the *Saint* is more preſent or propitious here than any where elſe: But we are ſpeaking of Devotion to God, not to the Saint; or Fourthly, That it is their *puniſhing themſelves* that is ſo acceptable; but that hath been ſufficiently diſcarded already: Or, Fifthly, That going ſo far, and taking ſuch pains *is a Sign of their Love*: But a man may ſhew his Love to God, and to his Saint too by more proper Inſtances, and do more good by it, which God, to be ſure, will better accept, and the Saint, if he be a Saint, will like as well. And therefore the making ſuch account of Pilgrimages, ſeems rather to favour the *Mahometan*, than the *Chriſtian* Religion: For the going on Pilgrimage to *Mecca*, is one of the five indiſpenſable points of the Mahometan Superſtition.

And as for the *Veneration of Reliques*, all the World knows, what a Cheat is put on Men, in vending any old rotten Bone, or piece of Cloth, *&c.* for a Relique of this or that Saint: So that according to a moderate Computation, I ſuppoſe ſcarcely one in a hundred is true: And ſome have pleaded they need not be true. Now whatever Devotion is performed *to*, or *on occaſion* of theſe Reliques, can be commendable only in regard of the Mind and devout Temper of the Perſon; which I think

might as acceptably shew it self in any other proper time and place: And there is required a long *Series* of Consequences before the Sight of St. *Joseph*'s Axe, or any such other of their Reliques, can be pretended to raise a man's Devotion. But it being the chief Trade at *Rome* to sell feigned pieces of Antiquity, and other such worthless Trinkets at a high rate, I the less wonder, that they have such an Esteem for Reliques; for it is for their profit to keep up the Value of them, they being the principal Commodities of the place.

7. And the Belief which they have of the *Saints hearing them*, and their Practise of *praying to them*, is no proper Encouragement or Instance of true Devotion: For all *Devotion* is properly towards God; and therefore the making Addresses to any other cannot possibly have any direct Tendency to exalt our Devotion to him, but is really a great hindrance: For it takes mens Minds off from God, and sets them on his Creature: And the same time that is spent in Prayer to them, surely is better spent in praying to God, who is more present with us, hears us better, and loves us more. And Men's going to Saints when God is present, naturally tends to provoke God's *Jealousie*: For he declares himself *jealous* as to his Worship particularly, to set them up in Competition with God, and to create in Men an Opinion, that they are more easily entreated, and readier to do us a Kindness than he is. And therefore though Men may *fear* God more, yet they will rather love the Saint; and Love is the truest Motive to such Devotion, as will be best accepted with God. And yet in this plainly consists all that Court which they make to the Virgin *Mary*, that she would *pacifie the Anger* of God the Father, or of the Son towards Men; they are represented severe, and almost cruel, to render her more amiable to the people in her interceding for them: So they frequently in their

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their printed allowed Books of Devotion, call her *Fountain of Mercy, and Pity*, and other Names of the like Importance. Now all the assurance they have of her being so tender and compassionate, is only because she is a Woman; but they are assured of God's Mercy, both from his Nature and his Word: They have no Assurance that she, or any other Saint hears them; nor can they shew how the Saint can be rationally supposed to know every thing that we do or say; but they are well assured that God hears them: For he is stiled *The God that heareth Prayer*; which Prerogative of his, by every Prayer to a *Saint*, they may at least suspect that they intrench on. They are not assured that the Saint can help them; but they may be fully satisfied of his Help, who is Almighty. They have no Encouragement from Scripture for praying to Saints: For though the Angels rejoyce at the *Repentance of a Sinner*, it doth not follow that therefore every concern of Men is known, or Prayer heard by them; much less that we may pray to them for the Gift of Repentance, or any other Grace. And Prayer being so considerable a part of Divine Worship, we need not doubt but the Angels and Saints would refuse it: For so St. *John* was rebuked for offering to worship the Angel, though supposed immediately and visibly with him, *Worship God*, Rev. 19. 20.

So that if they prayed to Saints and Angels only to *mediate and intercede* for them to God, it is more than they have any Warrant or Allowance for. Christ being always represented as the Mediator between God and man; and the setting up his Servants in his Office, is as far as is possible a deposing of him. Nor is it in this case, as it is in Courts on Earth (which is their common Excuse) where a Favourite is made use of to represent our Cause and our Request to the King: For this is done because our Kings do not know our Persons, nor understand our Case,

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nor can they be present in all places, and hear all Causes themselves: So that it is often necessary that Princes should employ and trust other than their own Eyes and Ears. Many things they think below them to enquire particularly into; and sometimes they will do that at the Request of a Favorite, which they would not do for the sake of a Person that is not particularly known to them. But there is no Room nor Occasion for this in the Court of Heaven: For God is not only intimately known, but is immediately present to all his Creatures; as he hath declar'd himself no Respecter of Persons, but to love all, and therefore there is no need of any Intercessor for us, except the Lord Jesus; he affects not empty Pomp and State; but his Providence extends to every particular Concern of the meanest of all his Creatures; and though he may give some undeserved Favours, as longer Lives, and further Opportunities of Amendment, *&c.* for the sake of others Prayers, yet no Man is so far his Favourite, as to be able to perswade him to reverse his own Laws, and to save a wicked Person that continues in his Wickedness. On all which Accounts there is no Occasion of praying to the Saints so much as to *intercede* for us, as the Church of *Rome* pretends. But to pray to them to *bless us*, and *give us* this or that Temporal or Spiritual Good, as they of the Church of *Rome* practise, and to suppose them to have Power to help us in this or that particular Difficulty and Distemper is plainly intollerable: For this is in a great measure to revive Heathenism, by which Men worshipped this or that God for this or that particular Case. They must grant the Saint to have, though not an Original, yet a most certain and derivative Power, according to which he will not fail to assist them that worship him; and in all such Prayer, methinks they even terminate their Worship on the Saint: For if I pray to a Saint to help me in this or

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or that Difficulty, with a full aſſurance that this Saint hath ſufficient Power to help me, though I ſhould grant that this Saint received this Power from God, yet my Prayers terminate on the Saint. Indeed the Saint is obliged to God for that Power; but I ſeem to own my ſelf only obliged to the Saint, for his applying this his general Power to my particular Caſe: Juſt as I am obliged to a man for giving me an Eſtate, though he is beholden to the Government and Laws, that either he enjoyed that Eſtate himſelf, or was empowered to give it to another.

