

“veneration are to be shown to the images of Christ and the Saints” (Vid. Sess. 25. de invoc. SS.) Such, and no other, is the doctrine of the Church of Rome—such its members believe and practise—such its Divines explain and defend; and we all unite in denouncing any other as unecatholic and false, and in branding the man, who imputes any other to us, either as an ignorant calumniator, or libellous imposter.

I have remarked above that as man consists of a body and soul, a religion instituted for him, must be calculated to arrest the senses of his body, in order to operate on his soul. This, I observed, was the principle, on which the Catholic Church acted in the institution of religious ceremony; and it is also the principle, from which she infers, that relics and images should be used and honoured.

Every man, with his eyes open, must know, that a picture or image recalls, or introduces, thoughts into his mind, which are connected with the original. The cross or a picture of the redeemer certainly reminds us of Jesus Christ, this recollection is surely proper and holy; and why should we not use the intervention of a picture or a relic, to attain this holy object? Notwithstanding all that the heary polemics of the last centuries have written against this tenet; and however much they may have admired the naked walls and barren simplicity of a reformed church, men of sense, when prejudice has worn away, will never condemn the Catholic church for using pictures and relics to recall their originals to the minds of her members; and if at the same time they be men of taste, they will rather lament, that the introduction of an opposite tenet into the world, has destroyed for ever many of the finest specimens of painting and sculpture.

There is little difficulty in defending the propriety of using pictures and images for the purpose of exciting in the mind religious reflection; but it seems more difficult to convince our dissenting brethren of the propriety of paying religious respect to them.—But I think there should be no difficulty even in this. The scripture says, that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,” (Philipp. 2. v. 10.) and every Christian acknowledges the propriety of bowing the head when that venerable name is pronounced. The name excites the idea of our Saviour, and on this account only it merits our respect. A picture or an image has precisely the effect; a crucifix reminds us as forcibly of the Redeemer as the articulation of his name; and why should we not show respect to the crucifix? The internal recollection, which alone claims our reverence, is identical; the word Jesus is as much a picture or image to the ear, as a crucifix is to the eye; and the representation to the mind is the same; and the only difference between the name and the crucifix is, that one is addressed to the ear, the other to the eye. If the word claim respect, why

should not the image? It is not irrational to condemn the Catholic church for paying external respect to the scripture, and yet Catholics have been frequently condemned, and by those very men too, who discover no impropriety in presenting the scripture to be kissed by whoever takes an oath in a court of justice. And why is this done? Certainly from respect to the word of God, which is contained in the scripture. The combinations of letters in the book have no meaning of themselves, and deserve no reverence; but because words have been universally admitted to be the signs of ideas, the scripture is therefore revered, because the words which it contains, occasion and signify ideas, which merit respect, reverence, and veneration. And why should we not pay respect to pictures and images? They, too, are the cause of ideas that claim our reverence.

Nature herself dictates that the representations, or, in fact, any thing, which recalls to the mind an object which we love, claims a degree of relative love and respect. The portrait of a cherished friend, whom the unrelenting grasp of death has torn away from us, and hurried to the cold region of the grave, is always affectionately loved by the surviving partner of his joys and his sorrows. Every thing, which was his, is consecrated by friendship in our eyes, and we hang his hair around our necks, with all the fervid recollection of former love, and well requited affection. Should some cold metaphysician attempt to prove, that we were dishonouring our departed friend by venerating the objects which recall him to our minds, his frozen arguments would be dissolved by the warmth of natural affection before they could reach the seat of conviction. We should say, “I love the portrait, not on account of the canvass, on which the painter has spread his colours; I love the lock of hair, not for the matter of which it is formed; I love every thing which was my friend’s, not for their intrinsic value, but, because they represent him to my mind, and recall the idea of departed worth.” This is the language of nature. And, now, why should not Catholics respect pictures, and images, and relics? We do so. “We respect the pictures and images of Christ and his saints, not on account of the canvass, on which they are painted, or the metal of which they are formed, we respect the relics of the cross or of departed saints, not on account of their intrinsic worth, or the matter of which they are composed, but we respect them because they represent to our minds, objects which deserve our respect and veneration.”