

# Worship of Saints and Angels

by Ian Paisley

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*The worship of saints and angels is a practice condemned by Scripture and is a direct insult to the one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3, Psalm 115:4, Colossians 2:18, 1 Timothy 2:5

**Topics:** "False Worship", "Christology"

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## Description

Ian Paisley addresses the issue of worshipping saints and angels, highlighting the controversy between Popery and Protestantism on the merit of the dead. He emphasizes that the worship of angels and saints is baseless and a direct insult to Jesus Christ, the one true Mediator between God and man. Paisley points out the absurdity of seeking mediation through creatures rather than directly to God, as it undermines the glory and work of Christ. He condemns the practice of worshipping angels and saints as an act of impiety and ignorance that detracts from the true worship of God.

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## Transcript

AMONG the charges that are justly brought against the Church of Rome, is that of worshipping saints and angels; and it is worthy of observation, that this is not denied by the Papists themselves. We are, therefore, absolved from all necessity of an attempt at proof, and hence the controversy turns on the merit of the dead, in itself considered. Popery defends, and Protestantism condemns it; and the point to be settled is, with whom lies the truth? Who can claim the suffrage of reason and of Scripture? This point, once discussed and determined, nothing more remains; but now it may be assumed, that as the greater contains the less, if angels are not to be worshipped, men are not; and it can be absolutely demonstrated from the Word of God that angels are not to be worshipped.

This we have from their own lips; it has been attempted by men, and by angels indignantly rejected. The seeds of all evil seem to have been sown in the Church about the same time. Nearly four centuries had passed away before these abominations were thought of; but, like most of the other evils to which they stand so unhappily related, it was not long in overrunning the earth. There is one peculiarity about this sin; the doctrine has not even the usual small fragment of truth to rest on. It is wholly baseless; there could be nothing found in the Word of God on which to exert the plastic power of forgery and falsehood; it rests, therefore, upon reason.

Well, in the way of reason it is argued, that it is a mark of humility to approach the Most High through the spirits of the brethren that are "made perfect," rather than to go direct ourselves to the Father of Spirits,

while their prayers as utterances of purity and excellence, are far more likely to be heard than those of men still compassed with infirmity, and but ill able to order their speech by reason of their darkness.

The answer to such a style of talk is obvious; suffice it to say that it is to attempt to improve upon the Divine wisdom. Had this been the best plan of intercourse between God and man, it would have been a part of the Divine economy, and men would have received instructions to that effect; but no such instructions are given, the inference therefore, is clear. But the matter does not end here; the act is highly criminal; it is a direct insult to the one Mediator between God and man.

Christians are permitted and commanded to pray for each other on earth, just as in all other respects, they are called upon to "bear one another's burdens;" but no such prayer is known in heaven. It is proper, however, to hear the Popish advocates. Let us, therefore, refer at once to the fountain of Romish orthodoxy, and see how it is dealt with by the Council of Trent:

"The saints, reigning with Christ, offer up their prayers to God, for man; hence it is good and useful supplicantly to invoke them; and to seek refuge (confugere, i.e. flee for succour or relief,) in their prayers, help, and assistance, to obtain favour from God, through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alone our Redeemer and Saviour."

The far-famed creed of Pope Pius IV. sets out with the same doctrine: That "the saints reigning with Christ are to be worshipped and invoked." Of Virgin worship we need not speak, having discussed that point in another chapter; we have here to do only with men called "saints," and of these the Papists have great numbers. Like the local deities of the heathen, they cover all places, and extend to all pursuits.

Every trade and profession has its patron saint-even diseases have their controlling president; nor are the brute-beasts forgotten! The sailor hoists his flag in the name of St. Christopher; St. Agatha rules amid flames of fire, and is to be invoked to preserve from burning; students bow the knee to St. Nicolas; the painter does homage at the shrine of St. Luke; Saint Cornelia looks after the concerns of those who are subject to falling sickness; and St. Appolonia conducts the affairs of the toothache! St. Loy presides over the destinies of horses, and St. Anthony manages the swine!

This may serve as a specimen of these and other saints, whose devotees rejoice in their delusion, crowding the edifices which contain the images of their respective saints, especially upon the days allotted to their honour, when they kiss and embrace them with a fanatical fervour that is altogether extraordinary.

The subject is too ridiculous for reasoning; it proceeds from a state of mind which mere arguments alone will never cure; it is the fruit of ignorance which can be removed only by knowledge; it is will worship, which, while it can bring no good to the creature, cannot fail to be highly offensive to the Creator, since it impiously derogates from the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It comes under the same principle as that which pervades the discussion concerning the worship of the Virgin.

It is the introduction of a class of secondary and subordinate mediators who practically have taken the place of the chief, the Lord of Glory, whom by implication, it treats as an unsuitable person for this work of mediation, in the first instance; it implies the necessity of a mediator with a mediator, which, however, as we have said, involves ultimately the exclusion of the primary mediator.

The idea is preposterous, and at utter variance with the foundation of the mediatorial economy. It deserves to be viewed as a serious matter, alike affecting the glory of Christ and the best interests of mankind. The

mediatorial work of the Messiah is one and indivisible; no more can He share that with his creatures, than He could the work of the atonement; and it is just as much permitted to creatures to affect to divide with Him the work of "making an end of sin "-and it is actually done hourly, and everywhere-as of interceding for the sinner. Thus, then, in all points, Popery divides with Him, or robs Him utterly of his glory. The worship of men, whether Apostles or others, is an act of monstrous impiety, full of peril to those who attempt it.

But of angels little need be said beyond the fact that their worship extensively prevails in the Church of Rome, while it is wholly without foundation in the Word of God; and in all respects comes under the same condemnation as the Worship of the Saints. In harmony with our plan, however, it may be proper to show that the practice is founded on the highest Roman authority, since it is regularly provided for by the Council of Trent, in the following words:

"The angels are to be worshipped, because they continually behold God, and have most willingly undertaken the charge of our salvation confided to them."

The homilies of the Church of England contain some excellent thoughts on this subject, which we commend to our readers, while we have much pleasure in closing the present chapter with the admirable words of that greatest of the ancients, in whose days the evil prevailed-Augustine-who thus speaks:

"I can address myself more cheerfully and more safely to my Lord Jesus Christ, than to any of the Holy spirits of God; for this we have a commandment, for the other we have none. There are many promises made to him who prays to Christ that he shall be heard; but to him who prays to saints there is not one in the whole Bible."

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