Beſides that they often pray to Saints for ſuch things, which, if they be only Creatures, they can have no power to give, or to be even ſo much as the Inſtruments of conveying to us; and yet it is notorious, they pray ſometimes to the Saints for *Grace*, for *Pardon of Sins*, and *ſtrength* againſt them. So in *Bonaventure's Pſalter*, tranſlated into *Italian*, and publiſhed for the uſe of the people, tho the Tranſlator and Publiſher ſays, that he had purged it from the Blaſphemies which were in the former Editions; yet we find ſuch paſſages as theſe to the Virgin *Mary*, Pſal. 7. *Come to her all ye that are heavy laden, and ſhe ſhall give Reſt and Refreſhment to your Souls.* Pſal. 40. *Cleanſe my Heart.* Pſal. 41. *Thou art the beginning and the end of my Salvation.* Pſal. 44. *By thy Holineſs my ſins are purged, and by thy Integrity, Incorruptibility is given to me.* Pſal. 104. *Eternal Salvation is in thy Hand, O Lady, and he that worthily honoureth thee ſhall obtain it*; and many more Sayings of this nature, or worſe, if poſſible. Now can any man ſay, that ſuch Prayers as theſe are fit to be offered up to a Creature, or that they are Inſtances of the Devotion of a Chriſtian, when they are ſo offered? I am ſure that we charge the Heathen with giving Di-

Salmi di S. Bonav. in Lode della Virgine, per Giovan. Battiſta Pinello. In Genoa, Anno 1606.

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vine Worſhip to *Men*, though we can hardly find any Expreſſions or Prayers to their Gods, which are ſo high, and argue their terminating their Worſhip on them ſo fully as theſe, and other ſuch, which are commonly uſed by thoſe of the *Church* of *Rome* to Saints, and eſpecially to the Virgin *Mary*.

8. And whatever they pretend, the conſtant Trade which they make of *Confeſſions and Penances*, and their Doctrine concerning them, is ſo far from encouraging Devotion, that it is enough to remove all true Devotion out of the World, if the Providence of God did not miraculouſly interpoſe.

For though they be very conſtant in their Confeſſions of all their Sins to a Prieſt, yet the frequency of it in themſelves and others, makes them not ſo much as aſhamed of themſelves; and though they may be more afraid of angring their Prieſts, yet they have no reaſon to abhor themſelves, or their Sins in the Sight of God any more for it.

And when they have thus confeſſed, their Confeſſor may enjoyn what Penance he pleaſeth, or elſe may leave it to the Penitent's own Choice, as *Eſcobar* from *Suarez* affirms; and men are not uſed to be very cruel to their own Bodies, or lay a very ſevere Penance on themſelves, when a lighter will ſerve: Or elſe the Confeſſor may ſay thus, "I impoſe on thee for Penance whatever good "thing thou haſt done, or ſhalt do this Day, or this "Week, or whatever Evil thou haſt, or ſhalt ſuffer. And Cardinal *Tolet* is of the ſame mind too. Now will not this make a man mightily afraid of ſinning any more, when his ordinary courſe of Converſation, and the unavoidable Caſualties of Life ſhall be turned into a ſufficient Penance, Satisfaction, and Puniſhment for his Sin? And if the Confeſſor enjoyn no Penance at all, indeed he is to blame, ſays *Eſcobar*; but ſtill it is a Sacrament for

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for all that, because a satisfactory penance is not an *essential* part of the Sacrament, but an *Integral.*

But if after all this the Confessor will impose a Penance, the Penitent may perform what he will of it: For, says *Tolet*, if he doth not perform his Penance, his Absolution stands good, only when he comes to Confession next, he must confess that he did not perform his penance, and so his Non-performance of penance will pass away in the Crowd of his other Sins, and there is an end of it. And if this please them not, there is an easier way still, if need be: For you may get another man to do your penance for you. Is not this a fine easie way to Heaven, when the fasting and starving of the Poor may be made to serve for a satisfaction for the Sins and Debauchery of the Rich? Indeed *Escobar* from *Suarez*, says, There ought to be a *just Cause* for one's performing penance for another: But here the other Distinction will help them, *non ad valorem, sed ad justitiam requiritur causa*, the penance is valid, though there be no just Cause. And whether there be a *Cause* or no, it is not doubted, says *Escobar*, but one may perform the penance for another, if the *Confessor will give leave:* And it is to be hoped there are some good natur'd Confessors to be found: But good Cardinal * *Tolet* is more free and generous than *Escobar* himself in this point: For he tells the Confessor, *That he must impose a lighter Penance, if he sees the Penitent will not perform a harder,* without ever telling the Penitent, that this *lighter* will not serve his turn, or without ever putting him in mind of his Danger, or of the necessity of a *harder* penance; and wholly commits it to the prudence of one Priest to diminish the penance which another had imposed, without so much as once telling him, that perhaps this penance will not suffice. So that in plain terms, by Consequence, he resolves it all into the power of the Priest; and neither

* Tolet Instruct. Sacerd. Lib. 3. c. 11.

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ther Confeſſor nor Penitent are any further accountable that I perceive, if too ſlight a penance be enjoyned, the Sin is pardoned notwithſtanding. And laſtly, he goes on, and ſhews, that though the Penitent be enjoyned to perform his penance in his own perſon, yet he may transfer this to another, *without his Confeſſor's leave*; and yet he ſhall obtain the *ſatisfactory* part of penance, though not the *meritorious*, that is, he *ſhall be excus'd from ſuffering* evil; but ſhall not *merit* much at God's Hands by ſuch penance. And indeed I think he is very unreaſonable if he expect more: And beſides all this, the deſign of all penance being only to ſatisfie the Debt of Temporal puniſhment due to their Sins, there are ſeveral eaſie ways provided by their Church for the diſcharge of it, beſides the ſevere penance, as *e. g.* ſeveral ſhort Prayers, to the ſaying of which ſome ſcores of thouſands of years pardon are annexed, *toties quoties*; there are large Indulgences granted at *Jubilees*, and at ſeveral other good Times; and may at any time be had for a good Sum of Money; And if a man take no Care of himſelf all his Life, yet if he can purchaſe Prayers to be ſaid for him after his death, it will ſerve as well. And though the Penance be never ſo eaſie, and be performed as triflingly, yet the Abſolution, by which they ſuppoſe the Debt of eternal puniſhment is diſcharged, muſt be as compleat and full as poſſible: For ſo the afore-named Cardinal, with a great deal of Concern, takes Care that the Abſolution be not pronounced *conditionally*, as *e. g.* on condition that you *amend your Life*, or *perform your penance*, &c. but it muſt be pronounced abſolutely, without any *if* or *and*, thus, *I abſolve thee*, &c.

Now would not any one think, that the Church of *Rome*, by this Method of Confeſſions and Penances ſo taught and practiſed among them, rather deſigns to find out the Temper and Inclinations of people, and to dive into

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into the Councils of great Men, or to anſwer ſome other ſuch politick End, than to advance piety towards God, or Amendment of Life in the Penitent? I am ſure they can have no hearty reſpect for *Devotion*, when they are taught to look on their Prayers to God, as a ſevere Penance; and yet which they may be releaſed from by winning a Game at Cards, as is too commonly known.

