

He can pray for us then, for having power to do so here, he has at least sufficient power to do it there, and surely it is lawful to request a saint or an angel to pray for us, when they have both the will and the power to do it.

Nor is this invocation idolatrous: for if idolatry be attached to it, Catholics must attribute to the saints and angels one or more of the perfections, which, exclusively belong to the divine Essence: for idolatry is to adore any thing as God, or to give any created object the honour, which is exclusive right. When we address the saints, we only request them, as more virtuous and consequently more favoured and more powerful petitioners than ourselves, to pray for us to God, and to obtain blessings for us. Our petitions are addressed to subaltern beings; the language which we employ, denotes that we consider them as such, and the nature of these petitions does not infer any other, than subaltern powers. If they grant our petitions, then they pray for us; if their prayers be heard, our final request is obtained from God. And is this idolatry: or is it unreasonable? A prudent man would employ the most powerful agents to assist him, when he requests a favour from a sovereign power.

It is true, that we suppose the Saints and Angels capable of hearing, or becoming acquainted with our prayers. In supposing this, we do not act without scriptural authority. "There shall be joy in heaven," says Jesus Christ, "when one sinner does penance." St. Luke xv. 5, 10. Penance infers interior acts; and, consequently, the inmates of the heavenly Jerusalem must be acquainted even with the thoughts of men, or they could never rejoice when a sinner does penance. But we do not attribute divine omniscience to them; this knowledge of our thoughts is given them by the Almighty, and it is limited and dependent. That such knowledge may and has been given, is controvertible from the example of the prophets. God discovered even the secrets of futurity to them, although the knowledge of future events seems more peculiarly reserved to the Deity, than the knowledge of present occurrences. The knowledge then of things in this world, which we suppose the saints to possess, is scriptural: nor does it infringe on the divine perfection of omniscience. And is this idolatry? I hope sufficient has been said to justify the Catholic invocation of Angels and Saints, or at least to convince our dissenting brethren, that our faith on this subject is neither idolatrous nor scriptural. In concluding I must observe, that we are not commanded to invoke these angelic spirits, but only informed by the church that this invocation is good and useful.

The council of Trent declares, that the Angels and Saints deserve honour. Our adversaries say, that the honour which we pay them, is supreme honour; and consequently idolatrous. But if we invoke them only as inferior and subaltern beings,

how can we honour them as gods? In fact the Council condemns all those, who pay any other than subaltern respect to them. "From this, and not from interested lucubrations of angry polemics, are Catholics to receive their faith, or dissenting Christians to discover the nature of that faith.

Reason and common sense dictate, that honour is due to superior beings, and that the nature of that honour should correspond to the nature of the deserving object. The Angels and Saints are superior beings; they are impeccable, they enjoy the beatific vision; they are the tried, and the approved, and the chosen friends of the Almighty. They have an inherent right then to be honoured by inferior beings. And we are those inferior beings: for we are sinners, we have not finished our career of trial, nor are we certain of gaining the ultimate object of our existence. Men in this world then ought to honour the angels and saints. The excellence, which these chosen spirits possess, and which entitles them to our honour, is of a supernatural nature, and consequently, the honour which we give them must transcend the honour which is due only to natural excellence. The saints and angels are, nevertheless, created and imperfect beings, and therefore the supernatural honour, which we ought to pay them, must be inferior to sovereign adoration, since adoration properly so called, is the exclusive right of the omnipotent Creator. The angels and saints then deserve from men a limited honour, which is nevertheless supernatural. This is precisely the doctrine and practice of the Catholic church.

In various parts of the sacred writings, we read of a certain species of religious veneration, which was justly paid to holy personages, on account of some supernatural excellence. When the Babylonian tyrant had ordered all the wise men of the city to be put to death, because they were unable to interpret his dream, the prophet Daniel appeared before him, and expounded the vision. "Nabneodonazzar was delighted with the interpretation, and falling on his face adored him." Dan. 2. That the king's conduct was correct is evident, because the virtuous prophet received this species of religious veneration, and took advantage of the king's good will to procure for his three companions "the superintendance of the works of Babylon." We also read that Abraham, Jossu, and Balaam paid religious honour to angels. (See Gen. xviii. Josu. v. Numb. xxii.) *Saul adored the spirit of Samuel*; Adias paid the same honour to Elias; and the sons of the prophets, when they had heard that the spirit of Elias had been imparted to Elisens, came to adore him. (See 1 Kings, xxviii. 3 Kings, xviii. 4 Kings, 11.) If we cannot accuse an Abraham, a Josu, or the college of prophets of idolatry, so neither can our dissenting brethren attribute that crime to the professors of Catholicity; for the honor which they give to saints and angels, is precisely the same as