

# THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS

## Church Association Tract 422

The Church of Rome teaches, in the Creed of Pope Pius IV, that “The Saints reigning together with Christ are to be worshipped and invoked,” that is, “called on” by prayer. The Church of England says that “The Romish doctrine concerning . . . Invocation of Saints . . . is a fond thing vainly invented, grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather, repugnant to the Word of God.” Which Church is right? Surely the Church of England.

1. *Invocation of Saints is a “fond (or futile) thing.”* The Saints are but creatures, it is therefore impossible that they can hear and answer our prayers. Take the case of the Virgin Mary. There are said to be 250,000,000\* Romanists in the world. Suppose only one in ten of them prays once a day to her; this means twenty-five million prayers every day, or well over a million an hour. No creature could possibly hear and answer all these petitions. Moreover, to hear and answer prayer argues the power (1) to read the heart of the worshipper, and so to judge the sincerity of his prayer; (2) to know whether it is best to grant or to refuse his petition, for we often have to thank God for not acceding to our requests. Plainly, therefore, it is “futile” to pray to the Saints.

2. *Invocation of Saints is “vainly invented.”* The Article says that the doctrine is “inanelly concocted” (*inaniter conficta*); and so it is. We can obtain all things by simply going directly to God through our Lord Jesus Christ; we can obtain nothing except in and through Him. No Saint loves us as tenderly as does our Gracious Saviour who died for us “while we were yet sinners” (Rom. v. 8-11; John iii. 16). No Saint has all power in Heaven and in earth; but He has (Matt. xxviii. 18). What “inanity” therefore it is to seek through the Saints the things which we can obtain without doubt (when they are expedient for us) by asking God Himself to grant them for the sake of the Saviour (Matt. vii. 7-11; Luke xi. 9-13; John xiv. 13-14, xv. 16, xvi. 23-4).

3. *Invocation of Saints is “grounded upon no warranty of Scripture.”* There is in the Bible not one *command* obliging us to pray to the Saints; not one *example* encouraging us to do so; not one *promise* leading us to hope any good from such a proceeding. Sentimentalists tell us that it is a “natural yearning” of the human heart to invoke the prayers of our loved ones who are departed this life; but our natural cravings are often wrong, and stirring appeals to the emotions are not arguments upon which we can build practices of religion. The more we feel this “natural yearning,” the more decisive becomes the silence of Scripture which was written aforetime for our learning, by the Inspiration of the God who made us, who knoweth our frame, who pitieth His children, and who is Himself Love. He knows all our passionate longings in this matter, and we may rest assured that He has kept back nothing profitable to us. His silence is eloquent of the perils into which the undisciplined “yearnings” of the “natural man” may lead us, unless they are curbed by a reverent regard for the teachings of His Holy Word. “Add thou not unto His words lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. xxx, 6; Deut. iv, 2; Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

4. *Invocation of Saints is “repugnant to the Word of God.”* We are called by the word of God to deal directly with Him through Christ our Redeemer. “Come let us reason together”; “Ho, everyone that thirsteth”; such is the language of the Old Testament. “Come unto Me” is the cry of the New. It is disobedience, if when God calls us to Himself, we seek to find human mediators through whom to approach Him. Saint-worshippers say that it is “more humble” to approach the Majesty on High indirectly; but St. Paul warns us against the “voluntary humility” of “worshipping angels.” It has a “show of wisdom” as an apparent acknowledgment of our unworthiness to approach God, yet is really the offspring of pride and self-will—“will-worship,” being the substitution of the dictates of our “fleshly mind” for the teaching of God who invites us to hold converse with Himself (Col. ii. 18-23; Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9). The same Apostle distinctly says that as there is but “one God” so also there is but “one Mediator between God and men” (1 Tim. ii. 5). The Master Himself declares in unmistakable terms, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but

by Me”; while His Apostles assure us that “there is none other name “than His” whereby we must be saved “ (John xiv. 6 ; Acts iv. 12). “How,” asks the Epistle to the Romans, “shall they call on (*or* ‘invoke’) him in whom they have not believed?” (Rom. x. 14); and, we may add, “How shall we ‘believe in’ the Saints, when the Christian Creeds bind us to ‘believe in’ God alone, and the Bible curses him who putteth his trust in man (Jer. xvii. 5) with no saving clause for those who trust in *dead* men?”

Sinful creatures such as ourselves, are indeed in need of a Mediator, and here as everywhere all our need is supplied by the Lord Jesus, who, when on earth, received sinners and ate with them, bore the name of the Friend of Sinners, called the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him, and has promised that He will in no wise cast out any who come (Phil. iv. 19; Luke xv. 2; Matt. xi. 19; 28-30; John vi. 37). His heavenly exaltation has not changed His gracious mercy: He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever (Heb. xiii. 8). He—though without sin—can sympathize with our infirmity, and is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him (Heb. iv. 14-16; vii. 24, 25). There is no need of other middle-men at the Throne of Grace, if we put our whole-hearted trust in the Redeemer, who is (according to the Scriptural teaching of the Church of England, in common with all the other Protestant Churches),

**“OUR ONLY MEDIATOR AND ADVOCATE.”**

\*In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (when this tract was written).