9. And their Doctrine concerning the *Merit of good Works* and *Supererogation*, as it is falſe, ſo we cannot look on it as any Encouragement to Devotion; for God will not be ſerved with a Lye.

I confeſs, if what is required of Men in their *Confeſſion* and *Penances* be enough to ſave their Souls, they may very eaſily do more than is required: For they cannot do leſs, if they do any thing, though indeed one would wonder, that any that conſider the Nature of the Goſpel, or the Words of our Saviour, ſhould ever pretend to ſupererogate.

But ſuppoſing their Doctrine to be true in theſe points, they cannot be thought to advance Devotion, but rather hinder it: For ſeeing it is ſomewhat natural for a Man to love his own Eaſe, every one will be apt to argue with himſelf, that ſo many have *merited* already, that there is no need of what he can do. Nay, it is Folly for him to attempt it: For what need he endeavour to add to a Stock of Merit, which is already infinite, as ſome have thought?

And indeed it had need be infinite, elſe it is to be feared, it is almoſt, if not quite ſpent, eſpecially conſidering the vaſt Expence of theſe Merits in frequent *Jubilees*, and other Indulgences, the Multitude of Sinners, and the little extraordinary Vertue and Piety found among them at this day, to add to their Store: So that methinks it may juſtly be queſtion'd whether they are not bankrupt

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before now, their Disburſement ſo much exceeding their Receipts; and the Credit of their Bank ſeems to depend wholly on their *Old ſtock* of Merit which the Ancients laid up for them; and yet they grant that this was rather caſual, than out of Deſign or good Nature: For the Saints deſign'd only to make ſure of doing enough for themſelves; and it ſeems that leſs ſerved their turns than they thought of, and the reſt was laid by for the uſe of ſuch rich Sinners as the Church would ſell it to. So that all this Stock of Merit, which the Church of *Rome* hath ſo great occaſion for, and of which there is made ſo prodigious an Expence, is at the beſt but a Chance and ſpare-heap, which they cannot tell how they came by (for every Biſhop hath the ſame Title to ſuch *Treaſure-trove* that the Biſhop of *Rome* hath,) nay, they have reaſon to fear there was never any ſuch Treaſure: (For I doubt not but the Saints in Heaven will thankfully own, that they have received more from God than they deſerved, or could challenge:) to be ſure, they knew not how much there was ever laid up, nor whether the Stock be ſpent; and yet they ſpend as freely now, as if they had been only laying up till this time, and that the Treaſure were now firſt opened.

Many other ſuch Abſurdities and unanſwerable Difficulties there are in their Doctrine of *Merit*, and in their practiſe of applying theſe *Merits* to the uſe of others. And is it not a diſmal thing, that the Prieſts of the Church of *Rome* ſhould teach men to truſt in, and as to Salvation, depend aſſuredly on theſe, of which they themſelves have no manner of Aſſurance nor Ground to hope. Is not this to play with Men's Souls and Eternal Salvation? And eſpecially can this be urged as an Encouragement of Devotion, when, if it were as true as it is falſe, it tends directly to make Men vicious, and to neglect *Devotion*: For ſo a Man will think if there be ſuch a Stock

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Stock in the Church, why ſhould not he have a Share of it as well as another? And if one can merit for another, why ſhould not he depend on others, as well as, they on his *Merits?* And ſeeing Merits may be bought as the *Roman* Caſuiſts have adjudged, he may think it very reaſonable that other's Merits ſhould be given him in exchange for his Money. So the Reſult of all is this, according to this Doctrine, and the ſuppoſed *Church-ſtock*, only one thing is needful, and that is *Money*; and this will *fully make* up all lack of *Piety* and *Devotion*.

10. And the belief of *Purgatory*, and of the validity of *Prayers for the dead*, is no proper Encouragement of *true Devotion*: For *true Devotion* is ſuch as we perform to God, agreeably to his Will, when we know what we do, and for what ends, and have a promiſe or hope of Succeſs; but when a man prays to God to deliver a Soul out of *Purgatory*, he muſt ſuppoſe as true ſeveral things, which are either falſe, or at leaſt very uncertain; ſo that he can never pray in *Faith*, or without great perplexity and diſtraction of mind; for he knows not whether there be any ſuch place or ſtate as *Purgatory*: For Scripture ſays nothing of it, nor the Fathers of the three or four firſt Centuries. He knows not whether the Soul that he prays for be in *Purgatory* (if there ſhould be ſuch a place) for it may be in Heaven or in Hell, for ought he can tell. And if the Soul be in *Purgatory*, he knows not whether it be Uſeful or Lawful to pray for it; for God hath given us neither Command, nor Encouragement, nor Liberty ſo to do, Nay, there are ſeveral particulars which they themſelves cannot agree on concerning *Purgatory*, *viz.* What Sins are promiſed there? How the Soul without its Body can be tormented there with a material Fire? Who are Gods Inſtruments in puniſhing the Souls there? For the Devils are not; and how the *Pope* by his Indulgences can apply the Satisfactions.

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ctions of Christ and of the Saints so as to deliver any Soul out of *Purgatory*? And if there be such a place, the Pope himself by his Example doth enough to dishearten all Men from endeavouring to deliver the Souls of their Friends from thence: For it is not doubted but he can deliver all out of *Purgatory*, he having the Command of the Treasure of the Church. And it must needs be a wonderful Discouragement to a Devout Mind, that among so many hundred Popes, there should not be one found so Charitable as to release so many thousands of poor Souls that lye under intolerable pains, and so must lye till the last day, or till the debt of their temporal punishment be paid. If the *P*ope can do so much with so little Charge or Trouble to himself, and yet will not do it, surely I have less Reason to do any thing.

Nor doth it follow, that because it is a part of acceptable *Devotion*, for one Man to pray for another, whilst living here on Earth; that therefore it is as pleasing to God, for us to pray for Souls departed: For our Prayers for others on Earth, are either for Temporal Blessings, or for the *means of Grace*. We pretend not to desire God to reverse his own Laws, and save such a Man, let him be as bad as he will; but to make him *Holy* first, and then to make him *Happy*: And to Pray any otherwise for another Man, naturally tends to represent it as feasible to reconcile a wicked Life with the hopes of Heaven; but when a Man is dead he can Work no more, nor make any use of the *means of Grace*, and therefore there is no room for this Prayer to God for him, he is not capable of *Repentance, and Glory, and Amendment*, and of being made fit for Heaven.

