

half a Country is more valuable than with the Whole. I begin to think there was nothing absurd in Sir *W. Petty*, when he fancied if all the Highlands of *Scotland* and the whole Kingdom of *Ireland* were sunk in the Ocean, so that the People were all saved and brought into the Lowlands of *Great Britain*; nay, though they were to be reimburs'd the Value of their Estates by the Body of the People, yet both the Sovereign and the Subjects in general would be enriched by the very Loss.

IF the People only make the Riches, the Father of ten Children is a greater Benefactor to his Country, than he who has added to it 10000 Acres of Land and no People. It is certain *Lewis* has join'd vast Tracts of Land to his Dominions: But if *Philarithmus* says true, that he is not now Master of so many Subjects as before; we may then account for his not being able to bring such mighty Armies into the Field, and for their being neither so well fed, nor clothed, nor paid as formerly. The Reason is plain, *Lewis* must needs have been impoverish'd not only by his Loss of Subjects, but by his Acquisition of Lands.

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N^o 201. Saturday, October 20.

Religentem esse oportet, Religiosum nefas.

Incerti Autoris apud Aul. Gell.

IT is of the last Importance to season the Passions of a Child with Devotion, which seldom dies in a Mind that has received an early Tincture of it. Though it may seem extinguish'd for a while by the Cares of the World, the Heats of Youth, or the Allurements of Vice, it generally breaks out and discovers it self again as soon as Discretion, Consideration, Age, or Misfortunes have brought the Man to himself. The Fire may be covered and overlaid, but cannot be intirely quenched and smothered.

A State of Temperance, Sobriety, and Justice, without Devotion, is a cold, lifeless, insipid Condition of Virtue; and is rather to be filed Philosophy than Religion. Devotion opens the Mind to great Conceptions, and fills it with more sublime Ideas than any that are to be met with in the most exalted Science; and at the same time warms and agitates the Soul more than sensual Pleasure.

IT has been observed by some Writers, that Man is more distinguished from the Animal World by Devotion than by Reason, as several Brute Creatures discover in their Actions something like a faint Glimmering of Reason, though they betray in no single Circumstance of their Behaviour any Thing that bears the least Affinity to Devotion. It is certain, the Propensity of the Mind to Religious Worship, the natural Tendency of the Soul to fly to some superior Being for Succour in Dangers and Distresses, the Gratitude to an invisible Superintendent which arises in us upon receiving any extraordinary and unexpected good Fortune, the Acts of Love and Admiration with which the Thoughts of Men are so wonderfully transported in meditating upon the Divine Perfections, and the universal Concurrence of all the Nations under Heaven in the great Article of Adoration, plainly shew that Devotion or Religious Worship must be the Effect of Tradition from some first Founder of Mankind, or that it is conformable to the natural Light of Reason, or that it proceeds from an Instinct implanted in the Soul it self. For my part, I look upon all these to be the concurrent Causes, but which ever of them shall be assigned as the Principle of Divine Worship, it manifestly points to a Supreme Being as the first Author it.

I may take some other Opportunity of considering those particular Forms and Methods of Devotion which are taught us by Christianity; but shall here observe into what Errors even this Divine Principle may sometimes lead us, when it is not moderated by that right Reason which was given us as the Guide of all our Actions.

THE two great Errors into which a mistaken Devotion may betray us, are Enthusiasm and Superstition.

THERE is not a more melancholy Object than a Man who has his Head turned with religious Enthusiasm.

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A Person that is crazed, tho' with Pride or Malice, is a Sight very mortifying to Human Nature; but when the Distemper arises from any indiscreet Fervours of Devotion, or too intense an Application of the Mind to its mistaken Duties, it deserves our Compassion in a more particular Manner. We may however learn this Lesson from it, that since Devotion it self (which one would be apt to think could not be too warm) may disorder the Mind, unless its Heats are tempered with Caution and Prudence, we should be particularly careful to keep our Reason as cool as possible, and to guard our selves in all Parts of Life against the Influence of Passion, Imagination, and Constitution.

DEVOTION, when it does not lie under the Check of Reason, is very apt to degenerate into Enthusiasm. When the Mind finds herself very much inflamed with her Devotions, she is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up by something Divine within her. If she indulges this Thought too far, and humours the growing Passion, she at last flings herself into imaginary Raptures and Ecstasies; and when once she fancies her self under the Influence of a Divine Impulse, it is no Wonder if she slights human Ordinances, and refuses to comply with any established Form of Religion, as thinking her self directed by a much superior Guide.

AS Enthusiasm is a kind of Excess in Devotion, Superstition is the Excess not only of Devotion, but of Religion in general, according to an old Heathen Saying, quoted by *Aulus Gellius*, *Religentem esse oportet, Religiosum nefas*; A Man should be Religious, not Superstitious; For as the Author tells us, *Nigidius* observed upon this Passage, that the *Latin* Words which terminate in *osus* generally imply vicious Characters, and the having of any Quality to an Excess.

AN Enthusiast in Religion is like an obstinate Clown, a Superstitious Man like an insipid Courtier. Enthusiasm has something in it of Madness, Superstition of Folly. Most of the Sects that fall short of the Church of *England* have in them strong Tinctures of Enthusiasm, as the *Roman* Catholick Religion is one huge over-grown Body of childish and idle Superstitions.

THE *Roman* Catholick Church seems indeed irrecoverably lost in this Particular. If an absurd Dress or Behaviour be introduced in the World, it will soon be found out and discarded: On the contrary, a Habit or Ceremony, tho' never so ridiculous, which has taken Sanctuary in the Church, sticks in it for ever. A *Gothic* Bishop, perhaps, thought it proper to repeat such a Form in such particular Shoes or Slippers; another fancied it would be very decent if such a Part of publick Devotions were performed with a Mitre on his Head, and a Crozier in his Hand: To this a Brother *Vandal*, as wise as the others, adds an antick Dress, which he conceived would allude very aptly to such and such Mysteries, till by Degrees the whole Office has degenerated into an empty Show.

THEIR Successors see the Vanity and Inconvenience of these Ceremonies; but instead of reforming, perhaps add others, which they think more significant, and which take Possession in the same manner, and are never to be driven out after they have been once admitted. I have seen the Pope officiate at *St. Peter's*, where, for two Hours together, he was busied in putting on or off his different Accountments, according to the different Parts he was to act in them.

NOTHING is so glorious in the Eyes of Mankind, and ornamental to human Nature, setting aside the infinite Advantages which arise from it, as a strong steady masculine Piety; but Enthusiasm and Superstition are the Weaknesses of human Reason, that expose us to the Scorn and Derision of Infidels, and sink us even below the Beasts that perish.

IDOLATRY may be looked upon as another Error arising from mistaken Devotion; but, because Reflexions on that Subject would be of no use to an *English* Reader I shall not enlarge upon it. L



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