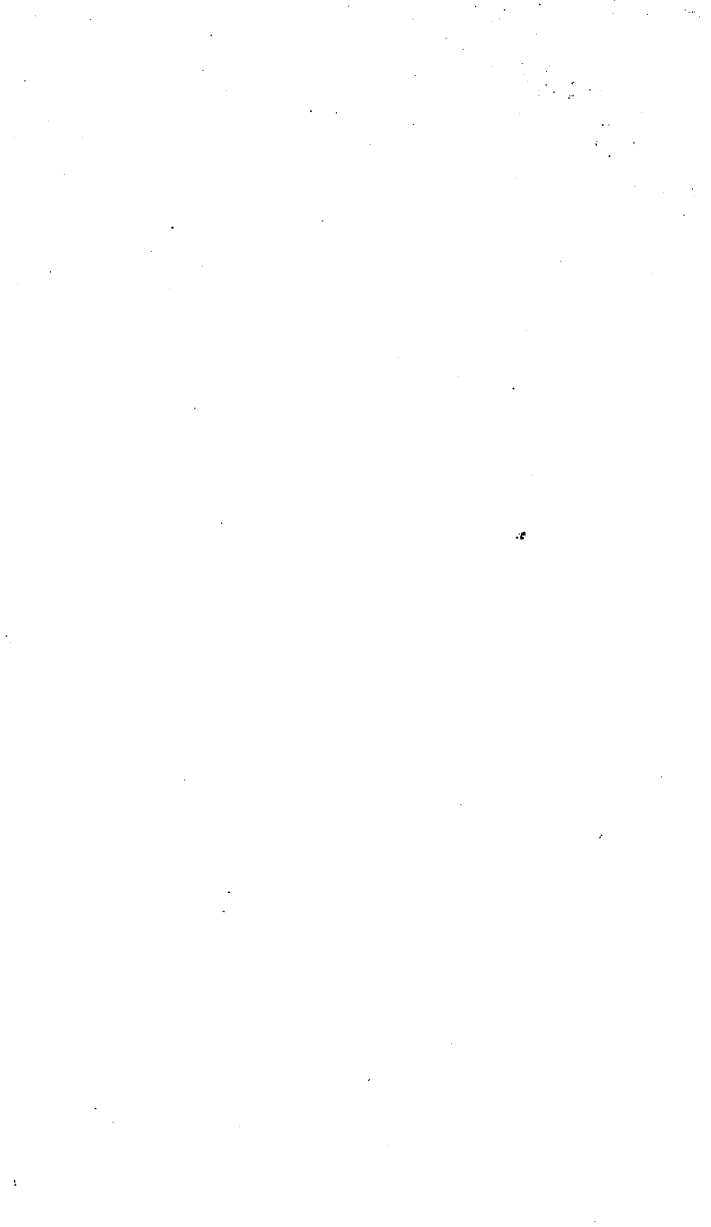


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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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Nos: I. & II.

I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES  
GRANTED BY THE POPE.



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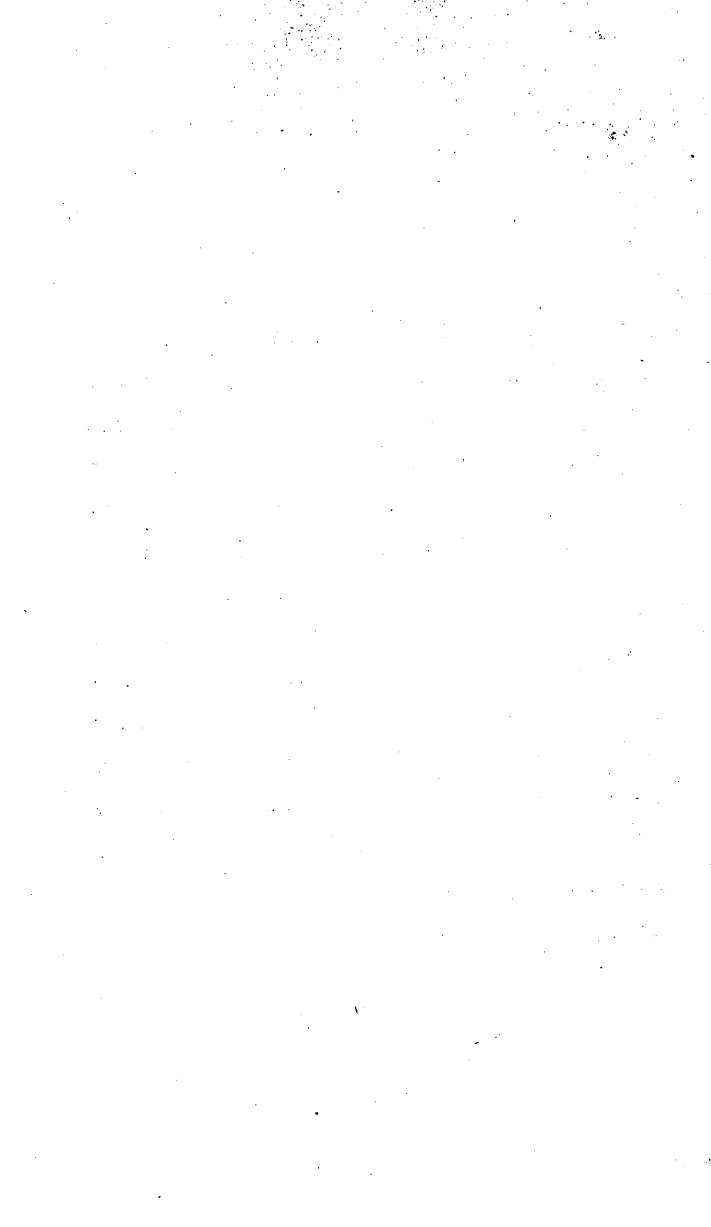
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts are the first of a series intended to be issued on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—[continued].

IN examining the references to the Psalms the reader will bear in mind that our English version, which strictly follows the original Hebrew, differs from the Roman Catholic version in the numbering of the Psalms from the 9th to the 147th. The Roman Catholic version throws our 9th and 10th Psalms into one; and thus our 11th becomes their 10th, our 12th their 11th, and so on till the 147th, which they divide into two, beginning their 147th at the 12th verse of ours. Between these limits, consequently, the reader, in referring to a passage quoted from the Roman Catholic version, must turn in our version to the Psalm next after that so quoted. Thus, if the quotation is taken from the 50th Psalm in the Roman Catholic version, the reader must refer to the 51st Psalm in ours.



# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## *On the Supremacy of the Pope.*

THE root and groundwork of much of the evil which for many centuries oppressed the nations of Christendom, (our own country not less than others,) was, in the assumption by Rome, of universal sovereignty over all the churches and all the kingdoms of the world, and of infallibility vested in her sovereign pontiff. The advocates of Roman supremacy claim the whole of Christ's fold as Rome's heritage. The Bishop of Rome they maintain to be the sole vicar of Christ, his vicegerent and representative on earth. Except in the communion of Rome, they deny that there is any spiritual safety. The doctrines sanctioned by the Pope are all put on an equality with the plainest revelations of the written word of God; for them all they claim the same certainty. Not content with spiritual dominion over the consciences of Christians, the Popes assume to themselves a divine right to dethrone kings, to release the subjects of any Government from their allegiance, and to shut out from the fold of Christ all who impede or refuse to second the Court of Rome in the exercise of these powers.

We in England have been so long accustomed to the protection which our constitution is strong enough to guarantee to us all against the attacks of any foreign tyranny, spiritual or temporal, that we not only feel easy as to any future interference on the part of Rome affecting our spiritual liberty and political independence, but we can scarcely, without an effort, conceive that our country ever was in reality exposed to any such dangers as we are now contemplating. We are incredulous as to the facts alleged—we suspect some mistake, either wilful or involuntary, as to the actual exercise of such enormous and monstrous

power by the Court of Rome; we consequently feel not so much need of proofs to show that the assumption of such power by any man, or any body of men, is unjustifiable; we want rather to be satisfied that such powers have been claimed and exercised—that the doctrine of the sovereignty and infallibility of the Pope is inherent in the papal system, and has been carried into execution in our own country; for whatever it may be in words, however monstrous in theory, if it never was accompanied by any outward and tangible act which might endanger the peace and threaten the liberties of our native land or our colonies, we might well let it pass as a dead letter.

To know then what in this point Rome has actually been in spirit and in practice, and what therefore, under a combination of favourable events, Rome may to our peril and cost be again, we need not have recourse to the early history of our people, when all professed one religion and all acknowledged allegiance to Rome (though many a dark page in that history abounds with evidence to the same point); nor need we rely on our own documentary annals, nor on the testimony of our accredited historians; abundant proof, evidence beyond gainsaying or suspicion, is contained to this very day in the records of Rome itself. We need look only to the bull or letters apostolic, as the Pope's decrees are called, by which Pope Pius the Fifth excommunicated and condemned our Queen Elizabeth, and as far as he could, deprived her of her throne; absolved her subjects from their oath of allegiance; and laid under the same curse and anathema all who dared to maintain her rights, or adhere to her as their sovereign. This indisputable proof of what Rome has shown herself to be, even since the reformation of religion in England, and what she might be again, if from morbid delicacy or carelessness we betray our trust, and cease to guard ourselves against the revival of such extravagant pretensions, is recorded in the second volume of the Roman Pontiff's decrees

called the Bullarium. It bears date April 27th, 1570, (that is in the fifth year of his pontificate, the twelfth year of Elizabeth's reign,) and is entitled "The Condemnation and Excommunication of Elizabeth Queen of England and of her Adherents, with the addition of other punishments, by Pope Pius the Fifth." Among other passages are the following:—

"He who reigns on high, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, delivered one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, without the pale of which is no salvation, to one only person in earth, namely, to the prince (or chief, *principi*) of the Apostles, to Peter, and to Peter's successor, the Roman Pontiff, to be governed in the plenitude of power. This one person he appointed prince (or chief) over all nations and all kingdoms, to pluck up, to destroy, to scatter abroad, to disperse, to plant, and to build, that he might in the unity of the Spirit keep together the faithful people, bound by the tie of mutual charity, and present them safe and unhurt to their Saviour. . . . But the number of impious men has so increased in power, that no place in the world is now left which they have not tried to corrupt by the worst doctrines: among others, Elizabeth, the servant of wickedness, the pretended Queen of England, adding her endeavours; with whom, as their asylum, the most hostile of all have found a refuge."

Then having enumerated her alleged crimes and impieties, that she had in a monstrous manner usurped to herself the place of supreme head and chief authority in the Church in all England, compelling her subjects to abjure the authority of the Roman Pontiff, and on their oath to acknowledge herself as sovereign in temporal and spiritual matters, and not suffering the Pope's nuncios to pass over into England to reason and remonstrate with her, the Pope proceeds:—

"We, by necessity driven, to the arms of justice against her, cannot soothe our grief that we are led to punish one whose ancestors deserved so well of the



Christian commonwealth; wherefore upheld by the authority of him who willed to place us (though unequal to such a work) on this supreme throne of justice, we, of the plenitude of the Apostolic power, declare that the aforesaid Elizabeth, being a heretic and the favourer of heretics, and those who adhere to her in the matters aforesaid, have incurred the sentence of cursing, and are cut off from the unity of Christ's body; and moreover that she herself is deprived of her pretended right to the kingdom aforesaid, and also of all and every kind of dominion, dignity, and privilege; and likewise that the nobles, subjects, and people of the said kingdom, and all others who have in any way whatever sworn to her, are for ever absolved from such oath, and utterly from all obligation of dominion, fealty, and obedience, as we by authority of these presents do absolve them; and we deprive the same Elizabeth of her pretended right of the kingdom, and of all others aforesaid; and we charge and forbid all and singular the nobles, subjects, people, and others aforesaid, that they dare not obey her or her admonitions, commands, and laws. Whosoever shall act otherwise, them we bind by like sentence of cursing."

Now it pleased the King of Heaven, by whom earthly kings reign, that this anathema of the Sovereign Pontiff deposing the Queen of England should fall lifeless to the ground; but that was, because the adherents of Rome were too weak to carry his will and decree into execution. Our own history tells us of an earlier time when the Pope's malediction and interdict threw misery and mourning over the whole land; as this anathema of excommunication and dethronement would have done, had his supporters been sufficiently numerous and powerful. Rome has never abandoned the right to which that Pope laid claim; and as long as she usurps the title of mistress and queen of all nations, and clings to her commission to pull down and destroy, agree-

ably to the dictates of her own infallibility, so long our duty to God, to our Church, to our nation, and to our children's children, calls upon us as wise men to guard against the most remote return of such danger; to take provident measures that Rome shall hereafter gain no footing in England. Our firm resolve on this point must never lead us to judge harshly, or act unkindly, or entertain a wish to interfere with the consciences of individuals. To our fellow-subjects who acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, we must show all forbearance and charity, cheerfully conceding to them the same liberty of conscience which we claim as our own birthright. But let us take good care that the temptation be never laid before them of joining together, and with others, in upholding the aggressive authority of Rome against the liberties of this country. Doubtless for the overthrow of our Church, Atheists, Infidels, and various classes of professed Christians, all opposed to Rome, would gladly confederate with Rome itself.

Circumstances, how improbable soever now, may conspire to bring about such a combination: and necessity is laid upon us to be on our guard against the united efforts of such heterogeneous enemies, and in this view it is well for us never to speak of the supremacy claimed by the Pope as a harmless shadow. It may suit the purposes of the adherents of Rome in our own times to represent these precautions as the fruits of unworthy suspicions, groundless anticipations, the dreams of bigotry, fitted rather for benighted ages long passed away, than for the enlightened liberality of modern times. But our spiritual inheritance is too valuable in itself, and too dear to us for any fear of such hard names to drive us from its present defence, or from prospective measures for its future safety. It is the best treasure bequeathed to us by our forefathers, and with God's blessing we will deliver it down whole and entire to our children's children.

If we enquire into the origin of this claim of the Roman Pontiff to supreme and universal dominion over all the churches of the world, we find, by the most searching examination of the earliest authentic records, that the assumption of such dignity and power was never made on the part of Rome till after many centuries from the time of our Lord's death.

The primitive church never recognised such a claim, nor ever heard of it. There is no allusion to it in Scripture, nor in the remains of the most remote antiquity. It resulted as one of the many accumulated and various changes, which time and opportunities brought about in opposition to the primitive and apostolic system. Pagan Rome had reduced the nations of the world under its own iron sceptre; and the spiritual tyranny of papal Rome, gradually step by step, here a little and there a little, as favourable occasions offered, was built upon the same foundation. To those who would for themselves sift the evidence on which these assertions are made, may be recommended a work full of sound reasoning, extensive learning, and Christian charity, written by John Henry Hopkins, bishop of Vermont, in America, who proves these points beyond all doubt and gainsaying by a calm, and searching, and candid examination of those very fathers and writers of the early Christian Church, against whose testimony Rome cannot demur; for they are the very authors, whose authority she herself maintains in her canon law<sup>1</sup>. The work, too, of Dr. Isaac Barrow, entitled 'A Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy,' deserves the especial examination of all who feel anxious to make themselves masters of this subject.

<sup>1</sup> This work is entitled "The Church of Rome in her primitive purity, compared with the Church of Rome at the present day, being a candid examination of her claims to universal dominion, addressed in the spirit of Christian kindness to the Roman Hierarchy." The first edition was published in America in the year 1837; the English edition appeared in 1839, with a valuable preface by the Rev. Henry Melvill.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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No. II.

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ON

PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED  
BY THE POPE.



## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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### *Pardons and Indulgences granted by the Pope.*

IT must be remembered throughout, that the object before us is not to fasten on individuals of the Church of Rome doctrines or views which they disclaim; it is to endeavour, as honest and prudent men, to preserve our Church and nation from any return of those corruptions in doctrine and practice, from which the Reformation set us free. In pursuing this end, we cannot rest satisfied with the partial and rhetorical representation of Roman tenets and Roman practices, which is now sometimes made in their pulpits by preachers of that Church before mixed congregations, and is not unfrequently issued from the press. Especially at this time when the members of that Church are engaged with renewed ardour, and almost unprecedented zeal in making the religion of Rome palatable to our countrymen, and facilitating by every device the path of the proselyte, we must, in fairness, see what were the current practical doctrines which the Reformation banished from our Church; what our forefathers were taught, before England threw off the yoke of Rome; nay, what they were compelled to believe and acquiesce in, or else submit to the curse of excommunication. On the assumed supremacy of the Roman Pontiff we have spoken in another part; our thoughts are now drawn to the power assumed by the Pope,

and his priesthood under him, of granting pardons (or as they were familiarly called indulgences),—that is, a release, on certain conditions, from all, or a portion of the temporal punishment otherwise due to sin from God's justice,—the benefit, whatever it be, to be derived to the guilty soul from the ministration of the Roman hierarchy, either in this world, or after death has closed our time of probation.

On the subject of this chapter we may freely confess that, were not the very books themselves (not reprints, but the originals,) still in existence, we could scarcely have believed any testimony as to what they really contained. But (happily for the truth's sake) various copies of the books themselves, printed before the Reformation, are still in existence, preserved in our libraries, and accessible to all. We need not say, "Our ears have heard, our fathers tell;" our own eyes see what was then the doctrine of pardon and indulgences; what power the popes of Rome actually assumed over the dead as well as the living. No doubt the monstrous forms which these spiritual wickednesses had assumed, had so disgusted Christendom, and threatened so loudly and intelligibly to shake the very throne of Rome, that resolutions were passed in the Council of Trent to check the enormity of the evil. The council forbade that "wicked gains" [pravos quæstus] should be derived from the granting of indulgences; and directed the Bishops to inquire into other abuses, and report them to the Pope, "lest by the too great ease of obtaining indulgences, ecclesiastical discipline might be weakened."—Dec. 4, 1563. But the evil exists even to the present day, as we shall see before the close of this chapter, in its very same nature, though its most monstrous shapes are no longer visible among us in England. These are dark and melancholy subjects, and we will not dwell upon them at any unnecessary length; but we must not disguise the reality, or extenuate the greatness of the evil.