Lastly, If they boast of the *validity of the Orders* of their Bishops and Priests, as an Encouragement to Devotion, the validity of the Sacraments dependnig so much

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much on the Legality of the Miniſtry; We anſwer that we have a Clergy as properly and truly of Chriſt's ſending as any Church in the World; againſt whoſe Ordination and Miſſion nothing can be objected: We deriving the Succeſſion of our Biſhops, not only from their own *Auſtin*, but from the *Britiſh* Biſhops before his time, which is the only Regular way of Miſſion, that we know of, except that of an extraordinary Commiſſion from Heav'n as St. *Paul* had. And I would not that there were that to be objected againſt us, that is juſtly objected againſt them, as to the Succeſſion of their Popes even ſince the Reformation began. For the Election of *Sixtus* V. was moſt notoriouſly Simoniacal, and yet one that comes by Simony into the Popedom, is by their own Canon Law, by the Bull or Conſtitution of *Julius* II. approved in the Council of *Lateran*, *An.* 1513. *to be looked on as a Magician, Heathen, Publican, and Arch-Heretick, and his Election can never be made valid by any after Act*, and yet ſeveral of the Popes ſince, were either made Cardinals by this *Sixtus* V. or received that Dignity from thoſe that received it from him; which is the very Caſe of this preſent Pope *Innocent Eleventh*.

Septimi Decretal. Lib. 1. Tit. 3.

As for their *Unity*, it is plain that they have more diviſions among themſelves, then they can charge us with. For they have not only ſuch as openly diſſent and ſeparate from them, but great and violent diſſentions among their own Members, and ſuch as live in the Communion of their Church, one againſt another, and each party pleads the Doctrine of the Church, and Deciſions of its Councils. And yet the Pope himſelf, notwithſtanding his Infallibility and Authority, either cannot or dare not determine which is in the Right, or which Opinion is True.

So

So that whatever *Power and Authority* their Church hath, it hath no good effect to ſuch ends and purpoſes, to which Church-Power is deſigned to ſerve, the encouragement of Holineſs and Vertue, and the diſcountenancing of Vice, the Preſervation of the Doctrine in Purity, and of the Members at peace one with another. It is true they are more able to ſee the Laws of their Church Duly executed; but it is to their diſparagement to have ſo much Power, and yet to do ſo little good with it. As for us, we had rather deſerve more then we have, then that it ſhould be ſaid that we have more power then we deſerve. And whatever Power our Church wants, and whatever loſs Religion ſuffers by this means, we juſtly Charge the Church of *Rome* with the guilt of it, who have made all Princes jealous, and affraid of all Church-Power, by their invading their temporal Rights under pretence of a Spiritual Jurisdiction.

In ſhort, though ſomewhat may be ſaid for the worſt thing, and a very bad Cauſe may have a great deal pleaded in its Vindication, as we have ſeen in all the foregoing Helps and Inſtances of Devotion, which the Church of *Rome* boaſts of; yet if we conſider them, they all in ſome reſpect or other come ſhort of what they pretend to; ſeveral of them being very improper, many plainly Nonſenſical and Ridiculous; they proceed from bad *P*rinciples, are done in an undue Manner and Meaſure, or to ſerve ſome bad end or deſign, or ſome ſuch other way offend; even the moſt ſecure Practices, which moſt reſemble true Self-denial, are countenanced or enjoyned rather to make a ſhow, or to gratifie ſome Tempers, then to advance Devotion; for exceſſes and overactings are often Infirmities, and the effects of Weakneſs; ſteddineſs being the moſt certain ſign of Strength, as the ſhaking *P*alſy is a Diſeaſe and Sign of Weakneſs, as well as the *Dead one.*

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3. I now come to consider such things in the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *Rome*, as tend directly to promote Debauchery of Manners, and Carelessness in Devotion.

I'll insist only on these few, among very many.

First, The unlimited Power which they ascribe to the Church, or to the Pope as Head or Monarch of it: For the People are taught that he can make null Duties that were made necessary by God, and make necessary what was not so before. The Consequence of which Doctrine is plainly this, that a Man may safely disobey and neglect the serving of God, if he pay but his due respects to the *Pope*. And yet their Casuists have defined that the Pope can dispense with Sins, or give leave to do things forbidden by the law of God, as well as pardon them when committed, as in the Dispensations with *unlawful Marriages*. And on the other side he can excuse them from doing what they are by their Duty to God bound to do, as in his Dispensations with *Vows* though made never so solemnly to God himself. That is, he can bind where God hath left us loose, and he can loose where God has bound us. Nay, a Superiour can give a *Dispensation* even when he doubteth whether it be lawful or no; *because in a doubtful case the milder side is to be taken.* And if the Reason ceaseth for which the Dispensation was given, yet the Dispensation doth not cease: Nay, a Dispensation may be granted where there is no Reason or Cause for it; and yet the Dispensation is valid notwithstanding. And not the Pope only, but every Bishop and Priest hath his Share of this Power, only there are some *reserved* and more profitable *Cases*, which *his Holiness* only can dispense in. And though I cannot tell what they *think*, yet I am sure their Casuists are very shy of *saying*, that there is any Case in which

there may not be a *Diſpenſation* granted for the doing of it, or a Pardon for it when it is done.

And all Indulgencies are directly deſigned to hinder Devotion, for they are given to free Men from the Neceſſity of *Mortification*, *frequent Alms and Prayers*, &c. which elſe would have been enjoyned as Penance; and yet we know that theſe are the chiefeſt parts of Devotion.

And as their general Doctrine concerning the validity of Pardons and Indulgencies is very deſtructive of all true Piety and Religion: So,

Secondly, Their conſtant Practice of giving *Abſolution before Penance*, is in a more eſpecial manner influential to that purpoſe. For the People are taught to believe, that by the Prieſts ſaying, *I abſolve thee*, &c. the Sin is actually pardoned by God: And though indeed their Guides of Confeſſors adviſe that Abſolution ſhould not be given till Penance be impoſed and accepted; yet when the Confeſſor thinks that the Penitent will accept of the Penance, he may abſolve him firſt: That is, the Perſon may be abſolved before he accept the Penance, or even promiſe to perform it; but it is their conſtant Method to abſolve him before Penance be actually perform'd.

Now if their Abſolution be of force, the Perſon is free from his Sin, and ſure enough of Heaven, whether he perform any Penance or no: Which Practice gives all imaginable Encouragement and Licenſe to Sin; the fear of Penance being the only reſtraint from Sin which they pretend to; but if the Sin be fully pardoned before Penance be accepted or performed: I ſee not why a man ſhould trouble himſelf much for the performance of his Penance; he ſees plainly that it is only an Appendix that is uſed to be annext to Abſolution, but is neither neceſſary in it ſelf nor for Abſolution; the Sin is

pardon'd

pardon'd already, and at the worſt there is only ſome temporal Puniſhment to be ſatisfied for, which he may get rid of ſeveral other ways.

