

THE
CHARACTER
 OF
POPERY.

POPERY is a *Catholick Sham*; for it cheats those that tamper with it, of their Understandings, and their Senses, their Consciences, and their Souls: An Ecclesiastical Juggle; the cunning Knave's Mask, and the silly Bigot's Creed: *Jacob's Ladder* revers'd, or the Debauchee's Ensigne; which he doubts not, but, if well oyl'd, will at last carry him to Heaven: For 'tis a Project, that offers at saving Men, and their Sins together; nay, in many Cases, to make their Sins meritorious of Salvation: A Blendure of *Ambition* and *Covetousness*, dress'd up in a long Mantle of *Hypocrisie*, call'd, *Saint Peter's Cloak*; A false Bait, managed by a crafty sort of Fisher-men, that pretend to angle Souls for Heaven; but design only to catch Gudgeons, and grasp Earth, and its Advantages: Jingling the Keys of PARADISE, on purpose to amuse the Croud, and to get Opportunities to pick their Pockets. 'Tis a strange Farrago of Errors and Impostures: A Gallimawrey, compos'd of contradictory Ingredients: The highest Superstitions, and yet the rankest Prophaneness: Subtilties of the finest spinning, and most gross Absurdities. It makes its God and then eats him. It teaches all its Voraries, to Pray, without either understanding the Words, or yet devout Attention of Mind: To Fast with a Luxurious Dinner of Fish, Wine, and Sweet-Meats, that *Heliogabalus*, and other choicest Heathen Gluttons would lick their Lips at. It cries up MARRIAGE for a Sacrament; and yet, at the same time, bars its Sacred Clergy from it, because it will defile them. It boasts its self to be the sole Keeper and Interpreter of the *Scriptures*; and yet avows, that they are corrupted, and unintelligible. And so, at once, proclaims her own perfidious Negligence, in not preserving the *Sacred Orac* and her monstrous Uncharitableness, in not giving Us an Authentick Explication. It pretends an Infallible Knack of deciding all Controversies; yet cruelly suffers her Brats to spend their Times in endless Quarrels; witness the Brawls between her *Franciscans* and her *Dominicans*, her *Jesuits* and her *Jansenists*, her most *Christian*, and most *Catholick* Doctors.

We may therefore call it a *Rope of Sand*, held together merely by *Interest* and *Force*: A *Babel-Building*, erected by diligent *Fraud*, and aspiring *Pride*, upon the Plains of drowsie *Ignorance*, and easy *Credulity*; and cemented not only with the Tears, but the Blood of thousands of *Innocents*. A devouring MONSTER, begot in the dark by an incestuous Mixture of *Impudence* the Son, with *Ignorance* the Mother; Suckled by *PHOCAS*, with the Milk of *REBELLION*, and *Blood-Royal*; and Rocked to Sleep by *Pope BONIFACE*, in the Cradle of a *Universal Bishoprick*; where doting MONKS sung Lullabies to it, with a multitude of lying *Legends*, and feigned *Miracles*. The *French Usurper*, King *PEPIN*, and his Son, gave it a new Coat; and *Pope HILDERBRAND* taught it to go High-Lone, and trample on the NECKS of *EMPERORS* and *KINGS*. 'Twas always very fond of Babies to play with; and cryed and scratcht most filthily, till it had got Pictures and Images set up in *Churches*; which from Lay-men's Books, quickly became their *GODS*. The School-men provided it Rattles of Distinction, and abundance of Elder *POT-GUNS*, to divert it self, and amuse the World with. The *Conventicle* of *TRENT* found it sick of the *Rickets*; but applying altogether the *Italian Physick*, set it again upon its Legs, though with a Head swell'd bigger than before: Yet ever since, it hath been languishing in a *Consumption*; to palliate which, Fifty Thousand Fathers of the Society, are always busy with *Cordials* and *Pain*, to keep up its Spirits and Complexion. The *DIET* it delights in; is *Aurum Potabile*, and the *Blood* of *MARTYRS*: The *Inquisition* is its Right-Leg, and *Sophistry* its Left; and with these Two Supporters, it bestrides the World.