In our own times we have been told by preachers and writers of the Roman Church in our own country, that all that is meant by indulgences is, “a releasing, by the power of the keys, the debt of TEMPORAL<sup>1</sup> punishment which may remain due upon account of our sins, after the sins themselves, as to the guilt and eternal punishment, have been already remitted by repentance and confession<sup>2</sup>”—“that the priest may offer prayers for the souls in purgatory, and he can moreover offer the sacrifice of the mass—that all he can do is, to apply to the mercy of God in behalf of the dead; but that, like other men, he must remain uncertain as to the efficacy of his prayers—THAT HE CLAIMS NO AUTHORITY OR JURISDICTION OVER THE DEAD<sup>3</sup>.”

But what was the belief and practice of the Roman church before the time of the Reformation, and what is it now? Do her spiritual powers claim no authority or jurisdiction over the dead? In good faith, do not her promises and declarations of pardon extend to the other world? And does she not claim jurisdiction over the souls in purgatory, so as to release them from their torments altogether, (in which case the pardon is called a Plenary Indulgence,) or remit such a portion of its bitter pains, and for so long a period and on such conditions, as her spiritual officers on earth shall determine?

First let us see what was the doctrine and what the practice just before the Reformation in England.

Leo the Tenth, who was Pope from 1513 to 1521,

<sup>1</sup> By TEMPORAL punishment we have generally understood punishment endured in this life; but when we read Roman Catholic definitions and explanations of pardons and indulgences, we shall be misled if we confine the term to this life; it extends to the bitter pains after death of souls in purgatory, though no mention be made of the next world.

<sup>2</sup> Chaloner, London; Jones, 1843, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Sermon preached at Bradford, July 27, 1825, by Peter Augustus Baines, D.D., Bishop of Siga. London; Booker, 1826, p. 24: republished with the authority of the Bishops of the Church of Rome in England and Scotland, and its committee of Lay members, as No. 2, by the Society called The Catholic Institute of Great Britain.



states the doctrine, (at the same time denouncing excommunication against all who should deny it,) in a letter of instruction to his legate at the court of Maximilian. Having referred to the report that had reached him, that "some divines, even professing to follow Roman doctrine, had by preaching on indulgences which had been customarily granted by himself and his predecessors, Popes of Rome, in times beyond memory, imprinted errors on the hearts of many;" and having charged his legate to reprove and condemn those men, Leo proceeds:—

"And in order that hereafter no one may plead ignorance of the Roman doctrine about indulgences of this kind and their efficacy, or excuse himself by the pretext of such ignorance, or help himself by a feigned protest, but that they may be convicted and condemned as guilty of a notorious lie, we have thought it our duty to signify to you, by these presents, that the Roman church, which, as their mother, other churches are bound to follow, has taught by tradition that the Roman Pontiff, successor of the key-bearer, Peter, and vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth, by the power of the keys, (the office of which is to open, by removing in the faithful of Christ its impediments, that is to say, the guilt and punishment due for actual sins, the guilt being removed by means of the sacrament of penance, and the temporal punishment due according to Divine justice for actual sins being removed by ecclesiastical indulgence,) may for reasonable causes grant to the same faithful of Christ, who by the bond of charity are members of Christ, whether they be in this life or in purgatory, indulgences out of the superabundance of the merits of Christ and of the saints; and on the apostolic authority, by granting the indulgence as well for the living as for the dead, to dispense the treasure of the merits of Christ and the saints, he has been accustomed either to CONFER the indulgence itself by the way of absolution, or by the way of suffrage to TRANSFER it; and con-

sequently that all, as well the living as the dead, who shall truly have obtained indulgences of this kind, are freed from so much temporal punishment, due according to Divine justice to their actual sins, as is equivalent to the indulgence granted and obtained; and that thus it must be held and taught by all under pain of the sentence of excommunication, from which (unless at the point of death) they cannot obtain the benefit of absolution, except from the Apostolic authority, we decree by the tenor of these same presents <sup>4</sup>.”

This exposition of the doctrine and practice of indulgences by Leo X. seems to have been a sort of text-book, as we shall soon be reminded, down to this very day.

Much discussion has been entertained by Roman Catholic writers as to the precise distinction here made by Leo between the conferring of an indulgence by absolution and transferring it by suffrage. Cardinal Bellarmin<sup>5</sup>, whose dissertation on indulgences presents most startling views to those who have not before been acquainted with the real doctrine and practice of Rome, maintains this to be the distinction: The Pope, he says, grants an indulgence by absolution directly to the individual, when he remits the punishment and guilt to the sinner in this life; whereas, in the other case, he transfers from the Church's treasure of the merits of Christ and the saints so much as will satisfy the Divine justice, and procure, as an equivalent for those merits, either the total remission of the punishment, or such a proportion of it as the indulgence expressly grants. The Cardinal illustrates it by what he considers more familiar to his readers, but what would convey to our minds somewhat of the same idea of superstition and impious intrusion into the province of the Almighty. “Therefore,” he says, “in the same manner as when any one gives alms, or fasts, or goes a pilgrimage to holy places for the sake of the dead,

<sup>4</sup> Le Plat, vol. ii. p. 21, &c.: Brit. Mus. 491, i.

<sup>5</sup> Bellarmin, Paris, 1608, vol. iii. p. 1169.

he does not absolve the dead from the state of punishment, but offers that satisfaction for the dead so that, God accepting it, frees the dead from the debt of the punishment which they would have suffered; so the Pontiff does not absolve the souls of the dead, but offers to God out of the treasure as much as is required to liberate them; and God, accepting the satisfaction of another person communicating it to the souls of the dead, frees them from the state of punishment<sup>6</sup>."

Of the deplorable application, however, of this doctrine in actual practice in our own country we have too abundant testimony; indeed were that evidence found in the books of our Reformers, we should have questioned whether they had not been mistaken, whether we were not reading their inferences rather than the undoubted facts themselves; whether, however honestly they might have desired to give their testimony, they had not exaggerated the evil—nay, were not the awful subject of man's salvation ever before our eyes, the reality could scarcely, in many cases, do otherwise than excite ridicule.

In a work in English, entitled "The Hours of the most blessed Virgin Mary, according to the legitimate use of the Church of Salisbury<sup>7</sup>," published at Paris in 1526, just five years after the death of Leo the Tenth, and only twenty-three years before our Book of Common Prayer was first published, we find such instances of the practical working of the doctrine declared by that Pope as would probably be pronounced unworthy inventions of the enemies of Rome, were they found in professed transcripts from the originals, or reported on the evidence of eye-witnesses, however respectable.

The volume abounds with forms of prayer to the Virgin, many of them prefaced by notifications of indulgences, startling indeed to us, but apparently familiar to our countrymen of that day, promised to

<sup>6</sup> Paris, 1608, vol. iii. p. 489.

<sup>7</sup> A copy may be examined in the British Museum.

those who duly repeat the prayers. These indulgences are granted by Popes and by Bishops, some of them dead centuries before that time. They guarantee remission of punishment for different spaces of time, varying from a few weeks to ninety thousand years: they undertake to warrant freedom from hell; they promise remission of punishment for deadly sins and for venial sins to the same person and on the same condition; they assure, according to the spiritual wants of the individual, both a commutation of the pains of eternal damnation for the pains of purgatory, and a change of the sufferings of purgatory into a full and free pardon.

The following specimens, a few selected from an over-abundant supply, will exemplify the several particulars specified in the above summary:—

1. “Laurence, Bishop of Assaven, hath granted forty days of pardon to all them that devoutly say this prayer in the worship of our blessed Lady, being penitent and truly confessed of all their sins. Oratio, Gaude Virgo, Mater Christi<sup>8</sup>.”

This was Laurence Child, who was made Bishop of St. Asaph, 1382.

2. “To all them that be in a state of grace, that daily say devoutly this prayer before our blessed Lady of Pity, she will show them her blessed visage, and warn them the day and hour of death; and in their last end the angels of God shall yield their souls to heaven; and he<sup>9</sup> shall obtain five hundred years and so many Lents of pardon, granted by five holy Fathers, Popes of Rome<sup>1</sup>.”

3. “Our holy Father, Sixtus IV.<sup>2</sup>, Pope, hath granted to all them that devoutly say this prayer before the image of our Lady, the sum of XIM.

<sup>8</sup> Folio 35.

<sup>9</sup> “They.” The language no less than the printing is in many of these passages inaccurate, but it is thought better to quote each passage as it appears.

<sup>1</sup> Folio 38.

<sup>2</sup> Sixtus IV. had been then dead somewhat more than forty years.

(eleven thousand) years of pardon., Ave, sanctissima. Maria, Mater Dei, Regina Cœli<sup>3</sup>.”

4. “To all them that before this image of Pity, devoutly say five Pat. Nos. and five Aves and a Credo, piteously beholding these arms of Christ’s passion, are granted XXXIIM. VII. hundred and LV. (thirty-two thousand seven hundred and fifty-five) years of pardon; and Sixtus IV., Pope of Rome, hath made the fourth and fifth prayer, and hath doubled his aforesaid pardon<sup>4</sup>.”

5. “Our holy Father, the Pope John XXII., hath granted to all them that devoutly say this prayer, after the elevation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3000 days of pardon for deadly sins<sup>5</sup>.”

6. “Our holy Father, Pope Innocent III., hath granted to all them that say these three prayers following devoutly, remission of all their sins, confessed and contrite<sup>6</sup>.”

7. “These three prayers be written in the chapel of the Holy Cross, in Rome, otherwise called Sacellum Sanctæ Crucis Septem Romanorum; who that devoutly say them shall obtain XCM. (ninety thousand) years of pardon for deadly sins<sup>7</sup>, granted of our holy Father, John XXII., Pope of Rome<sup>8</sup>.”

8. “Who that devoutly beholdeth these arms of our Lord Jesus Christ shall obtain six thousand years of pardon of our holy Father Saint Peter, the first Pope of Rome, and of XXX. (thirty) other Popes of the Church of Rome, successors after him; and our holy Father, Pope John XXII., hath granted to all them, very contrite and truly confessed, that say these devout prayers following in the commemoration of the bitter passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, three thousand years of pardon for DEADLY sins, and other three thousand for VENIAL sins<sup>9</sup>.”

We will only add one more instance. The following

<sup>3</sup> Folio 42.

<sup>4</sup> Folio 54.

<sup>5</sup> Folio 58.

<sup>6</sup> Folio 63.

<sup>8</sup> Folio 66.

<sup>9</sup> Folio 68.

announcement accompanies a prayer of St. Bernard, "Who that devoutly, with a contrite heart, say this orison, if he be that day in a state of eternal damnation, then this eternal pain shall be changed him in temporal pain of purgatory; then if he hath deserved the pain of purgatory, it shall be forgotten and forgiven through the infinite mercy of God."

On this it may be observed, that Cardinal Bellarmine does not venture to express any doubt of his own as to the genuineness of those indulgences which extend over many thousands of years; and he tells us, moreover, that those who entertained such a doubt, on the ground that the Pope never granted indulgences to souls in purgatory for a longer period than would have been sufficient to expiate their guilt by penance, were utterly mistaken, for that agreeably to the canons some souls would not suffer enough punishment in purgatory in the course even of thousands of years: and he quotes the opinion that some must, if left to themselves, remain there in torments till the day of judgment. Still, according to Bellarmine and other modern writers, the Church of Rome professes to exercise no jurisdiction over souls condemned to eternal fire. They tell us, that however grievously a man may have sinned, and however bitterly he may be punished in the next world for his crimes, yet the pains of purgatory are the only sufferings which the indulgences of that Church are believed to shorten or mitigate. This theory is, indeed, inconsistent with the promise in "The Hours of the Virgin," that a man's pain of eternal damnation should be changed for him into temporal pain of purgatory. But when human corruptions are allowed to carry men away so far and so recklessly from Gospel truth, contradictions and inconsistencies afford little matter of surprise.

It is melancholy to reflect that such were the husks, or rather the deadly poisons, once supplied to our countrymen instead of the bread of life. But is it fair to fasten upon our Roman Catholic brethren now such

impious enormities? We desire to do no such thing; yet we do desire that our countrymen of the present day should become better acquainted than they have been with the nature of the evils from which the Reformation rescued us. But, as we have intimated above, though such gross blasphemies do not shock our eyes in England now, yet in theory and in practice the doctrine of indulgences, extending not only to this life but to the next, is still the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and is still operative, acted upon by the hierarchy and received by the laity; and of this we have abundant proof.

In the first place, the doctrine is maintained and the practice sanctioned by the decrees of the Council of Trent, and enforced by a condemnation and curse on all who should oppugn it.

In the second place, the doctrine is affirmed in the creed of Pope Pius IV., as one article of the Catholic faith, without which no one can be saved. To their entire belief in this creed all officers in the Church of Rome are bound by an oath on the Gospels; and their assent to it, without restriction or qualification, all proselytes on their admission into that Church are bound to testify.

In the third place, the Popes at the present day grant indulgences on certain stipulated conditions, extending expressly to purgatory.

And, lastly, the clergy and laity of the Roman church accept those indulgences, extending to the next world, as boons to be prized most highly for their eminent spiritual efficacy, and urge their fellow members to avail themselves of such means of salvation.

These four points it will be now incumbent on us to establish.

First, as to the Council of Trent. To what is declared in this council, the creed of Pope Pius IV. compels every Roman Catholic to assent; and not only himself to assent, and undoubtingly to receive and confess it, but at the same time in like manner to condemn, reject, and curse with anathemas, all that is

contrary thereto. In the twenty-fifth session of this council, Dec. 4, 1563, the decree runs in these words:—"Since the power of conferring indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church, and she has used a power of this kind, divinely delivered to herself, even in the most ancient times, this most holy synod teaches and instructs, that the use of indulgences, in the greatest degree salutary to Christian people, and approved by the authority of sacred councils, is to be retained; and condemns those with a curse, who either assert that they are useless, or deny that the power of granting them is in the Church."

The remainder of the decree (as we have before intimated) merely forbids "depraved gains" to be obtained for granting these indulgences, and leaves the rest of the abuses to be inquired into by the bishops, and reported to Rome. Not one single word is there as to the limiting an indulgence to the remission of temporal penances for sin in this world, or as to modifying the indulgence, that is, the remission of punishment in the world beyond the grave, within limits less awfully startling than those which the "Hours of the Virgin, according to the use of Salisbury," announced. Nor would the decrees of Trent have been consistent with the present practice, had they not sanctioned the doctrine, that the Church of Rome still possesses power, put into operation by some means or other of her own approval, to remit the pains of purgatory. The reality may not now be put before us in such broad characters, as it assumed in the early years of the sixteenth century; but the reality is in truth one and the self-same—less appalling and less palpably blasphemous, but not one whit less real, and much more deceitful and seducing.

Secondly,—The creed of Pope Pius, called by Roman Catholics "their profession of faith," thus expresses the two parts of the doctrine, of which whoever denies the one or the other, is condemned



with an anathema by the Council of Trent. "I affirm that the power of indulgences was by Christ left in the Church, and that the use of them is salutary to Christian people<sup>1</sup>."

Of the third and fourth points we have proof to the overflow. Roman Catholic books abound with evidence, that Pope Leo's doctrine is still maintained in theory, and acted upon practically, in all its parts—that the Pope grants indulgences, that is, remits the guilt and the temporal punishment due from Divine justice to actual sins—that some of these are plenary indulgences, that is, entire and complete remission of guilt and punishment; others are partial, that is, a remission of so much only of the guilt and punishment as is specified in each separate indulgence; that some of these indulgences relate to this life, others extend to the life beyond the grave. To establish these points we need not refer to distant times, or unwilling witnesses; our own days furnish too ample testimony.

Take, for example, the bull of Pope Leo XII. granting the last "grand jubilee," only one-and-twenty years ago, "celebrated at Rome in the course of the holy year 1825, and extended to the Universal Church in 1826." The entire doctrine of indulgences may be drawn from the language of this single document:—

"During this year, which we truly call the acceptable time, and the time of salvation," said this mortal man, "we are resolved, in virtue of the authority given to us by Heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, and of his Virgin Mother, and of all the saints, WHICH THE AUTHOR OF HUMAN SALVATION HAS ENTRUSTED TO OUR DISPENSATION:

"Let the earth, therefore, hear the words of our mouth, and let the whole world joyfully hearken to the voice of the priestly trumpet, sounding forth to God's people the sacred jubilee. We proclaim that

<sup>1</sup> Chaloner, p. 58.

the year of atonement and pardon, of redemption and grace, of remission and indulgence, is arrived.

“We, with the assent of our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, do, by the authority of Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, for the glory of God Himself, the exaltation of the Catholic Church, and the sanctification of all Christian people, ordain and publish the universal and most solemn jubilee, to commence in this holy city from the first Vespers of the Nativity, and to continue during the whole year 1825: during which year of jubilee WE MERCIFULLY GIVE AND GRANT in the Lord a plenary indulgence, remission, and pardon of all their sins to all the faithful of Christ of both sexes, truly penitent and confessing their sins, and receiving the Holy Communion, who shall devoutly visit the churches of blessed Peter and Paul, as also of St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major, of this city, for thirty successive days.”

Pope Leo subsequently laments, that, “some persons covering themselves with sheep’s clothing, under the usual pretence of a more refined piety, were sowing among the people erroneous comments on this subject,” and he urges all patriarchs and bishops to explain clearly “the power of indulgences; what is their efficacy, not only in the remission of the canonical penance, but also of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice for past sins; and what succour is afforded OUT OF THIS HEAVENLY TREASURE, from the merits of Christ and his saints, to such as have DEPARTED REAL PENITENTS IN GOD’S LOVE, yet before they had duly satisfied, by fruits worthy of penance, for sin of commission and omission, and are NOW PURIFYING IN THE FIRE OF PURGATORY, that an entrance may be opened for them into their eternal country where nothing defiled is admitted<sup>2</sup>.”