Nay indeed the true and ancient Notion of Penance is utterly deſtroyed, by its being impoſed and performed after Abſolution. For Penance according to the Primitive uſe of it, was a ſevere courſe of Life preſcribed to a Perſon that had grievioufly offended, as a proper Method for him, at the ſame time to teſtifie his own ſorrow for his Sin, and abhorrence of it, and to create in him an Averſation to the Like for the time to come; and alſo to ſatisfie the Church of all this, that ſo he might be admitted to Abſolution and the Communion: And therefore their Penances were always publick, and indeed it is by publick Penance only that all theſe ſo good ends can poſſibly be anſwered: But now in the Church of *Rome*, the Offender is pardoned without any thing of this, he is not put to any grief for his Sin before he be abſolved. It is left wholly to his own Honeſty and Generoſity whether he will perform *any Penance* for his Sin. Nay indeed ſo loath are they to appear ſevere againſt Sin, or Cruel to the Sinner; that when in the Council of *Trent* ſome would have revived this Diſcipline, by enacting *publick Penance*, they were violently oppoſed and over-ruled; tho St. *Gregory* a Pope of *Rome* had held it to be *of Divine Right*: and their Caſuiſts ſince teach that a Confeſſor cannot, or ought not to enjoyn a *publick Penance*: So that by this means a Man is not ſo much as to be put to the bluſh for his Sins; for no ſuch Penance muſt be impoſed by which the Sin may be known, and he is ſure that the Confeſſor to ſave a Kingdom dare not reveal or diſcover it.

Thirdly, Their Doctrine concerning the *Nature of ſeveral Sins*, is ſuch as muſt needs rather incourage Men to con-

tinue in Sin, than deliver us from it; and will ſpoil all true Devotion to God, and that due regard that we ought to have to his Commandments.

Eſcobar Tract. 2. Exam. 1. cap. 4.

They tell us there is a vaſt number of Sins in their own Nature *Venial*, which are ſo very inconſiderable that an infinite number of them altogether will not deprive a man of the Grace and Favour of God, or make up one Mortal Sin, and for the Pardon of which there is no need or occaſion for the Mercy of God: And yet they have no certain Rules to diſcover whether a Sin be *Mortal* or *Venial*, ſo that men are in wonderful danger of being cheated in a matter of ſo great Moment as their Eternal Salvation.

Eſcobar Tract. 2. Exam. 1. cap. 2.

They tell us alſo, that an *Habitual Sin*, is only a Stain left by former voluntary Sins, and a Deprivation of habitual Goodneſs; but hath nothing elſe that is evil in it. From which Doctrine it neceſſarily follows that a man is guilty only of thoſe Sins which created this *Habit*, and that there is not an habitual Repentance, or Courſe of Life required to get pardon for habitual Sins; but a few or perhaps one ſingle Act of Contrition will ſerve. So that the more a Man ſinneth the better he may, and it is a piece of true Prudence to get an Habit of all Sin betimes; for a Man is accountable only for thoſe Sins which preceded the Habit; all the Sins which follow it will paſs under the name of *Inadvertencies*, and as ſuch can be eſteemed only as a kind of *Venial* Sins.

And they not only allow the Church Power to command what doth not belong to her in many Caſes; but give ſuch Authority to her Commands, as to make the Diſobedience to them the greateſt of all Sins, and make way for the breaking of the Laws of God, that they may keep thoſe of the Church. So *Marriage* hath been adjudged a greater Sin in a Prieſt than *Fornication*, becauſe the

the Prieſts are oblig'd to *Celibacy* by the Laws of the Church, and their own Vow; as if they were not by the Laws of God, and their Vow of Baptiſm more obliged to abſtain from *Fornication*; and accordingly for *Marriage*, a Prieſt is excommunicated or depoſed; but for *Fornication*, he is only obliged to confeſs it ſecretly among his other Sins; and the Guilt and Irregularity of it is done away by Abſolution. Indeed they bring almoſt all Sins under the Head of *Diſcipline*, not only by pretending to give Pardon and Diſpenſations for moſt Sins that can be committed; but alſo when they compare Sins, they are always moſt earneſt againſt ſuch as tranſgreſs the Commands of the Church. So *v.g.* when *Eſcobar* asks the Queſtion, *What if I communicate unworthily at* Eaſter? He anſwers, *That by ſo doing, I fulfil the Command of the Church, which is what I am immediately bound to*: And paſſeth over the Duty of Self-examination and Preparation ſo ſtrictly enjoyned by St. *Paul*, as not worthy to be conſidered: And ſo in innumerable other Caſes; by which means indeed they create a great Veneration for the Church, or for that which they call the Church; but thereby make the Commands of God of none effect.

Fourthly, Their very Doctrine concerning their Prayers and Devotions, and their Practiſe conſequent on it, is ſuch as is altogether inconſiſtent with the Nature of true Devotion: For, according to the Church of *Rome*, the outward Act will ſuffice in many Caſes, though nothing of the Mind go along with it; particularly as to Prayers *Eſcobar* from *Coninch* and *Durandus* affirms, that neither an actual, nor vertual Attention is required when a man *prayeth*; and they give an excellent Reaſon for what they ſay, *viz. Becauſe the Church hath no Power in hidden Caſes, but only in the Caſe of Auricular Confeſſion*: As if in Prayer only the power of the Church, and Obedience

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dience to its Commands were to be regarded: And he confirmeth his Aſſertion with this other moſt cogent Compariſon, That an outward Act of Devotion, or Prayer only with the Mouth, is a true Act of Prayer, tho without the Intention, as an outward Act of Adoration of an Idol, though without the Intention, is a true Act of Idolatry. So that for a man to mind what he doth when he is at Prayers, or to be earneſt in his Deſires of that which he prayeth for, though it may poſſibly be a Commendation, and Accompliſhment, yet it is not neceſſary either to the pleaſing of God, or ſatisfying of his Duty according to the Church of *Rome*. Nay, it is a praiſe for a man to *draw nigh with the Mouth, and honour him with the Lips, though the Heart be far from God*, notwithſtanding that our Saviour, after the Prophet *Iſaiah* blamed the *Jews* for ſo doing. Indeed ſuch a kind of ſuperficial Chriſtians will this Doctrine make, that a *Phariſee* would have been an excellent Man, if he had lived in theſe days.

And purſuant to this Doctrine of the No neceſſity of Attention at Prayers, they take care that the people ſhall not be able to attend to what is done; and therefore provide that the *publick Prayers* and the *Scripture* it ſelf ſhall be only in a *Language unknown* to the people, and are ſo deſperately fond of this Device of keeping the people ignorant of what is prayed for, that their Caſuiſts have defined, that a Man may ſay his *Office* privately in other Languages beſides the *Latin*, as in *Hebrew*, or *Greek*, but not in the Vulgar Language; at the ſame time keeping the people in Ignorance, and diſcouraging them in their Devotions, and exerciſing their Authority over them in the moſt dangerous manner that can be.