To express its Essence, and full Latitude in one word, you must call it *ANTI-CHRISTIANISM*, (whether you take [*Ani*] to signifie *against*, *for*, or *instead of*, as the *Greek* Tongue hath it; or whether you take [*CHRIST*] to denote peculiarity our Blessed *Saviour*; or more generally, his *Viceregerents*: or more largely, his *Saints* or *Catholick Church*; who all enjoy the *Unction* of the *Holy One*.) For as this *Mock Religion* most impudently pretends its *POPE*, the greatest Rebel and Enemy to *GOD* and *CHRIST*, (under Heaven) to be *Vice-God*, or *Christ's Vicar* or *Lieutenant* upon Earth: and that he has a Plentitude of Power in *Christ's* stead, to Rulè the *Universal Church*: Under which forged Commission, and kind Semblance, nothing can tend more against the Person, Honour, Merits, Offices, and whole *Gospel* of *CHRIST*, nothing be more degrogatory to the just Rights, and Veneration due to Sovereign Earthly Princes; nor yet any thing be more pernicious to, or destructive of Sincere Christians, than his *Tripple-Crown'd TRAYTOR's* Doctrines and Practises.

For *Popery*, by its Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, will have the Body of *Christ* to be without the Properties of a true Body; and consequently, taking away the *Humane Nature*, it denies the Person of our Mediator.

It Invades his *Royal Office*, by assuming his *Incommunicable Titles*, by undertaking to Rescind, and make void his *LAW S*; Absolving Man from his Duty to *God*, by *Dispensations*; and from the Penalty which



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Facienti which Sin hath made his due, by Indulgence; so *Bellarmino* tell us, That the Pope hath a Power to make *peccatum* Sin to be no Sin. And the Council of *Lateran*, That the Pope has all Power over all Powers, as well of *non peccatum* Heaven as of Earth.

It Blasphemes the **PRIESTLY** Office of **CHRIST**, whereby at one Oblation of himself, he satisfied for all Sin, *Heb. 10. 11. 1 Jo. 1. 7.* For as if the same was Insufficient, *Popery* appoints an innumerable Company of Shaveling Priests, whose daily business is pretended to offer up *Christ* afresh, or a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Quick and the Dead, in their Wicked and Idolatrous Mass. It also undertakes to Purge away Sins, by other Medicines, besides his precious Blood. And sets up a Multitude of other **MEDIATORS** and **INTERCESSORS**. It opposes *Christ's* Prophetick Office, by adding a multitude of Traditions and Inventions, as necessary to Salvation, to be received with the same Reverence as the Word of God.

It exalts it self above all that is called God in the World: For its **POPE** Crowns and Uncrowns Emperours with his Feet, and Treads upon them as one would do upon a *Viper*; Takes upon him to Depose **KINGS** and **PRINCES**, to give away their **KINGDOMS** to discharge Subjects of their Allegiance and Oaths; and to justify their Rebellion against, or Assassinations of their *Sovereigns*.

To speak Truth, **POPERY** is the Debauchment of all **RELIGION**; For by Substituting it self under the Christian Name, it hath Subverted the innate Sense and Worship of the Deity, and maintains Tenets, and imposes Practises, which the wiser sort of Heathens always blush'd at; And at the same time, it hath suppressed, and depraved, and counterfeited Divine Revelations; so that, the Principles both of Natural and Revealed Religion being thus Corrupted. It makes its Profelytes but so much the more the Children of Wrath, than they were by Nature; for she hood-winks their Understandings, degenerates and sears their Consciences, and lays waste all Morality.

Her design is not the promoting of *Christ's* Interest, (for that is apparently prostituted) but the Securing and Aggrandizing of a Faction, which under the Profession of Christianity, might be false to all its Realities. Her Rule is the Corrupt Inclination of depraved Nature, to which they have thoroughly Conformed their Practical Divinity; which easeth Men of Duty, for which they have an Aversion, and clears the way to those Sins to which they are disposed, as though there were no need to avoid them. Thus their Principles are more pernicious, because more taking; because Men will quickly like that Religion, because he Loves his Sin; and will, tis to be feared, follow both, though he Perish for it Eternally.