Four years after that jubilee, the Roman breviary, in four volumes, was printed at Norwich with the sanc-

<sup>2</sup> Laity’s Directory for 1825.—Keating and Brown.

tion of the pope, and by his permission adapted expressly for England; and what view of the Roman doctrine of indulgences do we find there? At the very opening of the breviary, between the calendar and the Psalms, we read this announcement,—“To those who devoutly recite the following prayer after performing service, Pope Leo X. hath forgiven the defects and faults in performing it which have been contracted by human frailty.” That pope died more than three centuries ago; and yet, in 1830, his promise of indulgence and pardon is recognized and put forward in the public offices and authorized rituals of the Church of Rome. To us there is something awfully revolting, in the thought of a mortal man prescribing for future ages, the conditions on which the frailties of human nature shall be pardoned; and of priests in the temple, even now, being taught to rely on such a promise of pardon, of whatever character it be, or whatever kind of punishment it may be supposed to remit. To believe that a priest can be put into a better condition by such a promise, does seem to be the very height of superstition.

But a work published at Derby only three years ago, entitled, “Manual of Devotion, for the use of the brethren and sisters of the confraternity of the Living Rosary of the blessed Virgin Mary, by Ambrose Lisle Phillips, Esq., of Grace Dieu Manor<sup>3</sup>,” renders all other evidence superfluous; the testimony borne by it is in every point complete. In the first place, page 22, this Roman Catholic writer copies a letter by the present pope, Gregory XVI., dated Rome, Feb. 2, 1832, of which the following are parts. The letter the pope addresses to “John F. Betemps, Canon of Lyons, and the Vicar of St. Roc, Paris.

“In the midst of that profound sorrow wherewith these evil days have overwhelmed our soul, we have found one subject of consolation, in that which we have heard touching a pious exercise, instituted to promote the devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary,

<sup>3</sup> Derby, 1843.

under the title of the Living Rosary. Most heartily do we concur with our authority, in order to help you in extending this pious institution; wherefore we open to you the heavenly treasures of holy indulgences, as you will find in the Apostolic Letter which we have directed to you, appended unto this. Continue, then, dear children, encouraged by this spiritual assistance, which we have drawn forth for you from the inexhaustible treasury of God.

“To this letter is appended an apostolic brief, wherein the holy father is pleased to grant the following indulgences to all the faithful in Christ of both sexes, who shall be inscribed in the guild, or confraternity of the Living Rosary.

“1. Plenary indulgence, receiving the Holy Communion after a devout confession on the first festival day after their admission into the guild.

“2. All the indulgences hitherto annexed to the recital of the Rosary.

“3. Indulgences of a hundred days as often as the members shall recite their appointed decade of the Rosary on working days.

“4. Indulgences of seven years and seven quadragesimæ, [Lents,] as often as they shall recite their aforesaid decades on Sundays and holydays, as well those of obligation, as on those which are no longer of obligation, and every day during the octaves of Christmas, Easter, Whit-Sunday, Corpus Christi, the Assumption, the Nativity, and the Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

“5. Plenary indulgence on Christmas-day [&c.], as well as on all the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as noticed in the last calendars of the holy Roman Church, and moreover on the third Sunday of every month.”

On this letter and brief of the Pope, the writer makes a long comment, exhorting all to secure to their own souls the benefit of these indulgences. Among other remarks we read:—

“These plenary indulgences are applicable to the holy souls in purgatory.” . . . “Indulgences are the remission of the temporal punishments which remain due to sin, even after God has forgiven us in the Sacrament of penance the eternal punishment due to it. . . . In this Sacrament the grace is not so abundant as in that of Baptism: it remits indeed the eternal punishments of hell, if we receive it in due dispositions; but it leaves uncanceled the debt of temporal punishment which God still requires for the repenting sinner, after his justification, to undergo. If this debt be not fully discharged in this life, the Church teaches that we must suffer it in the next in the place of departed spirits. But she also teaches, that the payment of this debt is not so easy a matter in the next life as in this. . . . Venial sins will add fuel to the flames, that have been already kindled by the debt due to our mortal sins forgiven as to their eternal punishment. How true then are the words of the holy Church, that indulgences are most profitable unto Christian souls. And why? because they apply to our souls the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and of the saints, (who are members of his mystical body, with whom also we have communion,) and so enable us more easily to cancel the debt of temporal punishment, which God in his infinite wisdom has still left upon us, even after He has reinstated us in his grace, and remitted the eternal punishment due to our sins by the Sacramental absolution of the Church. If, then, we desire to make our calling and election sure, let us diligently have recourse to this second branch of the power of the keys, which Christ our Lord hath left to his Church. I mean, let us never lose an opportunity of gaining holy indulgences.”

Such is the present state of indulgences: the Pope granting them both plenary, and in part; and the Romanists in England receiving them as boons; acknowledging their efficacy both in this world, and in the life of the world to come.

To us who are accustomed to appeal to the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith, there is something most awfully impious in this doctrine and practice, even under its least offensive form. In the thought that a mortal man should assume at his pleasure and on his own conditions, the right, the power on earth, of mitigating the punishment appointed by the eternal Judge to be endured in the next world; in one case suspending it for days or years, or myriads of years—in another remitting it altogether, and freeing the souls of the departed from all the pangs and sufferings, which but for that mortal man's indulgence they must for ages have undergone, there is something so abhorrent from our very first principles of reason, and our notions of God and of man, and so utterly at variance with the whole tenour of revelation, that our difficulty is not to point out its evils, but to believe that such a doctrine is indeed and in reality practically in existence, believed, and acted upon.

If it be said that the Pope does not assume this right and power, but that it was assigned to him by the providence of God, revealed in his written word, and testified by the primitive Church, we declare ourselves unable to find one single trace or shadow of it either in the Holy Scriptures, or in the records of the primitive ages. Pope Leo X., indeed, boldly affirms that indulgences had been customarily granted by his predecessors, Popes of Rome as St. Peter's successors, time out of mind: but for any grounds on which to rest that assertion, we search the records of the Christian Church in vain. Indeed, the Romanist writers do not allege any evidence of the doctrine and practice of indulgences from early ages; and many of them freely confess that they were comparatively modern in their origin. There is, we conceive, no point in pagan or sacred history more clearly established than this, that for the doctrine and practice of indulgences there is no ground whatever in the Gospel or the primitive Church.

Many proofs of this may be adduced; but we need no more than the confession of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. This Romanist Bishop, when he wrote his first arguments against Luther, seems to have thought it impossible for any true Catholic AT THAT TIME (whatever might have been the creed of Christendom in former ages) to doubt the existence of purgatory. And he thus argues, "Those who believe in purgatory must agree to indulgences. In former ages they had no purgatory; therefore, they did not seek indulgences; we have purgatory, therefore we must have indulgences." But let his own words convey his sentiments:—"Many, perhaps, are induced not to place so much confidence in these indulgences, because their use in the Church seems to have been somewhat recent, and to be found exceedingly late among Christians. I answer, that it is not a settled point by whom they began to be delivered [or from what time they began to be delivered down]. There was, however, some use of them, AS THEY SAY, among the most ancient Romans, as we are given to understand even from the very frequent stations<sup>4</sup> in the city. But they even say that Gregory the First granted some in his time. Nor is it otherwise than clear to every one, that by the talents of men in after times many points, as well out of the Gospel as from the other Scriptures, are now drawn out more clearly and understood more perspicuously than they were formerly. Either, forsooth, because the ice was not yet broken through by the ancients, and their age did not suffice for weighing to a nicety the whole sea of Scriptures; or because even in the very ample field of the Scriptures, after the reapers, although most careful, it will be allowed to glean some ears left hitherto untouched. For there are still in the Gospels very many places yet very obscure, which I doubt not will be made

<sup>4</sup> By "stations" was meant, places where the processions made a halt, and prayers were offered, confessions heard, &c.

more clear to posterity. Why should we despair of this, whereas for this very reason has the Gospel been delivered down, that it might be thoroughly and exactly understood by us? Since then the love of Christ to his Church continues not less strong than it was formerly, of whose power too there is no diminution; and since the Holy Spirit is the perpetual guardian and keeper of the same Church, whose gifts flow as uninterruptedly and copiously as they did from the beginning, who can doubt but that, whatever points remain in the Gospel unknown, the clear intellects of those who are to come will illustrate? However, as we were saying, there are many points on which no question was raised in the primitive Church, which, nevertheless, by the diligence of subsequent men, when a doubt arose, have been made clear. No orthodox person, at all events (to return to our point), now doubts whether there be a purgatory, of which, at that time, among those ancients no mention was made at all, or as rarely as possible. Nay, by the Greeks even to this very day, it is not believed that there is a purgatory. Let who will read the commentaries of the ancient Greeks, and he will meet with no word, as I think, or as rarely as possible, of purgatory. But not even did all at once the Latins, but by little and little, receive the truth of this matter. Nor was the belief either of purgatory, or of indulgence, so necessary in the primitive Church as it is now. For at that time charity was so ardent, that individuals were most ready to die for Christ. Crimes were rare, and those which occurred were visited with great and severe vengeance by the canons. But now a good part of the people would rather strip themselves of Christianity than submit to the rigour of the canons, so that, not without a very great dispensation of the Holy Spirit, has it come to pass, that after the revolutions of so many years, belief in purgatory and the use of indulgences have generally been received by the orthodox. As long as there was no care about purgatory, no one sought indulgences; for from



that depends all the estimation of an indulgence. If you take away purgatory, for what will there be any use of indulgences? for we should not need them at all, if there were no purgatory. Seeing then that purgatory was for a considerable time unknown, and then step by step, partly from revelations, partly from the Scriptures, was believed, and so at length generally the belief of it was most widely received by the orthodox Church, we can most easily understand some reason for indulgences. Since then purgatory was at so late a period received by the universal Church, who can now wonder about indulgences, that in the beginning of the nascent Church there was no use of them? Indulgences, therefore, began after there had been for some considerable time trepidation about the torments of purgatory. For, at that time, it is credible that the holy fathers more attentively studied by what means they could best consult for the safety of their flocks against those torments, especially for those whose age would not allow of their completing the penance appointed by the canons." The writer then proceeds to say, that those fathers, seeing that the Pope, as Peter's successor, has so much power, conceived that he might fairly be believed to have the power of releasing from the pains of purgatory; hence the origin of indulgences! He finishes the section in these words—"Nor would I deny that the abuse of them may take place on both sides. For both the person who grants them, may give them with some sinister view; and at the same time he who receives them, may make them a handle for living more carelessly."

After such a declaration, by one of the most learned champions of the Romish Church, we need not examine those passages of primitive writers which are now strangely perverted and pressed, to give countenance to some part or other of these innovations. The very earliest time to which Bishop Fisher would refer is the age of Gregory the First, who was not Pope till the very end of the sixth century; and even that he does not

venture to give as his own opinion, or to confirm by any evidence—all he can write is, “As they say.”

And if from the ancient Church we turn to the Holy Scriptures, we cannot find one single passage to give the slightest shadow or colour of authority to the practice or the belief of indulgences. The Pope claims the right on his being the successor of St. Peter, and on the authority of the keys as given to that Apostle by our Lord. But whatever that authority involved, it had certainly nothing in common with indulgences; and whatever it was, it was given equally to all the Apostles. The words by which He explains the figurative expression of delivering the keys to Peter He repeats to all the Apostles:—“Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven<sup>5</sup>.” “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever YE shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven<sup>6</sup>.” “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto THEM again, Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins YE retain, they are retained<sup>7</sup>.”

And when we read written as with a sunbeam,—“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;” “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” we turn from the doctrine and practice of indulgences as an unscriptural error, robbing the atoning sacrifice of Christ’s death of its infinite fulness, and denying its power of saving to the utter-

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xviii. 18.

<sup>7</sup> John xx. 20.

most those who come to the Father through Him. The idea of a treasure of merits, consisting of the mingled merits of Christ and his saints, seems to us nothing short of impiety. To maintain that a mortal man has the disposal of that treasure to make amends and satisfaction to God's eternal justice for the unexpiated guilt of departed souls, and liquidate that portion of their debt of punishment which they have not yet paid by sufferings, we cannot but regard as a presumption most offensive to the Almighty, and most abhorrent to our first principles of religion.

We throw ourselves on the mere mercy of God in Christ Jesus, assured that if we sincerely repent, and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel, He will absolve us from all our sins, and receive us to Himself as souls ransomed from sin, and death, and hell, by His blood, and cleansed from all our corruptions by the Holy Spirit. We endeavour, in reliance upon his grace, to work out our own salvation; considering the purity of God and our own frailty, we engage in that work with fear and trembling; but knowing that He will work in us by a power not our own, and will give us, in answer to earnest prayer, the strength, and guidance, and protection of His Holy Spirit, we go on our way rejoicing, in sure and certain hope of victory and of heaven. We feel no trepidation as to the torments of purgatory, but are sure that they are the presumptuous fabrication of men; and regarding the interval between our death and the resurrection, even were it a myriad of ages, in comparison with eternity, to be like the twinkling of an eye, with humble confidence we trust that, when the time of our departure is come, we shall fall asleep in Jesus, to be raised in God's good time to possess our full consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his everlasting glory.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. III.

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ON THE  
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND  
ANGELS.



LONDON:

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present Tracts are the first of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—  
[continued].

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## *Invocation of Saints.*

ONE of the characteristic doctrines of Romanism, in contradistinction to the faith and practice of the Church of England, is that tenet by which every member of the Church of Rome is bound to hold the Invocation of Saints. We are aware that different members, perhaps different sections, of that Church vary much in their practical acceptance of that doctrine; but their fundamental Articles, and the authoritative interpretation of those Articles, leave them no option as to its admission. In the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent, the article entitled, "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints and of sacred Images," is expressed in these words:—

"The holy council commands all bishops and others bearing the office and care of instruction, that according to the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and the consent of holy fathers, and decrees of sacred councils, they, in the first place, should instruct the faithful concerning the intercession and invocation of saints, the honour of relics, and the lawful use of images; teaching them that the saints reigning together with Christ, offer their own prayers for men to God; that it is good and profitable suppliantly to invoke them, and to fly to their prayers, help, and assistance, for obtaining benefits from God by his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our only Redeemer and Saviour. Those who deny that the saints enjoying everlasting happiness in heaven are to be invoked, or who assert either that they do not pray for us, or that the invocation of them to pray for us even as individuals is idolatry, or is repugnant to the word of

God, and is opposed to the honour of the one Mediator of God and man, Jesus Christ, or that it is folly by voice or mentally to supplicate those who reign in heaven, hold impious sentiments.

“Those who affirm that . . . the shrines of the saints are in vain frequented for the purpose of obtaining their succour, are altogether to be condemned, as the Church has long ago condemned them, and now also condemns them.”

There are several points of view in which the expressions of this decree are remarkable; among others, their elastic character forces itself upon our notice; for whilst they may be so widely expanded as to justify the practice of praying for blessings temporal and spiritual directly from the saints themselves, they may be so contracted as not palpably to contradict those who assert that the Church of Rome never offers to a saint any other petition than merely and simply a request, that the saint would, by his or her prayers, intercede with God for the worshippers. And conformably with this latitude we find the most astonishing discrepancies between the representations of their faith and conduct made by different Roman Catholic writers; and whilst this discrepancy reminds us especially of the rule which we have prescribed to ourselves throughout these papers, of not seeking to charge individual members of the Roman Church with doctrines and practices which they disavow, it enforces on us with increased obligation the necessity of cautioning the members of our own communion against those errors in belief and religious worship, which however softened down by metaphysical distinctions, are inseparably connected with such corruptions as we are led in the present paper to lay open. But let us first see what views of the invocation of saints are put before us by those Romanist writers who wish to make their doctrines as little repulsive as may be to members of our communion, and then how the doctrine and practice show themselves elsewhere.

In the sermon preached at the consecration of the Roman Catholic chapel at Bradford, July 27, 1825, by P. A. Baines, D.D., bishop of Siga, the doctrine and practice are thus stated: "But do we not worship and pray to the saints? We worship no creature whatever, and therefore not the saints. But at least we pray to them. Yes, my Christian brethren, just as St. Paul prayed to his own converts, or I pray to you. I say to you, and with all sincerity I say it, Pray for me, my brethren; obtain for me from God those blessings which I may myself be unable or unworthy to obtain. I say the same to the blessed mother of Jesus Christ, to St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, or any other of those holy persons whose acknowledged sanctity has procured for them, through the grace and merits of Christ, the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven. Surely there is nothing wrong or unreasonable in this. The earthly trials of those holy persons are past, the veil of mortality is removed from their eyes, they behold God face to face, and enjoy without reserve his friendship and his love. May I not reasonably hope that their prayers will be more efficacious than my own, or those of my friends? Under this persuasion I say to them as I just now said to you, "Holy Mary, holy Peter, holy Paul, pray for us!" The end of this section Bishop Baines closes with this awful imprecation on his own soul, "Anathema to myself, if the doctrine I have here explained to you is not the true and universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church!"