6. Their aſcribing ſpiritual Effects to ſeveral things which are purely of their own Invention, is much to the Diſcouragement of true Devotion towards God. And yet

yet they have very many things of this Nature: As *Holy Water*, by the being ſprinkled with which, they believe the Devil ſhall have leſs power over them: *Agnus Dei's*, *Swords* and *Medals* which they wear to preſerve them from Dangers; which being conſecrated according to the Rules of their Church, have through the Devotion of the Perſons, and the power of the Church, a wonderful good effect, though indeed God never promiſed any ſuch thing.

To this Head I may refer alſo, their *Roſary*, which is nothing elſe but an odd Combination of *Pater-noſter's* and *Ave Mary's*. Several *ſhort Prayers* to the ſaying of which thouſands of years of pardon of Sins are annext: Their carrying the Image of St. *Genoveſa* in Proceſſion at *Paris*, and other Images in other Places to obtain Rain, *&c.* and innumerable other ſuch like Practices, on which Men are taught to relie, and to expect great good by, though they have neither any natural force or efficacy that way; nor any aſſurance from God that ſuch effects ſhall follow. Nay even the *Sacraments* themſelves according to the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* are only ſuch a kind of *Charms*; for they are ſuppoſed to work effectually on the Perſon, without any Devotion or Vertuous Diſpoſition being required of him in order to it.

Now whatever effect they promiſe above what the natural efficacy of the thing is apt and able to produce, they muſt have expreſs Authority from God, or elſe they ſadly delude and cheat thoſe poor Souls that depend upon them. And at the beſt they are ſuppoſed only a ſhorter cut to Heaven, an eaſier way of pleaſing God and getting his Bleſſing, and are invented only to eaſe a Man of the fatigue and trouble of the common and ordinary rode of ſerving *him* by a conſtancy and regularity of Devotions.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Their Manuals and Books of Devotion which they give their People to read, inſtead of the Scripture which they forbid to be uſed, though they may deſign them as *Helps*, yet I muſt range them among the *Hindrances* of *Devotion.*

For the beſt of them are ſo full of Tautologies and vain Repetitions, that they muſt needs come under the Cenſure of our bleſſed Saviour, *Matt.* 6. though they uſe his own holy Name. For ſo in the *Jeſus Pſalter*, at the end of the *Manual of Prayers and Litanies Printed at* Paris *in Engliſh*, An. 1682. in a Litany of fifteen Petitions, the Name *Jeſu* is repeated over above 130 times. And in the ſame Book, in the *Litany of the bleſſed Virgin*, they pray to her by 40 ſeveral Names, being only ſo many diſtinct praiſes of her. And the like is obſervable in all their Books of Devotion which I ever ſaw. Now their ſaying the ſame thing ſo often over, is not contrived to help and aſſiſt Attention, or prevent Diſtraction, or as a Repetition of what is more then ordinarily important, or for any other good and prudent Reaſon, but out of pure Vanity and Oſtentation, or as it were even to flatter our bleſſed Saviour or the Saint which they pray to.

But moſt of the Books and Legends which they put into the hands of their People to excite their Devotion, and by which the People take an eſtimate of the Chriſtian Religion, are ſuch wretched plain Forgeries, and ſo pitifully contrived Fables, as can never be believed by Men of Senſe, and if they could be believed, are proper indeed to make Men Mad and Enthuſiaſtical; but not to advance true Devotion; and he that reads only ſuch Books is qualified indeed to tell Stories and to believe Lies, but no ſerious truth will ſtick to him or be valued by him. So that ſuch Books as theſe are ſo far from doing good, that they do much harm to Religion

ligion; for they Imprint a wrong Notion of Religion on Mens Minds; would make a Man believe that God is like a Child pleaſed with Trifles, that Religion and the Method of our Salvation is only a Charm and Trick, which the Prieſts have gotten the receit of; but that there is nothing in Chriſtianity fit to make a man wiſe and manly in his Worſhip of God, or in the management of himſelf and practice of Devotion. Nay the Stories which are told in the Lives of their Saints, and believed by the Common People, are enough even to deprave the natural Sentiments of Mankind concerning God and Religion, ſo that perhaps it were much better to leave Men to the natural effluxes of their own minds, than to pretend to aſſiſt them with ſuch Helps as theſe. That a little *Water* or a *conſecrated Bell* ſhould ſcare the Devil, or St. *Francis*'s rope charm and bind him, would make a Man have little fear of ſuch an Enemy, or a prodigious Veneration for ſuch a Saint; but how it ſhould render a Man more piouſly affected toward God, more relying on his Providence, or more Religiouſly Careful over himſelf, I ſee not: And theſe Stories though ſo apparently falſe, yet being affirm'd with ſuch Confidence, ſtrike at the very Foundation of our Religion; For it is apt to make Men believe that Chriſtianity it ſelf was at firſt propagated among a ſad dull ſtupid and credulous Generation of Men; (when as really it firſt appeared in an Age as ſharp-ſighted, as any Age before or ſince, which is much for its Vindication.) It would tempt a Man to deſpiſe a Religion in which ſuch Men are *Saints*, and ſuch Practiſes commended; And will ſet Chriſtianity but on the ſame level with modern *Judaiſm* and *Mahometaniſm*; For the *Jews* have juſt as much to ſay for their *Cabbala*, and the *Turks* for their incredible *Fables*; for they are reported on the ſame Credit, are juſt ſo credible in themſelves, and

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juſt as edifying of the People that attend to them: The Miracles which they relate being often Juſt ſo uſeful, as that pretended to be wrought in the Temple of *Apollo*; when a Man coming out of the Temple, it was obſerved that his body did not caſt any ſhadow; by which thing however ſtrange in it ſelf, the Man was not much the better, nor the World wiſer.

But many of their Books of Devotion are worſe than ridiculous; for there are frequently ſuch paſſages and prayers as I cannot tell how to vindicate from *Blaſphemy* and *Idolatry*. *Saint Bonaventure's Pſalter* both in *Latin*, and *Italian* I mentioned before, in which there are I believe a thouſand ſuch Prayers to her, or Expreſſions concerning her, which I confeſs I could not with a ſafe Conſcience ſay of any Creature. And *Albertus Magnus* the Maſter of St *Thomas Aquinas* hath not only 12 Books of the Praiſes of the *Virgin Mary*, but alſo a diſtinct Book called *Biblia Mariana*; in which he applies ſeveral places of Scripture to the *Virgin Mary*; as if ſhe were prefigured in ſeveral paſſages of the Old Teſtament as well as her Son: So *Gen.* 1. 1. *that ſhe was that Heaven that God made.* Gen. 1. 3. *She was the Light which God there made*; and ſo on through almoſt the whole Scripture: And however Cautious they are in the Books which they Print in Engliſh for the uſe of their Converts here: yet in them we find often ſuch ſayings to or of the *Virgin Mary* as I cannot reconcile with Chriſtianity; for ſo in the *Manual* quoted before, in the Prayers for Women with Child they ſing thus to her,

Hail to the Queen who Reigns above,
Mother of Clemenoie and Love, &c.

