

**THE VENAL INDULGENCES AND
PARDONS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME:
EXEMPLIFIED IN A SUMMARY OF A
INDULGENCE OF SIXTUS IV FOR THE
REPAIR OF A CATHEDRAL**

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Indulgence of Sixtus IV for the Repair of a Cathedral by Joseph Mendham

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JOSEPH MENDHAM

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THE VENAL
INDULGENCES AND PARDONS

OF THE

CHURCH OF ROME,

EXEMPLIFIED IN A SUMMARY OF AN INDULGENCE OF
SIXTUS IV.

FOR THE REPAIR OF A CATHEDRAL;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE FORMS CALLED CONFESSIONALIA,
APPLICABLE BOTH TO THE LIVING AND THE DEAD;

AND

OBSERVATIONS CONFIRMATORY OF THE
AUTHENTICITY

OF THE

TAXÆ PŒNITENTIARIÆ.

WITH A PLATE.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH MENDHAM, M.A.



..... simpliciter dicendæ sunt indulgentiæ tantum valere, quantum
predicantur: dummodo, &c. *Summa Theologiae S. THOMÆ, Suppl.
Tertiæ Partis, Quæst. xxv., Art. ii., Conclusio.*

Utinam liceret introspicere sensus vestros, recessusque ipsos men-
tis, quibus varias volvitis, atque inlitis obscurissimas cogitationes: repe-
riremus et vos ipsos eandem sentire, quæ nos. *ARNOB. adv. Gentes, lib.
vi., § xi.*

In avaritia fletis verbis de vobis negotiabuntur. *BEATI PETRI Epist.
Sec. ii., 3. Vers. Vulg.*

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TO THE
MOST EMINENT THE PREFECT
AND THE
MOST REVEREND THE CONSULTORS
AND OTHERS
OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE
INDEX IN ROME,
WHOSE INDULGENCE IS SOLICITED TO SPARE THIS
LITTLE VOLUME
FROM INSERTION AMONG THE AUTHORIZED AND PUBLISHED
PROSCRIPTIONS OF THEIR CHURCH;
OR,
SHOULD THAT HOPE PROVE TOO SANGUINE,
TO OBTAIN FOR IT
THE SAME RESCUE AS,
AFTER TWO CENTURIES OF PURGATORIAL SUFFERINGS
(DONEC EXPURGETUR)
WAS, BY PAPAL AUTHORITY,
IN THE INDEX OF EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE,
EXTENDED TO
GALILEO GALILEI, AND HIS SOLAR HERESY—
THIS FURTHER ATTEMPT TO CORROBORATE
“ THE SPIRITUAL VENALITY OF ROME,”
BY HER OWN DOCUMENTS,
IS BENEVOLENTLY INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

WHEN the chapmen of Rome are displaying the wares of the great mystic manufacturer in their front shops and shew rooms, set out with every attraction which unshackled ingenuity can invent and consummate art execute; at the same time concealing, or, if questioned, denying, that they have any other articles in other rooms than those which are public, or indeed any other rooms at all—the attempt ought not to be considered as superfluous, to discover, whether all this be strictly the fact; whether there are not back and secret, possibly underground premises, where engines and machinery may exist and be at work, to produce the exhibition in the public rooms; whether there be not an apparatus for the sole and direct purpose of manufacturing articles of false and deceptive quality; and, above all, whether there are not in the apartments, not exposed to common view, a store of odious, noxious, and destructive things, vials of intoxicating draughts, and poisons of all descriptions, instruments of torture and death, illusive optic-glasses, and abun-

dance of revolting filth. If such things are, it is imperative upon those who would not fail in their highest duty to their fellow creatures, to throw open the imposture to the light of day, and not, by their own unfaithful omission, allow the simple and trustful to be deceived to their spiritual mischief or perdition. They are bound to expose and warn, as occasion may present; and plainly to tell every passenger who may be wistfully gazing at the windows, and tempted to enter the doors, of the enchanted shop, and at least glance at the seductive furniture within, which the mercantile sorceress offers at the reasonable price of his understanding and conscience, that "her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Prov. vii., 27.

Amidst the cross-firing of different parties now existing, such a procedure is not in eminent favour. There seems to prevail at present a very extensive tenderness for falsehood and irreligion, a concern that they should not be too severely handled. Men, whatever they are, should not, by exposure, be made

Desperate, if they once are bad.

The old, honest, straightforward way, however, appears on the whole the best. And without endeavouring to fortify myself in following it by other authority, I will at once take shelter under that of the individuals, who are generally known by the appellation of the *Fathers of the Church*. These

exemplary men, as writers, are returning to high sway in popular estimation. Not only are their decided merits enthusiastically admitted and proclaimed, but a veil is indulgently thrown over what are decidedly and obviously their infirmities, and no slight ones—their best side is almost exclusively presented—they have been elevated from a station of comparatively and certainly very unjust contempt to one of distinguished honour—the *genuineness* of particular writings is shyly dealt with—scholars shrink with a sensitive aversion from such works as open the fountains of criticism on this subject.* Such conduct might be entitled to more praise if it were not vitiated by what, in compliance with modern usage, we must call Ultraism. It will, however, with all competent judges, be admitted, that the earlier Christian writers have been as unduly depressed as they are now unduly exalted. Themselves, were they to return among us, would be the first to reclaim against the modified idolatry with which they are now venerated and abused. They would direct the “wholesome advice to their indiscreet admirers,” (I do not say “wor-

* In the *British Magazine* for May, 1839, pp. 511, and following, may be read a well written and seasonable letter, which proves, in the case of the *British Critic*, a Quarterly now under the sole conduct of the sect at Oxford, how naturally the *approximators* to the theology of Rome adopt the *disingenuousness* of her criticism in the interpretation of the *Fathers*, as well as all other works affecting her creed.

shippers,") not to deprive them of their *due* honour by claiming for them *extravagant*. The honour to which they are legitimately intitled is indisputably great, principally as reporters of the facts and belief of their own early age, as far as their probable information, judgment, and integrity qualified them so to be; and the advantage above them which many moderns possess is to be ascribed to the clear present which they have made of their own acquisitions. Those who qualify their admiration of the primitive writers of Christianity bestow upon them the greatest and purest honour. By such, their authority is justly, and therefore highly, appreciated.

These individuals, however estimated, felt no restraint in exposing and denouncing both falsehood and impiety, wherever they were found, in the terms properly belonging to them. The Apologists in particular, as their subject would lead them, were distinguished by this openness of dealing. They were apologists for themselves, as they had a right to be, but none for the iniquities of their enemies and persecutors. They had no soft, palliating, words and phrases for them. They exposed heathenism with the mercy which alone it deserved, that is none. Without ceremony they tore away all its specious disguises, and left the defendants to call for candour and liberality where they were due. And they never desisted from stigmatizing vice and