To this exposition we must again revert. At present we only say, that however wide the difference, however groundless the analogy between one of us mortals asking a fellow mortal on earth to pray for us on the one hand, and on the other our suppliantly invoking the spirits in the unseen world to pray for us—between our requesting, by word of mouth or by letter, a living friend to join his prayers with our own at the throne of grace, and, on the other hand, in the



attitude of prayer, on our knees, with uplifted hands, in private or in the house of prayer in the very midst of the worship of Almighty God, (all marking it as a religious act of prayer,) our imploring an unseen spirit to aid us; however great a difficulty we may find in reconciling this declaration of Bishop Baines and his knowledge with the real state of facts both of doctrine and practice as we find them; we do not for a moment suspect him of willingly misleading his audience, which consisted of members of his own Church, and of the Church of England, and of Dissenters. His sermon was preached in 1825; in 1843 we have a very different view of the doctrine forced upon us in a letter dated "St. Mary's College, Oscott, Octave of Corpus Christi." It is written "to a friend at Oxford by a late member of the University," who represents himself as a convert from the Church of England to the Church of Rome. This writer, on the subject of the Invocation of Saints, uses these expressions: "To prevent all quibbling, I shall explain all the points in the above argument which are liable to be misunderstood or cavilled at. By 'Invocation of Saints,' I do not mean the mere 'Ora pro nobis,' (the mere 'Pray for us,') but the *direct*<sup>2</sup> asking from the saints things which God alone can bestow."

Whether this view or the representation of Dr. Baines be the more approved now in England it is needless for us to inquire, who believe both of them to be contrary to the faith and practice of the Primitive Church, and inconsistent with the Scriptural principle of one God, the only object of prayer, and one Mediator between that God and our fallen race. But we must now inquire what were the doctrines and practices from which the Reformation rescued our country in this respect, and what are the con-

<sup>1</sup> The title-page is "The Character of the Rev. W. Palmer, M.A., of Worcester College, as a Controversialist, particularly with reference to his charge against the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, of quoting as genuine works of the fathers spurious and heretical productions, &c. London: Dolman, New Bond Street, 1843."

<sup>2</sup> These italics are in the original.

clusions to be drawn by honest minds from the authorized formularies now in use in the Church of Rome, and what are practically the prevalent devotional exercises of its members. We reserve the worship of the blessed Virgin Mary for a separate consideration.

We cannot, however, help observing on the unsatisfactory language in which, on this subject, no less than on Indulgences, Dr. Baines conveys to a mixed congregation, unacquainted with Roman doctrines, this article of their faith, "I say the same 'Pray for me' to the blessed mother of Jesus Christ, to St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, or any other of those holy persons whose ACKNOWLEDGED SANCTITY has procured for them, through the grace and merits of Christ, the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven." By whom does he mean that their sanctity is acknowledged? If God be meant as acknowledging it, how can we be certified of the judgment of God as to the sanctity of any departed mortal? If man be meant, how can man know the heart of a fellow mortal? And, in any case, how can we know whether (on the Romanist principles, so far as Bishop Baines explains them) the soul departed is in a condition to be prayed for, or to be prayed to? If the soul is in purgatory, according to the Roman theory, it requires the prayers of the faithful on earth for its release from suffering; if it is already in heaven, not only may it pray for souls on earth, but those souls may suppliantly implore its assistance and good offices. This alternative can be decided by no mortal except through immediate revelation; but here the Church of Rome has attempted to meet this difficulty by investing the Pope with the power of canonizing such departed souls as he adjudges to be saints in heaven; and in this act he is held to be infallible. Cardinal Bellarmine insists upon this as an indisputable dogma; though, when he proceeds to enumerate his arguments, the first would seem not to partake of a seriousness corresponding with the character of the subject. "In the first place, was the

Pope ever proved to be mistaken in this act?" In Dr. Baines's exposition of the doctrine, then, there is much to be understood beyond what is expressed. By "acknowledged sanctity" is meant "sanctity acknowledged by the Pope and the College;" and to the words "has procured for them the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven," must be added, "in the judgment of the Roman pontiff." Thus the soul of a departed Christian might be prayed for, and masses said in his behalf to release him from purgatory through this year, and if the act of canonization were passed by the Pope at the end of the year, from that day and hour he would become, not the subject, but the object of prayer; he would not be prayed for, but prayed to. Thus in the record of the canonization of Alphonsus Liguori, we are told that immediately on the completion of the act, before leaving the church, the official offered to him the prayer "Pray for us." In contrast with this, the apostolic injunction forces itself upon us, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God<sup>3</sup>."

With regard to the awful extent to which the worship of saints had grown before the Reformation, we have a mass of evidence on record which must make us thankful that our Church suffers us to pray only to God, and to seek his mercies only through the merits and intercession of his blessed Son our Saviour. We cannot consistently with the teaching of his Gospel and of his Church make any distinction between a Mediator of Redemption and a Mediator of Intercession, such as some of our Roman Catholic brethren would persuade us to adopt. Holy Scripture countenances no such distinction. There we find the two offices of redemption and mediation joined in Christ, and in Him alone: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins<sup>4</sup>." And

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 5.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John ii. 1, 2.

the same Saviour who is declared to have "obtained by his own blood eternal redemption for us," is announced to us also as the Mediator of Intercession: "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them<sup>5</sup>." We are thankful, therefore, that our Church has restored to us this only sound and true doctrine—ONE GOD and ONE MEDIATOR.

But how was it before this sound doctrine was restored? One service familiar to the people of our country at that time, is of itself enough, (and we select it out of very many,) to enable us to answer that question—the Service of Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, whom some have denounced as a rebel; of whose condemnation as a sinner, or admission into heaven, the masters of Paris are reported to have disputed forty-eight years after his death; and whom the Church of Rome canonized as a saint. Into the questions of his religious and moral excellence or delinquency our present inquiry does not lead us; for our argument, we may consider him to be correctly represented by his most ardent admirers. The whole Service, consisting of biographical legends, and praises of Thomas à Becket, and declarations of the Divine vengeance upon his murderers, and prayers to him, may be read in a work on the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge<sup>6</sup>. In the ninth lesson of the first Service we find this announcement: "At the cry of this blood the earth was moved and trembled. Nay, moreover, the powers of the heavens were moved; so that, as if for the avenging of innocent blood, nation rose against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; nay, a kingdom was divided against itself; and terrors from heaven and great signs took place. Yet from the first period of his martyrdom the martyr began to shine forth with miracles, restoring sight to the blind, walking to the lame, hearing to the deaf, language to

<sup>5</sup> Heb. ix. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Primitive Worship, p. 201.

the dumb; afterwards cleansing the lepers, making the paralytic sound, healing the dropsy and all kinds of incurable diseases, restoring the dead to life, in a wonderful manner commanding the devils and all the elements; he also put forth his hand to unwonted and unheard-of signs of his own power, for persons deprived of their eyes merited by his merits to obtain new members," &c.

Among the addresses to the Almighty for mercy through the merits and mediation of Thomas, and to Thomas for his own spiritual aid, we find the following:—

“O Christ Jesus, BY THE WOUNDS OF THOMAS, loosen the sins which bind us, lest the enemy, the world, or the works of the flesh, bear us captive to hell. BY THEE, O Thomas, let the right hand of God embrace us. . . . Happy place, happy church, in which the memory of Thomas lives! Happy the land which gave the prelate! Happy the land which supported him in exile! Happy father, succour us miserable, that we may be happy and joined with those above.” “O good Jesus, BY THE MERITS OF THOMAS, forgive us our debts. Visit the house, the gate, the grave, and raise us from the threefold death. What has been lost by act, or in mind, or use, restore with thy wonted pity. Pray for us, O blessed Thomas!

“The grain falls, and gives birth to an abundance of corn.

“The alabaster-box is broken, and the odour of the ointment is powerful.

“The whole world vies in love to the martyr whose wonderful signs strike all with astonishment.

“The water for Thomas five times changing colour, once was turned into milk, four times into blood.

“At the shrine of Thomas four times the light came down, and, to the glory of the saint, kindled the wax tapers.

“DO THOU, BY THE BLOOD OF THOMAS WHICH HE SHED FOR THEE, CAUSE US, O CHRIST, TO ASCEND whither Thomas has ascended.

“Extend succour to us, O Thomas, guide those who stand; raise up those that fall. Correct our morals, actions, life; and guide us in the way of peace.”

This Service (which, as a writer<sup>7</sup> contemporary with our Reformation tells us, used “full solemnly to be sung in the temples”) suggests many serious reflections as to the state of religious worship in our country before the Reformation. It is indeed lamentable to find such legends substituted for the reading of the word of God. Of these lessons there are no less than fifteen. But even more lamentable is the impression which this Service must make on minds of ordinary power and cultivation. Its natural, and, as we conceive, unavoidable tendency, is to withdraw the worshippers from contemplating Christ, the only Saviour, and to fix their thoughts on the powers, the glory, the merits, and mediation of a fellow-creature. It is often said, that the worshippers will look beyond the martyr, and trace the blessings to Christ as the primary cause, and will think of the merits of Thomas as efficacious only through the merits of their Saviour; that in their religious addresses to Thomas, though they ask directly of him mercies which God alone can bestow, they will only ask him to pray for them. But can this be so? Is it reasonable to expect such a result? Does not experience prove the futility of such an expectation? Is not such a service rather a snare to the conscience? at all events, a most dangerous experiment? Let us look at it in one or two of its particular points. Does not the ascription of miracles to Thomas à Becket—does not the very form of enumerating those miracles tend much to exalt the servant to an equality with Him who alone doeth great wonders? For the reader will observe a marked and lamentable absence of any immediate reference of those miracles to God, or ascription of glory to Him. So, too, many passages in this Service tend to withdraw the minds of the wor-

<sup>7</sup> Becon, 1564, v. 183.

shippers from an implicit and exclusive dependence on the merits of Christ alone, and to tempt them to mingle, at all events, the merits of Thomas, in the work of grace and salvation, with the merits of Christ's death and precious blood.

We request the reader to reconsider the language already quoted from the Service of Thomas à Becket, and to compare it with the passages of that Word of life and of death to which at last, if we are Christians, our appeal must be made, and from which there is no appeal.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SERVICE  
OF THOMAS À BECKET.

"O Christ Jesus, BY THE WOUNDS OF THOMAS, loosen the sins which bind us."

"O blessed Jesus, BY THE MERITS OF THOMAS, forgive us our debts, raise us from the threefold death."

"Do Thou, O Christ, BY THE BLOOD OF THOMAS, which he shed for Thee, cause us to ascend whither Thomas has ascended."

"For thy sake, O Thomas, let the right hand of God embrace us."

"Send help to us, O Thomas."

"Guide thou those who stand."

"Raise up those who fall."

THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed <sup>8</sup>."

"He who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things <sup>9</sup>?"

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin <sup>1</sup>."

"By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God <sup>2</sup>."

"Lord, be thou my helper <sup>3</sup>."

"Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel <sup>4</sup>."

"The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down <sup>5</sup>."

<sup>8</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxx. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. viii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. iv. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm cxlv. 14.

“Correct our morals, actions, and life.”

“Create in me a clean heart, O God<sup>6</sup>.”

“Guide us unto the way of peace.”

“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means<sup>7</sup>.”

Compare also the language in which ascriptions of praise are couched to this departed mortal with the words which Holy Scripture appropriates to the eternal Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, the only wise God, our Saviour.

ASCRIPTIONS OF PRAISE TO  
THOMAS À BECKET.

HOLY SCRIPTURE WHEN SPEAK-  
ING OF GOD.

“Hail, Thomas, thou Rod of justice!”

“There shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse<sup>8</sup>.” “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just<sup>9</sup>.”

“The brightness of the world.”

“I am the Light of the world<sup>1</sup>.”  
“The brightness of his glory<sup>2</sup>.”

“The strength of the Church. The love of the people. The delight of the clergy.”

“I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me<sup>3</sup>.”  
“Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it<sup>4</sup>.” “I will love thee, O Lord, my strength<sup>5</sup>.”  
“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity<sup>6</sup>.” “Delight thou in the Lord<sup>7</sup>.”

“Hail, glorious guardian of the flock. Save those who rejoice in thy glory.”

“Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep<sup>8</sup>.” “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, come and save us<sup>9</sup>.” “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord<sup>10</sup>.”

How can these prayers and praises be regarded as merely variations of the expression “Pray for us?” Try the real, genuine nature of these prayers and praises by this general test—change only the name, and substitute the holy name of the supreme God and Saviour for the name of Thomas à Becket, and then

<sup>6</sup> Psalm li. 10.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Isa. xi. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Acts iii. 14.

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. i. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iv. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. v. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xviii. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Eph. vi. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm xxxvii. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. xiii. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm xxx. 1, 2.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. i. 31.



judge whether such devotions offered to the departed spirit of a fellow-creature, can be safe or justifiable.

## ROMAN SERVICE.

“To Thomas all things bow and are obedient—plagues, diseases, death, and devils, fire, air, land, and sea.

“Thomas fills the world with glory.

“To Thomas the world offers obeisance.

“Thomas shone forth with miracles.

“Do thou, O Lord, by the blood of Thomas, cause us to ascend whither he, Thomas, hath ascended.

“O Thomas! send us help. Guide those who stand. Raise up those who fall. Correct our morals, actions, and life; and guide us into the way of peace.

“O Thomas! thou Rod of Justice! the Brightness of the World! the Strength of the Church! the Lover of the People! the Delight of the Clergy! Glorious Guardian of the flock! save Thou those who delight in thy glory.”

## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

“To God all things bow and are obedient—plagues, diseases, death, and devils, fire, air, land, and sea.

“God fills the world with glory.

“To God the world offers obeisance.

“The Lord Jesus shone forth with miracles.

“Do thou, O Lord, by the blood of our Saviour Christ, cause us to ascend whither he our Saviour hath ascended.

“O God! send us help. Guide those who stand. Raise up those who fall. Correct our morals, actions, and life; and guide us into the way of peace.

“O Lord Jesus! thou Rod of Justice! the Brightness of the World! the Strength of the Church! the Lover of the People! the Delight of the Clergy! Glorious Guardian of the flock! save Thou those who delight in thy glory.”

Can that worship become the disciples of the Gospel and the cross which addresses such prayers and such praises to the spirit of a mortal man? Every prayer and every form of praise here used in honour of Thomas à Becket it would well become Christians to offer to the eternal Giver of all good, trusting for acceptance solely and exclusively to the mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord, and pleading only the merits of his most precious blood. We are, however, bound to confess, though in the ministrations authorized and appointed by the Church of Rome in public worship at the present day we are not shocked by such startling language, yet that in principle, in spirit, and in fact,

we can discover no substantial difference between this Service of Thomas of Canterbury and the Service which all persons in communion with the Church of Rome are under an obligation to use even at this very hour. Far, very far, are we from charging with idolatry our fellow-creatures who declare that they offer Divine worship only to the supreme Lord of heaven and earth; but we know and feel that, according to the standard of Christian truth and the rule of pure worship of Almighty God, which the Scriptures and primitive antiquity compel us to adopt, we should stain our own souls with the guilt of idolatry, and with the sin of relying on other merits than Christ's, were we ourselves to join in those services.

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*Invocation of Saints.—Present worship in the Church of Rome.*

IN our remarks on the Service of Thomas à Becket, whom our Roman Catholic brethren call St. Thomas of Canterbury, we observed, that although the same startling expressions and words do not now exist in the formularies of Rome, yet, that we are unable to find any real and essential difference in the objectionable points, between that service and the devotions at present prescribed and employed by that Church. We might, leaving more minute and subordinate distinctions, enumerate four grievous errors in that service, for which we shall not be long in discovering real parallels in the authorized books of the Church of Rome now.

First, prayer is offered to God through the mediation and intercession of the saints, instead of the mediation and intercession of Christ alone; and the merits of the saints are pleaded with God for the highest spiritual blessings.

Secondly, prayer is offered to the saints, asking for their prayers at the throne of grace, agreeably to the representation of Bishop Baines.

Thirdly, prayer is offered to the saints, imploring directly at their hands gifts spiritual and temporal, which God alone can bestow; agreeably to the representation made in the letter from Oscott above referred to.

Fourthly, praises are offered to them, and ascriptions of glory, such as Christians should offer only to the one supreme God.

The following instances are all taken from the present authorized and enjoined Liturgy of Rome.

1. First, prayer is offered to the Almighty, through the mediation and intercession of the saints; and the Almighty is supplicated to grant to the worshippers the benefits of the advocacy and intercession of particular saints by name<sup>1</sup>.

“We beseech Thee, Almighty God, that he whose feast we are about to celebrate, may implore thy aid for us: that he may be for us a perpetual intercessor.—A. 545. 551. “We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the intercession of the blessed Anthony, the abbot, commend us, that what we cannot effect by our own merits, we may obtain by his patronage, through the Lord.”—H. 490.

On this point it may be wise to compare two prayers of the Romish Church, both offered to Almighty God, and both seeking at his hand the self-same recovery from the misery into which sin had plunged the worshippers; but the one prayer imploring that mercy through the intercession of his dear and only Son, the other pleading the advocacy of a mortal man.

“We beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who among so many adversities from our own infirmity fail, the passion of thy only begotten Son interceding for us may revive.”—V. 243.

“O God, who hast granted the rewards of eternal blessedness to the soul of thy servant Gregory, grant that we who are pressed down by the weight of our sins, may by his prayers with Thee be raised up.”—V. 480.

<sup>1</sup> These references are made chiefly to the Roman Breviary, published under the Pope's sanction and patronage at Norwich, in the year 1830, by the *Rev. F. C. Husenbeth*, expressly adapted to the use of England. It is in four volumes, corresponding with the quarters of the year. A. stands for autumn, Æ. for summer, H. for winter, V. for spring.

Thus do the authorized services of Rome teach Christians to seek at God's hand a supply of their wants, in return for the prayers and intercession of their departed fellow mortals, of whose present condition neither reason nor revelation gives them any assurance. But there is another form of the same class of prayers which contradicts our judgment and shocks our feelings more even than the form of which we have here given instances. We are admonished by the written word of God, and the earliest worship of the Church of Christ, that by joining in such a form of prayer, we should do wrong to our Saviour, and unthankfully disparage his inestimable merits, and the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction of his omnipotent atonement. The form we mean consists of prayers to God, which supplicate that our present and future good may be advanced by the MERITS of DEPARTED MORTALS; that by THEIR MERITS our sins may be forgiven, and our salvation secured; that BY THEIR MERITS our souls may be made fit for celestial joys, and be finally admitted into heaven. Of these prayers the Roman Breviary forces upon us a great variety of examples, some exceeding others in their apparent forgetfulness of the merits of the only Saviour, and consequently far more shocking to the reason and affections of us, who hold it a point of conscience to make the merits of Christ, exclusively of any other to be joined with them, the only ground of a believer's acceptance with God.