Elſewhere they pray thus to her, *pag.* 196. O bleſſed Mother

Mother *assist my Weakness in all my Dangers and Necessities, in all Temptations to Sin, and in the hour of my Death, that through thy Protection I may be safe in the Lord.* Where the *Lord* indeed is mentioned, out of Complement, and for Fashions sake, but they had first begged of the *Lady* as much as they wanted or could desire: *and pag.* 80. they call her *Spouse of the Holy Ghost, Promise of the Prophets, Expectation of the Patriarchs, Queen of the Angels, Teacher of the Apostles, Strengthner of Martyrs, Faithful Comforter of the Living and Dead.* Now if they Print such things in *English*, what do they Print in *Spanish*? *If they do such things in a Green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?* And I fear that even their nicest Casuists give too much Countenance to this so gross Practice: For they have determined that *Honour's above Civil, cultus Hyperduliæ* are due to the *Virgin Mary*, that is in plain English, *Divine Honours* must be paid to her. For it must be a very Metaphysical Head, that can in this Sense apprehend a kind of Honour above *Civil*, and yet not *Divine*; it must be somewhat like his, that would pretend to find a mean between *Creator* and *Creature*, *between Finite and Infinite.*

Lastly, this is most notorious, that they enjoyn acts to be used, and propose Objects of Worship which they themselves cannot deny but there is danger of offending in them, and even of falling into that Idolatry; and yet take little or no care of giving caution concerning them; and if the grossest abuse should happen, there is scarcely any possibility of redress.

Indeed wherever they speak of Veneration due to Reliques and Images, of worshipping of Saints, and especially the Virgin *Mary*, they always seem as if they cared not how much Honour were paid to them; only they must make as if they put some Restriction on it, for the sake of the reformed who would exclaim against

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them: And therefore their Command for the worshipping of them is general and absolute; but the Limitations are so nice and forced, that one may easily see that they very unwillingly deny any Worship to be paid to them. For so the wary Council of *Trent* speaking of *Images*, says, They are to be *kept, and due Honour and Veneration paid to them*: And though by and by they seem as if they would limit this Honour, yet presently they put in such words as make that pretended Limitation to signifie nothing: For they tell you, That *whatever Honor you pay to the Image, goes to the person represented*, (v. g. to our Saviour) it seems the Honor is paid to him whether we intend so or no: And hence you may easily gather what Honor is due to the Image of our Saviour, and how little fear there is of paying too much Honour to it: For I suppose we are all agreed there is no fear of paying too much Honour to our Blessed Saviour; and whatever Honour is paid to his Image, is paid to him, if we can believe these Gentlemen. And agreeably hereunto, it is very rare to hear of any person censured or blamed for paying too much Honour to Images, though surely it is as possible for men to be Idolaters now as in the former Ages; and I suppose that neither the common people, nor all the Priests are Men of such extraordinary Understanding and Learning, as to be altogether free from the like Temptation. Nay, the Caution which is given seems only to concern, *Imagines falsi dogmatis, & Rudibus periculosi Erroris Occasionem præbentes*; but there is not one word concerning the abuse which may be made of the Image of Christ, or of a true Saint: There is no Provision made that Men be warned not to perform too much Devotion in their Minds to a good Image.

And by what this Council says the Priest understands well enough what it intends; and therefore scarcely ever dare

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dare preach againſt the exceſs and abuſe of Images, Reliques, *&c.* tho they cannot but ſee it actually committed every day.

And now if there ſhould happen to be any Idolatrous Worſhip pay'd to an Image; tho the Biſhop hath power indeed to ſet the Image up, yet he hath not power to pull it down, or to correct any abuſe concerning it; without the leave of the Archbiſhop and other Biſhops of the Province, and even of the Pope himſelf. So unwilling do they ſeem that any Proviſion ſhould be made for redreſſing abuſes in ſo great and common a Caſe as the exceſs in Worſhip of Images muſt needs be, *v. Concil. Trid. Seſſ.* 25.

Laſtly, as we have ſeen how deficient and very faulty the *Church of Rome* is in her pretences to Devotion, wee'll now conſider what Proviſion is made for the due Exerciſe of Devotion *among our ſelves*; that we may thank God for our being ſettled in the Communion of the Church of *England*, and may learn to be conſcientiouſly ſtrict and regular in our own, as well as to deſpiſe the *Romiſh* Devotions. And in order hereunto, I reckon that theſe four things are eſpecially to be regarded.

Firſt, That among us none but the true Object of Devotion is propoſed to be worſhipped. God the Father Son and Holy Ghoſt, none of the moſt bleſſed Angels, or Saints in Heaven being ever invoked, or adored by us. For we look on them only as our Brethren, and Members of the ſame Church with us, triumphing indeed whilſt we are here below ſtill in our Warfare. We thank God for them, and keep Feaſts in the Memory of them, at the ſame time praiſing God for his Goodneſs and Grace beſtowed on them, and ſhining forth in them, and alſo ſtirring up our ſelves by ſuch Commemorations to follow their good Example, and this we think

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think is as much as is due from us to our fellow Creatures, and believe that neither God allows, nor do they expect more from us.

Secondly, Only *proper Expressions of Devotion* are commanded or allowed by our Church. For the matter of them they are such as God himself hath required to be served by, are significant of that disposition of Mind which we know God accepts, and have an aptness to the producing of that temper in us which God intends to work us up to by them: We use all the Instances of Devotion which they of the Church of *Rome* use, if they be either necessary or fit; though indeed often to other and better purpose. We *pray* constantly, but only for the *living*; for we look on the *Dead* as past the means of Grace, and consequently past the benefit of our Prayers. We *praise* God for his Excellencies in himself, and *thank* him for his Goodness to others as well as to our selves: We practise *Confession* of Sins to God in publick, and in private, and advise it to be made also to the Ministers of Gods Word, when it is necessary for Ghostly Counsel and Advice, for the satisfying of their Consciences, and the removal of Scruple, and Doubtfulness: but we cannot say it is necessary to be made to *Men* in order to the Pardon of *God*: We reckon it rather as a priviledg or advantage than a Duty? And if Men will not make use of this priviledg, as often as there is Occasion unless we tell a lye to advance the credit of it, we cannot help that: We enjoyn *Fastings* and disallow not of *Penances*, but advise People to take an holy revenge on themselves when they have sinned; but not as the Papists do to *satisfie* for their Sins, or *merit* at Gods hand, but to shew the sincerity of their Repentance, and to strengthen their Resolutions of amendment; for it is our amendment, and not our punishment which God is pleased with. And we take care that all these things

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things be performed in a due measure, proportionably to the strength of the Person, and the Nature and Design of the Duty; but are afraid of straining them too high, lest men should be altogether deterred from them, or acquiesce only in the outward Action, or render our selves and our Cause ridiculous by an imprudent management. We have the Sacraments duly administred, as our Saviour commanded them; we reckon our Baptism with Water perfect without Oyl or Spittle: We grutch not the Cup to the Laity, nor celebrate solitary Communions, nor admire whispering to God in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; but as we have received from Christ, so we teach and administer, without Addition or Diminution of any thing essential or material. In short, in the holy Offices themselves, and the behaviour which our Church requires they be celebrated with, there is always a great propriety observable, agreeable to the Command of God in Scripture, and the Practice of the Apostles and first Ages of the Church, proper to the several parts of divine Worship, expressive of our Sense, consonant to Reason, and the use of the World, especially respect being always had to the exciting of Piety and Devotion in the minds and carriage of our People.