She hath by Various Methods, destroy'd (as much as in her lyes) the Credibility of the Christian Religion: As,

First, By making Men to neglect and slight those Sacred Oracles, which contains firm Demonstrations of its Verity; and to rely upon the vain Sandy pretence of her Infallibility, for the certainty of Faith.

Secondly, By obtruding upon the World her *Fabulous Legends*, and *Lying Miracles*; in which she is so Notorious a Falsary, which to every Rational Man appear to have been only Delusions; and Rank Impostures.

Thirdly, By rendering the Gospel it self unworthy of Acceptation; as she hath model'd, and deprav'd it, through her absurd, superadd'd Principles, Idolatrous Worship, Gross Superstitious Rites, and innumerable Ceremonies, no less various in themselves, than Burthen some to the Observers.

Fourthly, By reducing our whole Duty (upon the latter) to certain, unreasonable, servile Submissions, to her Haughty, Avaritious Clergy: And by resolving the Terms of Eternal Happiness, finally, into the Benediction, or good Pleasure of her vile Fulsome Priests.

So that take her Systeme together, and I see not how either *Jew*, *Pagan*, *Turk*, or other *Infidel*, can honestly entertain the Christian Religion, as she Teacheth it; or if they should so Embrace it, how far they would be Gainers by the Bargain.

In the *Homilies* of the Church of England for Whitsunday, you have this Character given of her; That the Church of Rome is an Idolatrous Church, not only an Harlot, as the Scripture calls her, but also a Foul, Filthy, Old, Withered Harlot, and the Mother of Wickedness, Guilty of the same Idolatry, and worse than any among the Gentiles.

POPERY in its self, is the vilest Tyranny, that ever Heaven in Judgment suffered, or Earth in Patience groan'd under: That of *Dionysius* and *Nero* were but Fleeting bitings to it; They only Challenged a Despotical Power over Peoples Persons; This assumes an uncontrollable Dominion over their very Consciences and Souls: And is fram'd intirely for the Befooling, Enslaving, Despoiling, and Corrupting of the Laity, and the Enriching and Aggrandizing her Priesthood; who with the Supple Hams of a Flattering Hypocrisie, first seem to Adore and Deifie; but as soon as they have gained their point, do really Spurn at, and Trample upon all Secular Dignity and Authority; for She assumes an Arbitrary Power to pluck up, and Destroy all Governments, when it is for her purpose.

But still, a fine Convenience or Umbrage of Religion she is, to those who will live by the Rules of none; And an admirable Colour for Ambitious Princes to enlarge their Empire, to the prejudice of their Neighbours, and pretence of advancing the Catholick Faith; and to destroy their own People for God's sake, when ever they shall have Oppressed them so far as to fear them: And as ready an Engine to excite Subjects to Rebellion against their Lawful Sovereigns, as oft as they will not Dance to the Measures of the Vatican.

To Conclude: As every Religion consists of Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline; so the Doctrine of *Popery* is Ignorance and Error: Its Worship, Idolatry and Superstition; Its Discipline, Rage and Cruelty. Whence fully doth the Holy Spirit, in Sacred Writ, describe her by those three Titles, *The False Prophet*, *The Whore*, and *The Beast*: False Prophet, for her Teaching, and enforcing Errors; *Whore*, for her Idolatry, Gaudy Dress, and Meretricious Paintings: And *Beast*, for her Ravenous and Savage Cruelty.

To Conclude further; She is the Disgrace, and grand Impediment of the Gospel, the overthrow of Morals, the perpetual Disquietor of Civil States, the Destroyer of Christians, the Scandal of Infidels, and the Pest of the World: Which therefore, all Mankind are obliged, both in Honour, Conscience, and Interest, by all Lawful ways to oppose; and with, and heartily Pray, for its Extirpation from the Face of the Earth; which for the Comfort of all that suffer by, and under it, and to the Terror of all its Abettors, (notwithstanding their Subtilties, or Violence, to support what Providence has doomed for Destruction) shall assuredly, in God's due time, be accomplished, and the **KINGS** of the Earth shall Burn her with Fire. Amen.

St. Austin.
Figmenta
mendacium
aut portenda
fallaciarum
spirituum