“O God, who didst adorn the blessed Pontiff Nicholas with unnumbered miracles, grant, we beseech Thee, that by his merits and prayers we may be set free from the fires of hell, through,” &c.—H. 436.

Another instance occurs in the Collect for the 19th March, in which the Church of Rome teaches her members to pray to God for the benefit of Joseph's intercession, and to hope for succour from his merits.

“We beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may be succoured by the merits of the husband of thy most holy

mother, so that what we cannot obtain by our own power may be granted to us by his intercession."—V. 486.

Under this head we will add only one more instance, in which the Church of Rome directs her people to offer this prayer to Christ,

“O God, whose right hand raised the blessed Peter when walking on the waves so that he did not sink, and rescued from the depth of the sea his fellow apostle Paul, for the third time suffering shipwreck; mercifully hear us, and grant that BY THE MERITS OF BOTH we may obtain the glory of eternity.”—H. 149.

Now suppose for a moment it had been intended in any one prayer, to exclude negatively the merits of Christ from the great work of our salvation, and to limit our hopes of everlasting glory to the merits of St. Peter and St. Paul, could the object have been more effectually secured than by this prayer? No reference is here made, even by allusion, to the merits of Christ's death,—none to his merits as our Redeemer, none to his merits as our Intercessor. The worshipper is led to approach the throne of grace only with the merits of the two apostles on his tongue. If those who offer this prayer, hope for acceptance through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of his merits, that hope is neither suggested nor fostered by their prayer. The truth as it is in Jesus would compel us, in addressing Him as the Saviour of the world, to think of the merits neither of Peter nor of Paul, neither of angel nor spirit. Instead of praying to Him that we may obtain the glories of eternity for their merits, true faith in Christ would compel us to throw ourselves implicitly on his all-perfect and omnipotent merit alone, and implore the blessing for his own mercy's sake. If we receive the whole truth, can it be otherwise than a disparagement of his merits to plead with Him the merits of one whom the Saviour Himself rebuked with as severe a sentence as ever fell from his lips; and of another who after his conversion, when speaking of the salvation wrought by Christ, in profound humility confesses himself to be a chief of those sin-

ners for whom Christ died<sup>3</sup>? We feel, indeed, a sure and certain hope that these two fellow-creatures, once sinners, but by God's grace afterwards saints, have found mercy with God, and will, through Christ, live with Christ for ever; but for us to pray for the same mercy at his hand, for the sake of their merits, is repugnant to the first principles of our Christian faith. When we think of merits for which to plead for mercy, we can think of Christ's, and of Christ's alone.

2. The second class of invocation in our division, comprehends those addresses to the saints which implore them to pray for the worshippers. These occur so frequently in every part of the authorized worship of Rome, that we need not lengthen the present section by enumerating many instances. One example both of the preceding class, and of this in juxtaposition, occurs in the case of Ambrose, bishop of Milan. The Church of Rome has availed herself of his pious labours, and has introduced into her public worship many of the hymns usually ascribed to him. It had been well for Christian truth and apostolic worship had she followed his example in addressing her invocations to no one but our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier.

“O God, who didst assign to thy people the blessed Ambrose, as a minister of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may deserve to have him as our intercessor in heaven, whom we had as a teacher of life upon earth!”

“O thou most excellent teacher, the light of the Holy Church! O blessed Ambrose, thou lover of the divine law, deprecate the Son of God for us!”

In the “*Litany of the Saints*” more than fifty different persons are enumerated by name, and are implored to pray and intercede for those who join in it; among them are Raphael, Gervasius, Protasius, and Mary Magdalene; whilst in the *Litany* for the recommendation of the soul of the sick and dying, the names of Abel and Abraham are specified.

Under this head we will cite only one more example.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 23.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15.

Indeed, it may be doubted whether the hymn would be more properly classed under this head or reserved for the next, since it seems to partake of the nature of each. It supplicates the martyr to obtain spiritual blessings by his prayers, and yet addresses him as the power who is to grant those blessings. It implores him, indeed, to liberate us by the love of Christ; but so should we implore the eternal Father of mercies Himself. We think it, however, the safe course to cite it under this head, as merely a prayer to St. Stephen to pray for us. But it may be well to derive from it a lesson on this point, how easily the transition is made from one false step to a worse; and how infinitely wiser and safer it is to avoid evil in its very lowest and least objectionable character.

“Martyr of God! [or unconquered martyr] who, by following the only Son of the Father, triumphest over thy conquered enemies, and as conqueror enjoyest heavenly things, wash out by the office of thy prayer our guilt, driving away the contagion of evil. The bands of thy hallowed body are already loosed; loose thou us from the bands of the world, by the love of the Son of God [or by the gift of God] most high<sup>4</sup>.”—H. 237.

3. But thirdly, the Roman Church (we say this with the declaration of Bishop Baines, &c. on the one side, and the Letter from Oscott, &c. on the other, before us) by no means limits herself to this one kind of invocation. Prayers are addressed to saints imploring them to hear, and as of themselves to grant, the prayers of the faithful on earth, and to release them from the bands of sin, without any allusion to the intercession of those saints. Thus, in the Gradual on St. Michael’s day, this prayer is offered to him:—

“O holy Michael, O Archangel, defend us in battle, that we perish not in the dreadful judgment!”

When we read the invocation made to St. Peter on the 18th of January, called the Anniversary of the Chair of St. Peter at Rome, the words of our blessed

<sup>4</sup> In the above hymn the words included in brackets are the read-

Lord Himself and of his beloved apostle seem to rise up in judgment and to condemn that prayer.

“Now, O good shepherd, merciful Peter, accept the prayers of us who supplicate, and loose the bands of our sins by the power committed unto thee, by which thou shuttest heaven against all by a word, and openest it<sup>5</sup>!”—H. 497.

It may be well to place the several members of this address to Peter side by side with the language of Holy Scripture, and then ask, can such a form of devotion be safe?

“Merciful Peter, O thou good shepherd,”

“Accept the prayers of us who supplicate:”

“And loose the bands of our sins, by the power committed to thee:”

“By which thou shuttest heaven against all by a word, and openest it.”

“Jesus saith, I am the good Shepherd<sup>6</sup>.”

“Whatsoeveye shall ask in my name, that will I do<sup>7</sup>.” “That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you<sup>8</sup>.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sins<sup>9</sup>.”

“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth<sup>1</sup>.” “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death<sup>2</sup>.”

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ings adopted in the last edition of the Roman Breviary, printed in England (1830); and it may be well here to observe, that we find various readings in the hymns, as they are now printed for the use of Roman Catholics in different countries. In some instances the changes are curious and striking. Grancolas, in his historical commentary on the Roman Breviary (Venice, 1734, p. 84), furnishes us with interesting information as to the chief cause of this diversity. Pope Urban VIII., who was Pontiff from 1623 to 1644, himself a man of letters and a poet, took measures for the emendation of the hymns in the Roman Breviary. His taste was offended by the many defects in their metrical composition, and upwards of 950 faults in metre are said to have been corrected. This gave Urban occasion to say, that the Fathers had begun rather than completed the hymns. According to Grancolas, many complained of these changes, alleging that primitive simplicity had been sacrificed to poetry. “Accessit Latinitas, recessit pietas.” The verse was neater, but the pious feeling was chilled.

<sup>5</sup> This hymn has undergone many changes since its first adoption into the Roman Breviary.

<sup>6</sup> John x. 14.

<sup>7</sup> John xiv. 13.

<sup>8</sup> John xv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John i. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. i. 18.



The same unsatisfactory associations must be excited in the minds of all who ground their faith and worship on the word of God, by the following supplications to various saints on St. John's day. The reader cannot fail to observe how peculiarly fitting would the expressions of this hymn be in an address to our God and only Saviour, and our Judge; whereas, when they are used in a devotional prayer to our fellow-creatures, the words of inspiration condemn every sentence.

“Let the world exult with joy, let the heaven resound with praise; the earth and stars sing together the glory of the Apostles. Ye Judges of the Ages, and true Lights of the world, we implore with the prayers of our hearts, hear the voices of your suppliants. Ye who, by a word, shut the temples of heaven and loose its bars, **COMMAND US**, who are guilty, **TO BE RELEASED FROM OUR SINS**, we pray. Ye, of whose commands sickness and health are immediately sensible, heal our languid minds, increase virtues in us, so that when Christ the Judge shall return at the end of the world, he may grant us to be partakers of eternal joy. Jesus, to Thee be glory, who wast born of a virgin, with the Father, and the Benign Spirit, through eternal ages. Amen.”—H. 243.

4. On the subject of our present examination we will only quote one more case—the prayers and praises offered in the Roman Ritual to Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, which will supply us with a sufficient proof of the fourth error above specified. Of Joseph mention is made by name in the Gospel, just before and just after the birth of Christ, as an upright, merciful man, to whom God on three several occasions, by the medium of a dream, made a direct revelation of his will with reference to the incarnate Saviour. Again, on the holy family visiting Jerusalem, when our Lord was twelve years old, Mary, in her remonstrance with her Son, speaks thus: “Why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” On which not one word was uttered by

our Saviour enabling us to form an opinion as to his own will with regard to Joseph. He seems purposely to have withdrawn their thoughts from his earthly connexion with them, and to have raised their minds to his unearthly, his heavenly and eternal origin. "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" After this time, though the sacred writings, either historical, doctrinal, or prophetic, embrace at the lowest calculation a period of fourscore years, no allusion is made to Joseph as still living, nor to his memory as one already dead. And yet not only does Rome teach her members to pray to God for the benefits of his merits and intercession, but offers prayers to Joseph himself, as well to obtain his prayer, as to procure from him "gifts and graces which God alone can bestow," and offering him praises and honours which are due only to God our Saviour.

Of course, in the Litany of the Saints, "St. Joseph pray for us," is one of the suffrages; but on his day (March 19), we find three hymns addressed to him, full of lamentable superstition, assigning to him a share at least in the work of our salvation, and solemnly stating as a truth what, whether true or false, rests on a groundless legend, namely, that our blessed Lord and Mary watched by him at his death; ascribing also, as we have intimated, that honour and praise to Joseph which the Church, from its earliest days, was wont to offer to God alone. The following are extracts from these hymns:—

First Hymn—"Let the companies of heaven celebrate thee, O Joseph! Thee let all the choirs of Christian people resound; who, bright in merits, wast joined in chaste covenant with the renowned Virgin. Others their pious death consecrates after death, and glory awaits those who deserve the palm. Thou, when alive, equal to those above, more blessed by wondrous lot, enjoyedst God. O Trinity most high, spare us who pray; grant us to reach Heaven [to scale the stars] BY THE MERITS OF JOSEPH, that, at the last, we may perpetually offer thee a grateful song."—V. 485.

Second Hymn—"O Joseph, the glory of those in Heaven, and the sure hope of our life, and the safeguard of the world, benignly ACCEPT THE PRAISES WHICH WE joyfully sing TO THEE. Perpetual praise to the most high Trinity, who, granting to thee honours on high, give to us, BY THY MERITS, the joys of a blessed life."—V. 486.

Third Hymn—"He whom we the faithful worship with joy, whose exalted triumphs we celebrate, Joseph on this day obtained the joys of eternal life. O, too happy! O, too blessed! at whose last hour Christ and the Virgin together, with serene countenances, stood watching. Hence he, the conqueror of hell, freed from the bonds of the flesh, removes in placid repose to the everlasting seats, and binds his temples with bright chaplets. Him, therefore, reigning, let us all importunately pray, that he would be present with us, and that he, obtaining pardon for our transgressions, would ASSIGN to us the rewards of peace on high.

"Be praises to thee, be honours to thee, O true God, who reignest and ASSIGNEST golden crowns to thy faithful servants for ever. Amen."—V. 490.

It is painful to remark, that the very same word is employed when the Church of Rome requests Joseph to ASSIGN to the faithful the rewards of peace, and when glory is ascribed to God for ASSIGNING crowns to his faithful servants. These hymns contain expressions which ought to be addressed to the Saviour alone, whose "glory is in the heavens," who is "the hope of us on earth," and "the safeguard of the world." Speaking the truth in love, we confess it would be impiety and sin in us to offer these prayers and praises to the soul of any man, however holy, however blessed, however exalted.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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Nos. IV. & V.

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ON THE  
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND  
ANGELS.

IV. EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT  
AGAINST IT.

V. EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT  
AGAINST IT.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present Tracts are the first of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—  
[continued].

## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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### *Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of Holy Scripture.*

THE Church of Rome, as we have seen in a previous section, teaches her members to pray to the angels of heaven, and the souls of the faithful departed now with God, for their intercessions, and for blessings, and graces, and benefits, which God alone can bestow; and moreover, to plead the merits of the same saints as a ground of their own acceptance with God; and to offer them religious praise and honour. Both in faith and in practice the Church of England holds all this to be wrong, unsound, unjustifiable, and dangerous; and maintains that a Christian, whether engaged in public worship or in private devotions, must, if he would be safe, address his prayers to God alone, and seek blessings in no other way than by directly applying for them to God alone; and in his supplications to the Almighty, plead only the merits, and trust only to the mediation and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one only Mediator, either of redemption or of intercession, between God and man.

Now as persons to whom the supreme Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, has entrusted the oracles of

truth, the written revelation of his will, the first step to be taken by us in the way of determining which of these two contradictory and irreconcilable systems is the true and safe system, and which is unsound and dangerous, will of necessity be to ascertain what conclusions an honest study of that revealed will of God would lead us to form: we must search which is the faith and practice countenanced, recommended, or prescribed in the sacred Book, both in the times of the elder covenant, when "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and also in that "fulness of time" when God spoke to us by his Son.

And here, on this first entrance upon a review of the inspired volume, it will be well for us briefly to recall the principles and tone of mind, the temper and feelings, the frame both of the understanding and the heart, with which we should study the sacred pages, on whatever subject we would try all things, and hold fast what should prove itself most in accordance with the will of God. The two great parts into which the books of Holy Scripture are divided, are sometimes called the Old and New Testaments, sometimes the Old and New Covenants. But whichever view we prefer to take, the practical result will not be in the least affected. Different associations are suggested by these different titles of the inspired volume; yet, under either view, the same honest and good heart, the same patience of investigation, the same upright and unprejudiced judgment, the same exercise of our faculties, and the same enlightened conscience, must be brought to the investigation.

Regarding the book of God as a COVENANT, we must endeavour to ascertain its true intent and meaning on principles the very same with those on which we would interpret a covenant made by ourselves with a person who had joined in it, in full and unsuspecting reliance on our integrity, justice, and honour.

Looking upon the Bible as a WILL OR TESTAMENT, we must bring with us the same principles and feelings

to our inquiry as we should apply if we were called to interpret the last will and testament of our own father, who, with implicit confidence in our uprightness and straightforward dealing, and in our affectionate anxiety to fulfil his intentions, had assigned to us the sacred duty of executor or trustee.

Under the first supposition, our anxiety would be to discover the true intent and meaning of the contracting party; not to seek out plausible excuses for departing from it; not to cull out and exaggerate such expressions as might seem to justify us in adopting the view of the contract most agreeable to our present wishes, and most favourable to our own interests. Our fixed purpose would be, at whatever cost of time, or labour, or self-sacrifice, or personal discomfort, to apply our unbiassed judgment to the interpretation of the deed.

Or, adopting the other analogy, our single desire would be to ascertain the chief and leading objects of our parent's will; what were his intentions generally, what ruling principles seem to have guided him in adopting its provisions; and in all cases of obscurity and doubt, in every thing approaching an appearance of inconsistency in one part with another, we should refer to that great and pervading principle as our test and guide. We should never seek for ambiguous expressions, which might be ingeniously interpreted so as to countenance our departure from the general drift of the will.

Now, only let us act upon these principles in the interpretation of THAT COVENANT in which the Almighty has deigned to make Himself one of the contracting parties, and man the other; only let us act on these principles in the interpretation of THAT TESTAMENT of which the Saviour of the world is the Testator; and, with God's blessing, we need not fear the result. Any other principle of interpreting the Bible will only confirm the inquirer's prejudices, and involve him more deeply in error.



## EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Let us then suppose that a person of a cultivated mind and sound judgment, but hitherto a stranger to revelation, were required to study the Old Testament, with the single view of ascertaining what one object more than any other (subordinate to the great end of preparing the world for the promised Saviour) seemed to be proposed by the Almighty, in imparting to mankind that revelation; could he fix upon any other point with so much reason as he would upon this; —the preservation in the world of a practical belief in the perfect unity of God, and the protection of his worship against the admixture of any other worship whatever; the announcement that the Creator and Governor of the universe is the sole Giver of every temporal and spiritual blessing, the one only Being to whom his rational creatures on earth should pay any religious service whatever; the one only Being to whom mortals must seek, by invocation and prayer, for the supply of all their wants? Through the entire volume the inquirer would find, that the unity of God is announced in every variety of expression; and that the exclusive worship of HIM alone is insisted upon, and guarded and fenced with the utmost jealousy, and in every variety of way, as of the God who heareth prayer, alone to be called upon; alone to be invoked, alone to be adored. So to speak, he would find that recourse was had to every expedient for the express purpose of protecting God's people from embracing in their worship any other being or name whatever. He would find not that supreme adoration was reserved for the Supreme Being, while a sort of secondary honour and inferior invocation was allowed to his own exalted saints and servants: but that the laws of God banished at once and for ever the most distant approximation towards religious honour, the veriest shadow of spiritual invocation to any being except **JEHOVAH HIMSELF ALONE.**

In process of time the heathen began to deify those mortals who had conferred signal benefits on the human race, or had distinguished themselves in power and skill above their fellow-mortals; and thus male and female divinities were multiplied on every side. Together with Jupiter, the fabled father of gods and men, who was worshipped under various names in different countries, were associated those "gods many and lords many," which ignorance and superstition, or policy and craft, had invented, and which shared some a greater, some a less portion of popular veneration and religious worship. To the people of God it was again and again most solemnly and awfully denounced, that no such thing should be. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," is a mandate repeated in every variety of language, and under every variety of circumstance. In some passages, indeed, together with the most clear assurances that mortal men need apply to no other dispenser of good, and can want no other, as saviour, advocate, or intercessor, that same truth is announced with such superabundance of repetition, that in the productions of any human writer, the style would be liable to the charge of tautology. In the Bible this repetition serves only to fix on the mind that same principle as an eternal verity never to be questioned, never to be dispensed with, never to be diluted or qualified, never to be invaded by any service, worship, prayer, invocation, or adoration of any other being whatever. Take for example the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I guided thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is none else. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be

ashamed nor confounded world without end. I am the Lord; and there is none else. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. There is no God beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

But to multiply such passages is needless. Members of the Church of Rome will say, that they acknowledge, as fully as members of our own Church can do, that there is but one supreme God and Lord, to whom alone they intend to offer the worship due to God; and that the appeals which they offer by way of invocation to saints and angels, for their intercession and good offices, do not contravene this principle. But without for a moment questioning their sincerity in making that profession, it may be well here to ask ourselves these few questions:—

First, if it had been intended by the Almighty to forbid any religious application (such as is now professedly the Invocation of Saints and Angels) to any other being than Himself alone, what words could have been employed more stringently prohibitory?

Secondly, had such an address to saints and angels as the Church of Rome now confessedly makes, been contemplated by our heavenly Lawgiver as an exception to the general rule, would not some saving clause, some expressions indicating such an intended exception, have been made in mercy and wisdom? Would not some allusion to it have been discoverable in some page or other of his Divine will?

Thirdly, if such an appeal to the angels of light, or to the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, had been sanctioned under the elder covenant, would not some examples, some few instances, at least some one solitary instance, have been recorded of a faithful servant of God offering such a prayer with the Divine permission?

Lastly, when such strong and repeated declarations and injunctions, interspersed through the entire volume of the Old Testament, show beyond all question the will of God to be, that no other object of religious worship should have any place in the heart or on the tongue of his own true spiritual sons and daughters, is it becoming in a faithful child of our heavenly Father to seek for excuses and palliations, and to invent distinctions between one kind of worship and another? After so many positive warnings against seeking by prayer the aid of any other being whatever, is not a positive command required to justify a mortal man in preferring any prayer to any being, saint, angel, or archangel, save only the one supreme God alone? Instead of any such command, or even permission, appearing, not one single word occurs, from the first syllable in the book of Genesis to the last of the prophet Malachi, which can be forced or strained to countenance the practice of addressing any created being in prayer.

It may, however, be satisfactory to look to such examples in the Old Testament as may seem to have a direct and genuine bearing on the subject. Very many a prayer is recorded of men, to whose sanctity, and integrity, and acceptance with God, the Spirit Himself has set his seal; yet among these prayers there is not found one invocation addressed to saint or angel.

The whole book of Psalms is a manual of devotion, consisting of prayers and praises, composed some by Moses, some by other inspired Israelites of less note, but chiefly by David himself; and what is the force and tendency of their example? Words are spoken in praise of "Moses and Aaron among HIS saints," and of "Samuel among such as called upon HIS name," and mention is made with becoming reverence of the "angels of HIS that do HIM service," but not one word ever falls from the pen of the psalmist addressed by way of invocation to saint or

angel. In the Roman Ritual supplication is made to Abel and Abraham as well as to Michael and all angels. If it is now lawful, if it is now the duty of the worshippers of the true God, to seek his aid through the mediation of those spirits, can we avoid asking why the inspired patriarchs did not appeal to Abel for his mediation? Why did not the inspired David invoke the father of the faithful to intercede for him with God? If the souls of those faithful ones, who in their lifetime appeared to their fellow-mortals to be accepted servants and honoured saints, may be safely addressed in prayer, and be invoked by an act of religious supplication, either to grant us aid, or to intercede with God for aid in our behalf, why did not men, whom God Himself declared to be partakers of his Spirit, offer the same supplication to such departed spirits, as before and after their decease had this testimony from Omniscience itself, that they pleased God? Why is no intimation given in the later books of the Old Testament, that such invocations were addressed to Moses, or Aaron, or Noah, or Abraham?

When wrath was gone out from the presence of the Lord, and the plague was begun among the people, Aaron took a censer in his hand, and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. If the soul of Aaron was to be regarded as a spirit influential with God, one whose intercession could avail, one who ought, were it only for his intercession, to be approached in prayer; could a stronger motive be conceived for suggesting that invocation than David must have felt, when the pestilence was destroying its thousands around him, and all his glory, and strength, and his very life, too, were threatened by its resistless ravages? But no; neither Abel, nor Abraham, nor Moses, nor Aaron, must be petitioned to intercede with God, and implore Him to stay his hand. To God, and God alone, for his own mercy's sake, must his afflicted servant turn in supplication.

Among his prayers we find no "Holy Abraham, pray for us!" "Holy Abel, pray for us!" "Holy Aaron, mediate for us, as thou didst for thy brethren of old!" His own Psalm of thanksgiving well describes the object and the nature of his prayer, "When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears."

Abraham, when on earth, prayed God to spare the offending people of Sodom and Gomorrah; but he invoked neither Noah, nor Abel, nor any of the faithful departed, to join their intercessions with his own. Isaac prayed to God for his son Jacob, but he did not ask the mediation of Abraham in his behalf; and when Jacob in his turn supplicated an especial blessing on his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, though with gratitude he called to his mind, and expressed with his tongue the devotedness to the Almighty both of Abraham and of Isaac, yet we never find him appealing to them, or invoking their intercession with the Lord.

When the conscience-struck Israelites felt that they had exposed themselves by sin to the wrath of the Almighty, whose Sovereign power, on the prayer of Samuel, they then witnessed, distrusting the efficacy of their own supplication, and confiding in the intercession of that man of God, they implored Samuel to intercede for them; and Samuel answered their appeal with an assurance, that he would undertake to plead their cause with heaven. "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not. . . . The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake. . . . Moreover, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." The Holy Spirit numbers Samuel among those who "called upon HIS

name:" and when Samuel died, all Israel were gathered together to lament, and to bury him; but when he was once removed from them by death, we read of no petition being offered to him to carry on the same intercessory office in their behalf. As long as he was alive in the flesh, and sojourned on earth with his brethren, they besought him to pray for them, to intercede for blessings with their God and his God (just as among ourselves one Christian asks another to pray for him); but when Samuel's body had been buried in peace, and his soul had returned to God who gave it, the Bible never records any further application to him; we never read of his being "suppliantly invoked," we nowhere find "Holy Samuel, pray for us!"

Again, what announcement could the Almighty Himself make more expressive of his acceptance of the persons of any, than He actually and repeatedly made to Moses with regard to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? How could HE more clearly intimate, that if "the spirits of just men made perfect" could exercise intercessory or mediatorial influence with Him, those three holy patriarchs would possess such power above all others who had ever lived on the earth? "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.— Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial throughout all generations<sup>1</sup>." Did then Moses, in his alarm and dread, when he was afraid to look upon God, call upon those holy and accepted servants to aid him in his perplexity, and intercede for him and his people with the Eternal Being on whose Majesty he dared not to look? Did he teach his

<sup>1</sup> Exod. iii. 6. 15.

people to invoke Abraham, the father of the faithful? That was far from him.

When Moses himself, that saint and servant of the Lord, was called hence, and was buried (though no mortal man was allowed to know the place of his sepulture), did the survivors pray to him for his help and intercession with God? He had wrought before their eyes so many and great miracles as never had before been witnessed on earth; he had in his lifetime been admitted to talk with the Almighty as a man talketh with his friend, and yet the sacred page records no invocation ever breathed to his departed spirit.

We need not multiply instances, and we will here refer only to one more. Hezekiah, who "trusted in the Lord God of Israel," and clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments when he and his people were in great peril, addressed his prayer only to God. He offered no invocation to holy David to intercede with the Almighty for his own Jerusalem; he made his supplication directly and exclusively to the Lord God of Israel. And yet the very answer made to that prayer would have seemed to justify Hezekiah in seeking holy David's mediation, if prayer for the intercession of any departed mortal could ever have been sanctioned by heaven. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake<sup>2</sup>." Of what saint in the calendar was such a thing as this ever spoken?

This then is the evidence borne by the books of the Old Testament. No prayer to angel or beatified spirit occurs from its first to its last page. And this is indeed confessed by the chief champions of the Romish Church, though at the same time there is a strong and inconsistent desire to enlist some passages in favour of the invocation of angels, to which

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xix. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Kings xx. 5, 6.



we must briefly refer before we bring this subject to a close.

Those writers who openly confess that the Old Testament affords no instance of invocation being offered to the spirits of departed mortals, and are yet desirous of escaping from the force of that evidence as conclusive against the present adoration of saints and angels in the Church of Rome, have recourse to one or the other of two arguments, both equally untenable, to reconcile that fact with their present belief and practice.

One class, with Cardinal Bellarmin at their head, allege this reason, "No one can be invoked who is not admitted to the presence of God in heaven; but before Christ went down to hell and released the spirits from prison, no mortal was admitted into heaven; consequently, before the resurrection of Christ, the spirit of no mortal was invoked." At the close of his preface to the "Church Triumphant," the cardinal says, "The spirits of the patriarchs and prophets, before the coming of Christ, were for this reason not worshipped and invoked as we now worship and invoke the Apostles and Martyrs, because they were yet shut up and detained in prisons below." Again, he says, "Because before the coming of Christ the saints who died did not enter heaven, and saw not God, nor could ordinarily know the prayers of suppliants, therefore it was not customary in the Old Testament to say, 'Holy Abraham, pray for me,' &c., but the men of that time prayed to God only, and alleged the merits of the saints who had already departed; that their own prayers might be aided by them<sup>5</sup>."

We need not here dwell on the inconsistencies and perplexities involved in this assumed theory; far less need we inquire into the state of the souls of the faithful departed before our Lord's advent. With

<sup>4</sup> Bell. Ingolstadii, 1601, vol. ii. p. 833.

<sup>5</sup> P. 900. This last position, "That the men of old, before the time of Christ, pleaded the merits of the Saints," is unfounded.

St. Augustin.<sup>5</sup> and other Christians, we are content to leave that subject where Scripture has left it. But surely before such an assumption can be expected to obtain any acceptance among thinking men, the case of Enoch requires to be well weighed, whose translation from this life to heaven, making, as it has been beautifully expressed, but one step from earth to glory; the Epistle to the Hebrews cites with a most important comment: "Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him<sup>6</sup>:" "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God<sup>7</sup>." Surely, too, the case of Elijah must not be dismissed summarily, of whom the book of truth declares, "that the Lord took him in a whirlwind into heaven;" his ascent being made visible to mortal eyes, as was afterwards the ascension of our blessed Lord Himself. Surely, moreover, before such a theory as Bellarmin's can be received, the language of Holy Scripture must be well examined, which positively declares, that before the resurrection of Christ, at his transfiguration, Moses and Elijah both in glory appeared visibly to his Apostles, and conversed with Him on the holy mount. "And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem<sup>8</sup>."

Whilst we need not dwell longer on this immediate point, two considerations seem to present themselves to our notice altogether decisive as to the evidence borne against the invocation of saints by the writings of the Old Testament. The first is this;—if the spirits of the saints departed were not invoked before the resurrection of Christ, merely because they were not then admitted into heaven, why did not the faithful

<sup>5</sup> Aug. De Pecc. Orig. c. 23, tom. vii. p. 338.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. v. 24.      <sup>7</sup> Heb. xi. 5.      <sup>8</sup> Luke ix. 30, 31.

and inspired servants of the Lord invoke the angels who were in heaven? The second is this, why did not the inspired Apostles and faithful servants of our Saviour invoke the spirits of those saints after his resurrection, and when the Holy Spirit was present with them to guide them into all truth; that is (according to the theory of Bellarmin, and those who put forth the same view), after those saints had been taken by Christ with Him into his Father's presence? We must not here anticipate our inquiry into the evidence borne by the New Testament against the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome in this point; and we will only add, that whatever be the cause of the absence from the Old Testament of all worship and invocation of Abel and Abraham, whom the Roman Church now invokes, the alleged reason that it was because they were not in heaven till after Christ's resurrection, is utterly contradicted by the conduct of his Apostles and disciples, recorded in the New Testament, for more than half a century after his return to his glory in heaven. This is, however, the proper place for entertaining the first of the two considerations suggested above,—why did not the holy men of old under the elder covenant invoke the angels, as the Roman Church now does?

The inspired writers of the Old Testament, and those to whom through their mouth and pen the Divine word was addressed, were as fully as ourselves acquainted with the existence of the angelic beings. They were aware of the station held by those angels in the court of heaven, of their power as God's ambassadors and agents for good. Either their own eyes had seen the operations of the Almighty by the hands of those celestial messengers, or their ears had heard their fathers tell what HE had done by their instrumentality in times of old. Why, then, did not the chosen people offer to the angels the same worship and invocation which the Church of Rome now addresses to them? In the condition of the holy

angels, no one ever suggests that any change affecting the argument has taken place since the time when man was created. And as the angels in heaven were in themselves the same, equally in the presence of God, and equally able to succour men through that long space of four thousand years which intervened between Adam's creation and the birth of HIM who was Son of Adam and Son of God, so was man in the same dependent state, needing the guidance and protection of a power above his own. Nay, surely, whatever difference affecting the argument has arisen in the state of man, it must all add weight to the reason against the invocation of angels by Christians. God's people of old had no clear knowledge, as we have, of one great Mediator who is ever making intercession for us; and yet they never sought the mediation, and intercession, and good offices of those superhuman beings, of whose existence, and power, and employment in works of blessing to man, they had, however, no doubt. This is a point of much importance, and it will be well to refer to a few passages in support of it.

When David, who had himself<sup>9</sup> visible demonstration of the existence and ministration of the angels, called upon them to unite with his own soul, and with the whole creation throughout the world, in praising their merciful, glorious, and omnipotent Creator, he thus conveys to us his own exalted ideas of their nature, their excellence, and their ministration: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye angels of his, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye servants of his, that do his pleasure<sup>1</sup>." David knew, moreover, that one of the offices, in the execution of which the angels do God's pleasure, consists in their succouring and defending us on earth. In a psalm, prophetic of

<sup>9</sup> 1 Chron. xxi. 16.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm ciii. 19—21.

the Redeemer, the Psalmist says, "There shall no harm happen unto thee, nor shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.<sup>2</sup>" And again, with exquisitely beautiful imagery, he represents those same blessed servants as a host of God's spiritual soldiers, keeping watch and ward over the poorest of the children of men who would take refuge in his mercy. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.<sup>3</sup>" And yet David, the prophet of the Lord, never addresses to these beings, high, and glorious, and powerful as he acknowledges them to be, one single invocation; he neither asks them to assist him, nor to pray for him, nor to pray with him in his behalf.

Isaiah was admitted by the Holy Spirit to witness in the fulness of its glory the court and the throne of heaven; and he heard the voices of the seraphim proclaiming their Maker's praise; he experienced also personally the effect of their ministration, when one of them said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged<sup>4</sup>." Still, though the prophet must have regarded this angel as his benefactor under God, yet neither to this seraph, nor to any of the host of heaven, does he offer one prayer for their good offices, not even by their intercession. He ever ascribes all to God alone, and never joins any other name with HIS, either in supplication or in praise.

Daniel's case, too, bears immediately on the point before us. He acknowledges, not only that the Lord's omnipotent hand had rescued him from the jaws of the lions, but that the deliverance was brought about by the ministration of an angel: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths,

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xci. 10—12.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxiv. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah vi. 7.

that they have not hurt me<sup>5</sup>." Yet, throughout Daniel's prayers, we can find no allusion to any even of the highest angels. He had seen Gabriel before his prayer, he had heard the voice and felt the hand of that heavenly messenger who was commissioned to reveal to him what was to come; and immediately after the offering of his prayers, the same Gabriel announces himself as one come forth to give the prophet skill and understanding. And yet, neither to Gabriel nor to any other of the angels of God, does one word of invocation fall from the lips of Daniel. In the supplications of that holy, intrepid, and blessed servant and child of God, it is in vain to search for any thing approaching in speech to the invocation, "Holy Gabriel, pray for us!"

The other strange reason assigned for the people of God not having "suppliantly invoked" saints and angels in times of the Old Testament, to which we before adverted, is this,—in those times prayer was not offered to God through a mediator at all; and as the one Mediator was not then revealed in his person and his offices, the subsidiary intercessors, to whom the Church of Rome now prays, could not act, and therefore could not be invoked by man. The answer to this suggestion is at once conclusive; that Mediator has been revealed in his person and in his offices, and has been expressly declared to be "THE ONE Mediator between God and man;" we therefore seek God's covenanted mercies through Him. Those subsidiary intercessors, as they are called, have never been revealed, and therefore we do not seek their aid. To assure us that our heavenly Father willed us to approach Him by secondary and subsidiary mediators and intercessors, a revelation would have been required as clear and unquestionable as that which He has vouchsafed to us of the mediation of his blessed Son. Had

<sup>5</sup> Dan. vi. 22.

the will of God been that we should seek his mercy through the intercessions of saints, and martyrs, and angels, to be secured by our own prayers to them, is it conceivable that HE would not have given us some intimation of his will in this respect? If believers in the Gospel were expected to look to unnumbered mediators of intercession in heaven as well as the one Mediator of redemption (a distinction of which we find no trace in Holy Scripture), would not the Gospel itself have announced it? Could such declarations as these from the oracles of Divine Truth have been put on record without any qualifying or limiting expressions? "He is able also to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—"There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." But this involves the question which must next be discussed, what is the evidence of the New Testament on this point? All we would anticipate here is, that if the irresistible argument from the Old Testament is met on the ground that no mediator at all was then revealed, we must require a distinct revelation of the existence and offices of other mediators and intercessors who are to be supplicantly invoked by us, before we can be justified in applying to them for their intervention with God in our behalf. The question, therefore, now is; though no prayer to angel or beatified spirit occurs in the Old Testament from its first to its last page, nor any intimation of the office of such mediators, much less of our duty to invoke them, yet are such mediators revealed in the pages of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

It may however be wise first to advert, though briefly<sup>6</sup>, to those passages in the Old Testament to which some

<sup>6</sup> The reader will find this subject examined more fully in "Primitive Christian Worship," p. 38.