Thirdly, All useful Helps, Motives and Occasions are here plentifully afforded and pressed on Men. For we not only have all our Service in a Language which the meanest People understand, but have it so contrived by frequent Responses, that every Person bears a part in that Worship which he is so much concerned in, and doth not only hear the Priest speak to God Almighty, but prays for himself, and is required to joyn his assent to every short Prayer by a distinct *Amen*. With us the same Service and Rules of Life are enjoyned to all, all Men having the same Concern in another Life however differ-

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ent their Circumſtances and Concerns are in this Life. We have conſtant Prayers in every Pariſh weekly at leaſt, in many dayly, with the bleſſed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Chriſt frequently adminiſtred, nay every *Sunday*, not only in Cathedrals, but in ſeveral Colledges and private Pariſh Churches. And we appeal to all Men whether there be any where more practical Sermons, fitted to the Caſes of Men, without Vanity and Superſtition, than among us; Whether good and free Learning be any where more encouraged, or where better care is taken for the due Inſtruction of the People: The Scriptures being in every one's hands, with us, and other excellent Books made according to the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, inſtead of Legends and Lives of Saints, St. *Bonaventure's Pſalter*, and other ſuch Books which are really Libels againſt Chriſtianity, and yet are the principal Books which the *Prieſts* of the Church of *Rome* commend to their *People*: For as for the Bible, if any one of them hath happened to read in it, who is not licenſed to that purpoſe, he muſt own it as a Sin to his *Prieſt* at his next Confeſſion.

And as there are ſuch bleſſed Opportunities afforded ſo conſtantly, and ſuch *Prudent Proviſion* made for all Caſes Ordinary and Extraordinary, ſo I thank God, we can ſay that our *People* are generally very diligent in the uſe of theſe Means; (or would be more ſo, were it not for the Diviſions which they of the Church of *Rome* eſpecially raiſe among us.) For they may eaſily perceive that we urge no more on them than their own good, and the commands of God require of them; though our Church knows her *Power* very well, yet ſhe makes uſe of it only to enforce the Laws of God, to explain, illuſtrate and apply them to particular Caſes, but never to ſet up her own Commands in Oppoſition to them, as the

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the Church of *Rome* doth; and therefore though we teach our *People* to dread an Excommunication, it being *ſummum futuri Judicii Præjudicium*, as *Tertullian* calls it, *a foretaſt or foreſtalling of the laſt Judgment*; and not for a World to lye under it, though it were inflicted only for Contempt; yet we warn them in the firſt place to avoid the Cauſe and Occaſion of Excommunication, and therefore not to value what Cenſures of the Church of *Rome* we are under, they being ſo very unjuſt and Groundleſs.

Fourthly, and *laſtly*, as only the true *Object of Devotion* is here worſhipped, only *proper Expreſſions* allowed, all *uſeful Helps* afforded; ſo alſo the *greateſt ſtreſs is laid on the Practiſe of it*, agreeable to the true Nature, End and Deſign of it. The Principal ends of Devotion are to pay a Homage to God our great Creator and Benefactor, to get his Bleſſing, and to work our ſelves up to a better temper of Mind: And to this end we are in our Service importunate without Vanity or Impertinency, long without Tediouſneſs, or Idle Repetitions; (Only we uſe the Lord's Prayer often, that no part of our Service may be without that perfect form, and alſo in Conſideration of the great Comprehenſiveneſs of it, and of the Diſtraction of Men's Minds which ſeldom can attend to the full Senſe of it all at one time.) And we teach our People that every Man muſt work for himſelf, for he that prays only by a Proxy, it is very juſt that he ſhould be rewarded only by a Proxy too; we put our *People* in mind that an unfeigned Repentance is abſolutely Neceſſary, and not a Verbal one only: That it is out of our power, and of any Man's in the World to turn *Attrition* into Contrition. We pretend not to *diſpenſe* with any for not obeying the Command of God. We have no *Taxa Cameræ* by which the *Papiſts* are ſhown

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how all Sins are fined in their Church; for in that Book Men see at what Charge they may kill a Father, or commit Incest with their Sisters: But we assure all, that *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Death Eternal, if indulged and not most earnestly repented of. And we tell all that Devotion is necessary for all, though the Church of *Rome* hath ways of gratifying every Inclination, so as they that will not lead a strict Life, need not, and yet may have hopes of Salvation: We own their Policy in this Contrivance, but do not so much admire their Religious regard to the Salvation of Mens Souls.

And to conclude, though we thus forcibly press all Christian Duties on all Men; yet at the same time we warn them not to pretend to Merit Heaven at God's Hand; but after they have done their best, to confess they are *unprofitable Servants*. We say of our Charity or whatever else we do in Obedience to God, that *of his own we give to him*, and we are bound to thank him both for the Will and the Ability to give. The most that we pretend to, is only to make a small Acknowledgment by way of Sacrifice for what we have received; we beg of God to accept it as a Testimony of a grateful Mind, and we know that his Goodness is so great, that he will abundantly reward an honest and sincere Servant, though he hath done no more than was his Duty: And we hope that what we offer though mingled with many Imperfections, he will be pleased to accept for the sake of Christ as if it were perfect.

These are the Grounds that we go on in our Devotions, and whatever we do for the Honour of God; and thus designing and thus acting and persisting, we need not doubt but the good *Providence* of God which watcheth

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eth over his whole Church, will in an especial manner watch over this which is so pure a Member of it; that he will accept of the Devotions which are offered to him in it, and hear the *P*rayers that are made unto him for it, and defend it against all its Enemies on every side; which God of his Infinite Mercy grant for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE

DEVOTIONS

OF THE

Church of Rome,

Especially, as compared with those of the

CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

In which it is shewn,

That whatever the *Romanists* pretend, there is not so true *Devotion* among them, nor such rational Provision for it, nor Encouragement to it, as in the Church established by Law among us.

LONDON,

Printed for *Benj. Tooke* at he Ship in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1685.

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