Roman Catholics appeal as countenancing religious adoration to angels. The two principal instances relied on are, first, Abraham bowing down before his heavenly visitants; and secondly, the words of Jacob when he gave his benediction to his grandsons.

With regard to the first case, even did the words imply religious adoration, it could not justify our paying religious adoration to angels; because whatever it was, agreeably to the interpretation of the best commentators both ancient and modern, the person whom Abraham then addressed was no created being, neither angel nor seraph, but the Word, the eternal Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, Himself God<sup>7</sup>. But the fact is, that no argument can be drawn from this passage; for the word which the authorized Roman version translates "adoravit," and the Douay Bible renders "adored," is the same, letter for letter, with the word employed to signify Jacob's bowing down to his brother Esau; and which means, as the English Bible has it, "bowed down toward the ground<sup>8</sup>."

In the other passage the very words of Jacob prove that when he expressed his desire that the angel, "which had redeemed him from all evil, would bless the lads," that Being was no other than the same Angel of the Covenant, God revealing Himself to mortal eyes. And this, too, is the interpretation put upon the passage by the early fathers. Among others, Eusebius and Athanasius declare the person spoken of by Jacob to be God the Son. "And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the ANGEL which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."—"And the angel of God spake . . . I

<sup>7</sup> Among others, see Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 56. See also for the next instance, Athanasius, Paris, 1698, vol. i. p. 561; Euseb. *Demonst. Evan.* v. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. xviii. 2; xxxiii. 1—3.



am the God of Beth-el, where thou vowedst a vow unto me<sup>9</sup>.”

We must now examine the evidence borne by the books of the New Testament on our present subject.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; xxxi. 11, 13.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. V.

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ON THE

INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND

ANGELS.

EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

AGAINST IT.



## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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### *Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of the New Testament against it.*

THOUGH the testimony borne by the Old Testament against the invocation of saints and angels is, as we have seen, strong and irresistible, yet it has been said that we are living under another dispensation; that to us as Christians, neither the precepts nor the examples of the patriarchal and Mosaic times are applicable; and that consequently the injunctions from heaven, given of old to preserve the chosen people from pagan idolatry, do not prohibit us, under the Gospel, from seeking the aid of those departed saints who are now reigning with Christ. But surely to those whose heart's desire is to fulfil the will of God in all things, those commands and examples are still most strictly applicable, as conveying a knowledge of the will of our heavenly Father, that his sons and daughters on earth should associate no name, however exalted, with his own holy name, in prayer and spiritual invocation. To those who can be content to depart from that will, whenever they can devise plausible arguments and refined distinctions to countenance such departure, we are not here addressing ourselves.

Before, then, it can be safely concluded that Chris-

tians have a liberty, denied to believers under the former dispensations, of addressing prayers to saints and angels for their aid and intercession, surely an authoritative declaration to that effect from the divine Lord of all our dispensations must be produced, clear and unequivocal. But from the very first to the very last word of the New Testament, we find the doctrines, the precepts, and the examples, the pervading and reigning spirit of the entire volume, combining with voices loud and clear, to impress upon us this principle of devotion,—‘Pray to God Almighty only, and pray only in the name and for the sake of his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, our only Mediator in heaven: offer no prayer, no supplication, no entreaty, to any other being in the unseen world, neither saint nor angel, though it be only to ask for their intercession with the Great God.’ This, however, involves the whole question, and must be fairly and thoroughly sifted.

Let us then review the entire volume with close and minute scrutiny, and ask ourselves, Is there a single passage which directly sanctions any religious invocation to any being except God alone? And then let us resolve this point: In a matter of so vital importance, of so immense interest, and of so sacred a character as the worship of the Supreme Being, who declares Himself to be a jealous God, ought we to suffer any refinements of casuistry to entice us from the clear light of revelation? If it were God’s good pleasure to make exceptions to his rule—a rule so repeatedly and so imperatively enacted and enforced—surely our knowledge of his gracious dealings with mankind, would have taught us to look for an announcement of the exception by an inspired tongue or pen, in terms equally forcible and explicit. Instead of this, we find no single act, no single word, nothing which even by implication can be forced to sanction any prayer or religious invocation, of whatever kind, to any being, save to Himself alone; the God who

heareth prayer, and who has revealed to us his only Son, as the one Mediator between God and man.

In this inquiry we must first look to the language and conduct of our blessed Lord Himself, whose prayers to his Father are upon record for our instruction and comfort, and whose precepts and example form the best rule of a Christian's life. So far from repealing the ancient law, he repeats in his own person its solemn announcement, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord<sup>1</sup>;" and commands us with authority, "When thou prayest, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly<sup>2</sup>." Undoubtedly our Lord is here cautioning his followers against engaging in religious acts for the purposes of the hypocrite; but neither here nor elsewhere is there any allusion in a single word of his to prayer from a mortal on this earth to an angel or saint in heaven. And yet occasions were multiplied, on which some reference to the invocation of angels, and their intercession, would have been natural, and apparently called for, had his will been that his disciples should unite such an invocation with their prayers to his Father, and such an intercession, as auxiliary to his own.

Again and again He places beyond all doubt the reality of the existence of angels, and of their good offices in behalf of mankind; but it is as they are God's servants, and act at God's bidding, not in answer to any supplication of ours. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus has been appealed to for opposite testimony<sup>3</sup>; but the parable is not in point; and were it in point, it might be fairly and strongly urged against our invoking the spirit of any departed mortal, even the Father of the faithful himself. What are the circumstances of the parable<sup>4</sup>? A lost soul, in the regions of torment, prays to Abraham in the regions of the blessed, and the spirit of the deceased

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vi. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 895.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xvi. 19.

and blessed Patriarch professes to have no power to grant the request of the deceased and condemned spirit. The practice, indeed, of our Roman Catholic brethren would have been exemplified here, had our Lord represented the rich man's five brethren still on earth as pious men, supplicating Abraham in heaven to pray for themselves, or for the mitigation of their lost brother's punishment and his woes. But then the case would have afforded Christians little encouragement to follow such an example, when they found Abraham declaring himself unable to aid them in attaining the object of their prayer, or in any way to assist them. Without one single exception, we find our Saviour's example, precepts, and doctrines<sup>5</sup>, to be decidedly against the practice of invoking saint or angel; while not one solitary act or word of his can be cited to countenance or palliate it.

It follows next that we inquire into the writings of Christ's Apostles and immediate followers, to whom He graciously promised that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth. In the Acts of the Apostles various instances of prayer attract our notice, but not one ejaculation is found there to any other being save God alone. Neither angel nor saint is invoked. The Apostles prayed for guidance in the government of Christ's infant Church, but it was thus: "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men<sup>6</sup>:" they prayed for their own acceptance with God, but it was "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit<sup>7</sup>." They prayed for each other, as in behalf of St. Peter in prison; but we are expressly told, that the prayer which was made without ceasing by the Church for him was addressed to God<sup>8</sup>.

To deliver St. Peter from his chains an angel was sent on an especial mission from heaven; but though St. Peter saw him, and heard his voice, and followed him, and knew of a surety that the Lord had employed

<sup>5</sup> See especially St. John xiv. 14; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Acts i. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. vii. 59.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. xii. 5.

the ministration of an angel to liberate him from his bonds, yet we do not hear of Peter afterwards praying to angels to secure their good offices and their intercession with God: nor has he once intimated to others that such applications would avail, or were allowable. He exhorts his fellow-Christians to pray, "Watch unto prayer;" but it is because "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers<sup>9</sup>." He himself prays for them, but it is that the God of all grace might make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them. He suggests no invocation of saint or angel to intercede with God for them. He bids them cast all their care upon God, in the assurance that God himself careth for them.

St. Paul also experienced in his own person the comfort of an angel's ministration, bidding him cast off all fear when in the extreme of imminent peril<sup>10</sup>: but with him God, and God alone, is the object of prayer throughout; by him no saint or angel is alluded to as one whose intercession might be sought by himself or by us. He speaks in glowing language of patriarchs, prophets, and angels; but unto none of these would he turn in prayer. "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God<sup>1</sup>." And can any one receive, in the plain meaning of his words, the solemn caution which he gives to the Colossians on the subject of worship, and think that St. Paul could have uttered these words without any exception or qualifying expression, if he had worshipped angels himself by invocation, merely asking them for their prayers, or had meant us to do so? "Let no one beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, not holding the head<sup>2</sup>;" which "Head" he had before declared to be the Son of God, in whom we have redemption through his blood, "even the forgiveness of our sins."

<sup>9</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 7; iii. 12.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iv. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Acts xxvii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 18.



It has been said that St. Paul does not here prohibit all worship of angels, but only such worship as would cause those who offered it to desert the worship of God:—but had that been his meaning, would not the Apostle have told us so?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the inspired penman brings before our minds with most fervent uplifting eloquence, together with Abel, and Abraham, and David, that goodly fellowship of the prophets, that holy army of martyrs whose names were written in the book of life: he speaks as though he were an eye-witness of what he describes, of the general assembly of the Church of the first-born<sup>3</sup>. Had the thought of seeking by invocation the support or intercession of saint or angel been familiar to him,—had the thought ever been entertained favourably in his mind, could he have allowed such an occasion to pass by without even alluding to any benefit that might result from our invoking such friends of God? But so far is he from any such allusion, that the utmost he says at the close of his eulogy is this: “These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect<sup>4</sup>.”

The beloved Apostle, who could look forward in full assurance of faith to the day of Christ’s second coming, and who knew that “when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,” has left us this record of his sentiments concerning prayer: “This is the confidence that we have in HIM, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us<sup>5</sup>.” St. John alludes to no intercessor, to no advocate, save only “that advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is also the propitiation for our sins<sup>6</sup>.” St. John never suggests to us the advocacy or intercession of saint or angel; with him God in Christ is all in all.

The case of St. James, equally to the point, and strongly illustrative of the truth, is the last to which

<sup>3</sup> Col. i. 18. <sup>4</sup> Heb. xi. 39, 40. <sup>5</sup> 1 John v. 14. <sup>6</sup> 1 John ii. 1, 2.

we will now refer. He is anxious to impress on his fellow-Christians the efficacy of our intercessions. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much<sup>7</sup>." He instances its power with God in the case of Elijah, a man so holy that the Almighty suffered him not to pass through the regions of death and the grave, but translated him at once from this life to glory. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." And yet St. James is very far from suggesting the efficacy or lawfulness of any invocation to the hallowed spirit of this man, whose prayer had been permitted to influence the elements and natural powers of the sky and the earth. He exhorts all men to pray, but it must be to God alone, and directly to God, without applying for the intervention of any mediators or intercessors from among angels or men: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering<sup>8</sup>." Like the writer to the Hebrews, he would have us come ourselves "boldly" and directly "to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Surely these Apostles, chosen heralds for conveying the truths of salvation throughout the world, knew well how the Almighty could best be approached by his children on earth; and had the invocation of saint or angel found a place in their creed, they would not have kept back so important an article of faith and practice from us.

Before leaving this part of our inquiry, it is necessary to weigh the import of two passages in the New Testament, often quoted on our present subject, one in

<sup>7</sup> James v. 16.

<sup>8</sup> James i. 5, 6.

the Acts of the Apostles, the other in the Apocalypse.

The holy Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, by a striking miracle had excited feelings of religious reverence and devotion among the people of Lystra, who prepared to offer sacrifice to them as two of their fabled deities<sup>9</sup>. The indignant zeal with which these two ministers of the word rushed forward to prevent such an act of impiety, however admirable and affecting, does not constitute the chief reason for which reference is here made to this incident. They were, undoubtedly, still clothed with mortal flesh, and the weakness of human nature; and the priest and the people were ready to offer to them the wonted victims, the abomination of the heathen. Equally clear is the wide difference, in many particulars, between such an act and the act of a Christian praying to their spirits after their departure hence, and supplicating them to intercede with the true God in their behalf; and on this difference Roman Catholic writers have held the inapplicability of this incident to the present question. But, surely, if any such prayer to departed saints, as the Roman Church now offers, had been familiar to the minds of those Apostles, instead of repelling the religious address of the inhabitants of Lystra at once and for ever, they would have altered the tone of their remonstrance; and not have suppressed the truth, when so good an opportunity offered itself for imparting it. And, supposing it was part of their commission to announce and explain the invocation of saints at all, as a doctrine of the Gospel, on what occasion could an announcement of what would be a just and authorized and beneficial invocation of angels and saints departed, have been more appropriate in the Apostles than when they were denouncing the unjustifiable offering of sacrifices to themselves when living?

But whether the more appropriate place for such an announcement were at Lystra, at Corinth, at Athens,

<sup>9</sup> Acts xiv. 11.

or at Rome, it matters not; nor whether the doctrine would have been more advantageously communicated by their oral teaching, or in their epistles. If the Apostles by their example, or instruction, had sanctioned the invocation of saints and angels, it would have inevitably appeared in some page or other of the New Testament, in the course of the fifty years and more, between the resurrection of Christ and the date of the last Canonical Scripture. Instead of this, the whole tenour of the Holy Volume is in perfect accordance with the spirit of the apostolical remonstrance at Lystra, to the fullest and utmost extent of its meaning, "We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God."

On the weight and cogency of the other instance, also, it well becomes every Christian to ponder carefully and honestly. St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, when admitted to view with his own eyes, and to hear with his mortal ears the things of heaven, rapt in amazement and awe, fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed him these things<sup>1</sup>. If the adoration were ever justifiable, surely it was then; and what a testimony to the end of the world would have been put upon record, had the adoration of an angel by the blessed John at such a moment, when he had the mysteries and the glories of heaven before him, been received and sanctioned! But what is the fact? "Then said he, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: worship God." It is difficult to understand, it is impossible to admit, the refinement by which the conclusiveness of this direct refusal of all religious adoration and worship is attempted to be set aside. Uttered without any qualification, at such a time, by such a being, to such a man, these words are conclusive beyond gainsaying to those who resolve to follow

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxii. 8.

Scripture, and not to bend Scripture to their own theories. The interpretations put upon this passage, and the inference drawn from them by a series of our most trustworthy guides, with St. Athanasius at their head, present to our minds so entirely the plain, straightforward, honest, and common-sense view of the case, that all the subtilty of casuists, and all the ingenuity of modern refinements, will never be able to establish any other in its stead. "The angel (for such are the words of that ancient defender of the true faith) in the Apocalypse forbids John, when desiring to worship him, saying, 'See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: worship God.' Therefore to be the object of worship belongs to God only; and this even the angels know: they, though they surpass others in glory, yet are all creatures, and are not among objects of worship, but among those who worship the sovereign Lord<sup>2</sup>."

To say, as some have said, that St. John was too fully illuminated by the Holy Spirit to do what was in itself wrong, especially a second time, is as untenable as it would be to maintain that St. Peter, whom the Saviour had pronounced blessed, could not, especially thrice, have done wrong when he denied our Lord. St. John did wrong by worshipping the angel, or the angel would not have chided and warned him. And to say that the angel here forbade John personally to worship him, because John was himself a fellow-servant and one of the prophets, and thus that the prohibition only tended to exalt the prophetic character, and not to condemn in others, not prophets, the worship of angels, is proved by the angel's own words to be a groundless assumption, who reckons himself a fellow-servant not with prophets only and St. John, but with all those also who keep the words

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius, Orat. 2 Cont. Ar. vol. i. p. 491.

of the book of God; thus equally forbidding every faithful Christian to worship his fellow-servants, the angels. These are not far from the last words in the volume of inspired truth, and together with those last words themselves, they seem to us, as with "the voice of a great multitude, and of many waters, and of mighty thunderings," from the very throne itself of the Most High to proclaim to every inhabiter of the earth, 'Fall down before no created being in religious worship of any kind; invoke, call upon, pray to no created being, whether saint or angel: worship and adore God only: pray only to God. Trust to his mercy; seek no other mediator or intercessor in the unseen world, save only his own blessed Son.' "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Thus the New Testament, the Gospel covenant, that gracious dispensation under which we live, so far from relaxing the strictness of the law of the Old Testament, in respect to the subject before us, so far from countenancing any departure from the obligation of that code which limits prayers and all religious worship to God only, so far from suggesting the distinction of worship invented comparatively of late years into three kinds, one for God, another for the Virgin, a third for saints and angels; so far from sanctioning, even by a shadow, invocation to sainted men and to angels as intercessors for us with the eternal Giver of all good—so far from this, the Gospel renews and repeats the commands given of old, and declares also, that our invocation, in order to be Christian, must be addressed to God alone; and

that there is one, and only one, Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is at the right hand of his Father, a merciful High Priest, sympathizing with us in our infirmities, ever making intercession for us, and able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through Him.

THE END.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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Nos. VI. & VII.

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ON THE  
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND  
ANGELS.

VI. EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
AGAINST IT.

VII. EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
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- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—  
[continued].

## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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### *Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of the Primitive Church against it.*

ON the subject of the worship in the Church of Rome of saints and angels, we are induced to examine into the evidence of Christian antiquity, not by any mis-giving lest the testimony of the Holy Scriptures might appear defective or doubtful; far less by the unworthy notion that God's word needs the support of the suffrages of man. On the contrary, the voice of God in his revealed word is clear, certain, and indisputable, commanding the invocation of Himself alone in acts of religious worship, and condemning any such departure from that singleness of adoration, as now distinguishes the Church of Rome, in her worship of saints and angels, from our own communion. It is a fixed principle in our creed, that whenever God's word is clear and certain, human evidence cannot be weighed against it in "the balance of the sanctuary." When the Lord hath spoken, well does it become the whole earth to be silent before Him. But when Scripture is silent, or where its meaning is doubtful, the testimony of the early Church offers itself to us as a guide to be followed with watchful care and due reverence.

Now for the present let it be supposed, that instead of the oracles of God having spoken, as we know

them to have spoken, with a voice clear, strong, and uniform, against the invocation of saints and angels, their voice had been doubtful; suppose in this case the question had been left open in Scripture, and we were therefore the more anxious to ascertain the faith and practice of the primitive Church, then what evidence should we be able to draw from the remains of the earliest ages? What testimony do the writers who followed next, after the canon of Scripture was closed, bear upon this point? To what conclusion would a full and candid inquiry into the real spirit of those authors lead us in answer to this question—Whether we of the Church of England, by scrupulously abstaining from offering, in thought or word, any prayer, or supplication, entreaty, request, or invocation whatever, to any spiritual being except God, are treading in the steps of the first Christians, adhering to the very pattern they set, or not? and whether members of the Church of Rome, by addressing angels or saints in any form of invocation, seeking aid from them by their intercession or otherwise, have or have not swerved decidedly and far from those same footsteps and departed widely from that pattern?

An examination, then, of the passages collected by the most celebrated Roman Catholic writers, and a searching scrutiny into the undisputed original works of primitive writers of the Greek and Latin Churches, seem to force upon us two conclusions:—

First, negatively, that the Christian writers through the first three centuries and more, never refer to the invocation of saints and angels as a practice with which they were familiar, or which they had adopted for themselves; that they have not recorded or alluded to any forms of invocation of that kind, as used by themselves or by the Church in their days; and that no services of the earliest times contain hymns, litanies, or collects to angels, or to the spirits of the faithful departed.

In the second place, positively, that the principles which these early Christians habitually maintain, are irreconcilable with such a practice. In tracing (as the original documents supply us with suggestions) the worship of saints and angels, we proceed one step after another, from the earliest practice of the Church—the practice of addressing prayers to Almighty God alone, for the sake and through the merits of his blessed Son, the only Mediator between God and man—to the lamentable innovation, both of praying to God through the mediation of departed mortals, and of invoking those mortals themselves, as the actual dispensers of the blessings sought. It is indeed painfully interesting to trace the several steps, one after another, beginning with the sound doctrine maintained by various early writers, that the souls of the saints are not yet reigning with Christ in heaven, and ending with the anathema of the Council of Trent against all who maintained that doctrine; beginning with prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God alone, and ending with daily prayers both to saints and angels; one deviation from the strict line of religious duty, and the pure singleness of Christian worship successively gliding into another, till at length, with a few notable exceptions, the whole of Christendom was seen to acquiesce in public and private devotions, which in earlier and better times, had they been proposed, the whole of Christendom would at once with unanimity have rejected.

The places and occasions most favourable for witnessing and estimating the gradual innovations in the worship of the early times of Christianity, are the tombs of the martyrs, and the churches where their remains were deposited; at the periods of the annual celebration of their martyrdom, or, in some instances of what was called, their translation, that is, the removal of their mortal remains from their former resting-place to a new spot, generally dedicated to their memory. On these occasions an almost incredible enthusiasm

reigned; sometimes, as St. Chrysostom<sup>1</sup> tells us, the ardour of the worshippers being little removed from madness. But even at times of less excitement, by contemplating the acts and sufferings of a beloved and admired martyr, immediately after his death, recalling his looks, and words, and steadfastness; and exhorting each other to picture to themselves his holy countenance then fixed on them, his tongue addressing them, his sufferings still fresh before them, encouraging all to follow his example, they were led to consider him as actually himself one of the faithful assembled round his tomb. Hence they cherished first the hope, then the belief, that he was praying with them, as well as for them; that he heard their eulogy on his Christian excellence; and took pleasure in the honours paid to his memory: hence they inferred, together with his good-will towards them, his ability also, as though he were still on earth, to promote their welfare: hence they proceeded by a fatal step, first to implore him to procure them bodily relief from their present sufferings; next they invoked him to plead their cause with God, and to intercede for the supply of their spiritual wants, and the ultimate salvation of their souls; and lastly, they prayed to him directly as himself the dispenser of temporal and spiritual blessings.

The following then is the order in which the innovations in Christian worship seem to have taken place, being chiefly introduced at the annual celebration of martyrdoms.

1st. In the first ages confession, and prayer, and praise were offered to the Supreme Being alone, and for the sake of his Son our only Saviour and Advocate; when mention was made of saints or martyrs, it was to thank God for the graces bestowed on his faithful ones when on earth, and to pray to God for grace to follow their good examples, and attain through Christ to the same end and crown of a

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrys. Paris, 1718, vol. vii. p. 330.

Christian's earthly struggles. This act of worship was usually accompanied by a homily, setting forth the Christian excellence of the saint, and encouraging the survivors so to follow him as he followed Christ.

2nd. The second stage appears to have been a prayer to Almighty God; that He would suffer the supplications and intercessions of angels and saints, (their embassies, as they were called) to prevail with Him and bring down a blessing on their fellow petitioners on earth; the idea having spread among enthusiastic worshippers; that the spirits of the saints were suffered to be present at their tombs, and to join with the faithful in their addresses to the throne of grace.

3rd. The third grade appears to have owed its origin to the practice of orators dwelling continually on the excellencies and glories of the saints—in the panegyrics delivered over their remains—representing their constancy and Christian virtues as super-human and divine, and as having conferred lasting benefits on the Church. By these benefits at first were meant the comfort and encouragement of their good example; and the honour flowing to the religion of the cross from the testimony they had borne to its truth even unto death; but in process of time, the habit grew of attaching a sort of mysterious efficacy to their merits; hence sprang this third gradation in religious worship, prayers to the Almighty, that “He would hear his suppliants, and grant their requests for the sake of his martyred servant, and by the efficacy of that martyr's merit.”

4th. Hitherto, unauthorized and objectionable as are the two last forms of prayer; still the petitions in each case were directed to God alone. The next step swerved lamentably from that principle of worship; and the petitioners were led to address their requests to angels and sainted men in heaven; at first, however, confining their petitions to the asking for their prayers and intercessions with Almighty God.

5th. The last stage in this progressive degeneracy of Christian worship was to petition the saints and angels directly and immediately themselves, at first for the temporal, and afterwards for the spiritual benefits which the petitioners desired to obtain from heaven. For it is not less evident than curious, that the worshippers seem for some time to have petitioned the saints for temporal and bodily benefits, before they proceeded to ask for spiritual blessings at their hands, or through their intercessions<sup>2</sup>.

Of these several gradations and stages, we find traces in the records of Christian antiquity less and less faint, as superstitions and the corruptions of apostolic doctrine spread wider, and leavened more of Christian worship. Of all of them we have lamentable instances in the ritual of the Romish Church. But, as we now proceed to show, it was not so from the beginning. In the earliest ages we find only the first of these forms of worship exemplified, and it is the only form retained in our English ritual, of which the prayer for Christ's Church militant here on earth furnishes a beautiful specimen: "We bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom: Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen."

Before we refer in detail to some of the invaluable remains of Christian antiquity, in proof of our views, three observations may be premised.

1st. We do so, not for the purpose of attesting the exact accuracy of the above representation as to the various stages of the worship of saints and angels in the order of time (the soundness of our argument not depending upon that accuracy), but to be enabled to answer satisfactorily this question, Whether the invocation of saints and angels prevailed from the

<sup>2</sup> See Basil. Orat. in Mamanta Martyrem.

first in the Christian Church, or whether it was an innovation introduced after pagan superstition, in the worship of its many inferior divinities, had begun to mingle its poisonous corruptions with the pure worship of Almighty God?

2nd. The field of Christian antiquity is too wide to be even cursorily examined here, and we must refer the reader who desires to verify any of our statements, or scrutinize fully and minutely any of our arguments on points of much research, to the work lately taken upon the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to which reference has been already made, entitled, "Primitive Christian Worship." But a brief outline of the evidence, and specimens of the conclusive testimonies of primitive writers at different periods cannot be otherwise than satisfactory to those who desire to make themselves generally acquainted with the nature of the argument.

3rd. We conceive that few persons will be disposed to doubt, that if the primitive believers were taught by the Apostles to address the saints in heaven and the holy angels with adoration and prayers, the earliest Christian records must have contained clear and indisputable references to the fact, and that undesigned allusions to the custom would inevitably have presented themselves to our notice here and there. Not that we could expect to meet with full statements of the doctrine or practice of the primitive Church in this particular, far less such elaborate apologies for the practice as abound in later times. But what is more satisfactory in proof of the general prevalence of any custom, expressions would incidentally occur implying habitual familiarity with such worship. For example, in the remains of Christian antiquity, from the very earliest of all, such expressions are constantly meeting us (even when the writer is engaged on some other and different topic), as imply the doctrines of the ever blessed Trinity, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the influences of the Holy Spirit; habitual prayer and



praise offered to the Saviour, as very and eternal God; the observance of the holy sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, with other tenets and practices of the Apostolic Church. It is impossible to study the remains of Christian antiquity without being assured beyond the reach of doubt, that such doctrines and practices prevailed in the universal Church from the days of the Apostles. Can the invocation of saints and angels and the blessed Virgin be made an exception to this rule? And can it stand this test? Had it prevailed, is it not beyond gainsaying that we must have found traces of it in the earliest works of primitive antiquity, especially in the forms of prayer and exhortations to prayer with which those works abound? Can such traces be found?

#### CENTURY I. THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

The books called the works of the Apostolic Fathers are full, and copious, and explicit, and cogent on the nature and duty of prayer and supplications, as well for public as for private blessings, and of intercession by one Christian for another, and for the whole race of mankind, no less than of petitions for mercy on himself; and yet, though openings of every kind offered themselves for a natural introduction of the subject, there is in no one single instance any reference or allusion to the invocation of saints or angels as a practice either approved or even known in those times. With the different opinions as to the exact time when these writings first appeared, and with the genuineness of all or any of them, though interesting questions in themselves, we have nothing to do in this argument. They were certainly all in existence before the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, and their testimony is not affected by the exactness of the date assigned to them. Not only, however, is the absence of all allusion to prayers offered to saints and angels decisive of the question, in point of negative evidence, but various passages occur<sup>3</sup> which

<sup>3</sup> The references are made to the edition published at Antwerp, 1698.

supply positive testimony on the subject! The nature of the present work does not admit of many quotations, or long discussions, and throughout this reference to the testimony of ancient writers we will endeavour to be as brief as may be consistent with the desire of enabling the reader to form a fair estimate of the evidence.

1. THE EPISTLE OF ST. BARNABAS gives directions on the subject of prayer, but it is prayer to God only. He speaks of angels, but not as beings who were to be invoked by us. The saints of whom he speaks are not souls in heaven to be petitioned by us on earth, but Christians on earth whom a true Christian is bound to search out, and comfort, and assist on their way to heaven.

“There are two ways of doctrine and authority, one of light, the other of darkness. Over the one are appointed angels of God, conductors of the light; over the other, angels of Satan. . . . Thou shalt love Him that made thee; thou shalt glorify Him that saved thee from death. . . . Thou shalt love as the apple of thine eye one who speaketh to thee the word of the Lord. Call to remembrance the day of judgment night and day. Every day thou shalt search out the persons of the saints. . . . proceeding to exhortation, and anxiously caring to save a soul by the word! . . . Thou shalt not come with a bad conscience to thy prayer. The Lord of glory and all grace be with your spirit. Amen.”

2. THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS<sup>4</sup>.—“Let us then remove from us double-heartedness, and faint-heartedness, and never at all doubt of supplicating any thing from God, or say within ourselves, How can I who have been guilty of so many sins against Him ask of the Lord and receive? But with thine whole heart turn to the Lord, and ask of Him without doubting; and thou shalt know his great mercy, that He will

<sup>4</sup> The passage, of which we can here give but a brief extract, will be found in *Primitive Worship*, p. 77, and is full of sound, and pious, and comfortable sentiments.

not forsake thee, but will fulfil the desire of thy soul," &c.

Speaking of the angels, the writer says, "These are all to be revered for their dignity. By these, as it were by a wall, the Lord is girded round. But the gate is the Son of God, who is the only way to God: for no one shall enter into God except by his Son."

3. CLEMENT, BISHOP OF ROME, has left us an epistle, which no one can read without agreeing with Jerome, that it is "very admirable." Clement speaks of angels, and of the holy men of old who pleased God, and were blessed, and were taken to their reward. He urges to prayer—he specifies the objects and the subjects of our prayer—he speaks of the saints, and of our remembering them with compassion for our own good—(just as St. John says, Let him who loveth God love his brother also; and as St. Paul speaks of our ministering to the necessities of the saints)—he invites us to contemplate with reverence Abraham and the other faithful ones, but it is only to imitate their good examples—he bids us think of St. Paul and St. Peter, but it is to listen to their godly admonitions. Throughout there is not the most distant allusion to the saints and angels, as persons to whom supplication should be addressed. "Let us venerate the Lord Jesus, whose blood was given for us." . . . "Let us approach HIM (God) in holiness of soul, lifting up holy and undefiled hands towards Him . . . loving our merciful and tender Father, who hath made us a portion of his elect<sup>5</sup>."

Of any other being to whom the invocations of the faithful should be offered, except God alone, and of any other advocate and intercessor, except the Lord Jesus alone, Clement seems to have had no knowledge. Could this have been so had those who received the Gospel from the very fountain-head been accustomed to pray to the angels, or to the holy men

<sup>5</sup> Epist. Corinth. c. xxi. and xxix.

who had finished their course on earth, and were gone to their reward?

4. SAINT IGNATIUS sealed the truth of the Gospel with his blood about seventy years after the death of our Lord. In his works, in which many passages occur most cheering and uplifting to the soul, no vestige however faint can be found of the invocation of saints or angels; whilst he prays for his fellow labourers to the Lord; and he implores them to approach the throne of grace with supplications for mercy on his soul<sup>6</sup>. "Long since have I prayed to God, that I might be worthy to see your faces which are worthy of God." . . . . "Only pray for strength that it may be given to me from within and from without, that I may not only say but also may will; and not that I may be only called a Christian, but also may be found to be so." "Pray to Christ for me."

5. The only remaining name among those who are called Apostolical Fathers is the venerable Polycarp. He suffered martyrdom by fire at a very advanced age in Smyrna, about 130 years after our Saviour's death. In the only epistle of Polycarp that remains, addressed to the Philippians, he speaks to his brother Christians, of constant continual prayer—but he speaks only of prayer to the all-seeing God. He marks out for our imitation the good example of St. Paul, and the other Apostles, assuring us that they had not run in vain, but were gone to the place prepared for them by the Lord, as the reward of their labours. But not one word can we find alluding to the invocation of saints in prayer.

Here we must refer, though briefly, to the<sup>7</sup> epistle from the Church of Smyrna to the neighbouring Churches, announcing the martyrdom of Polycarp, and relating the affecting circumstances which attended it. The letter purports to contain the very words of the martyr himself in the last prayer which he ever

<sup>6</sup> Epistle to the Romans i. 3, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, Paris, 1628. Book i. Hist. iv. c. xv. p. 163.

offered on earth. On the subject of our present inquiry, this interesting letter, of the genuineness of which there is no ground for doubt, supplies evidence not merely negative. So far from countenancing any invocation of saint or martyr, it contains a very striking passage, the plain common-sense meaning of which bears decidedly against all exaltation of mortals into objects of religious worship. The letter is so generally known, that we may the less regret our inability to quote it at length in these pages, though every line is deeply interesting.

“The Church of God which is in Smyrna, to the Church in Philomela, and to all the branches of the Holy Catholic Church dwelling in any place, mercy, peace, and love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied. . . . .

“The proconsul in astonishment caused it to be proclaimed thrice, Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian. On this they all shouted that the proconsul should let a lion loose on Polycarp: but the games were over, and this could not be done; they then with one accord insisted on his being burnt to death.”

Before his death Polycarp offered this prayer; or rather this thanksgiving to God for his mercy in thus deeming him worthy to suffer death in testimony of the Gospel.

“Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received our knowledge concerning Thee, the God of angels, and powers, and of the whole creation, and of the whole family of the just who live before Thee; I bless Thee because Thou hast deemed me worthy of this day and this hour, to receive my portion among the martyrs in the cup of Christ, to the resurrection both of soul and body in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be received before Thee this day in a rich and acceptable sacrifice, even as Thou the true God, who canst not lie, foreshowing and fulfilling, hast beforehand prepared. For this and for all I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through

the eternal high-priest Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, through whom to Thee with Him in the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and for future ages. Amen."

After recounting the circumstances of his death the narrative proceeds: "But the envious adversary of the just observed the honour put on the greatness of his testimony, and his blameless life from the first, and knowing that he was now crowned with victory, resisted when many of us desired to take his body, and have fellowship with his holy flesh. Some then suggested to Nicetes the father of Herod, and brother of Dalce, to entreat the governor not to give his body, 'Lest,' said he, 'leaving the crucified One, they should begin to worship this man;' and this they said at the suggestion and importunity of the Jews, who also watched us, when we would take the body from the fire. This they did, not knowing that we can never either leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who will be saved in all the world, or worship any other. FOR HIM, BEING THE SON OF GOD, WE WORSHIP, BUT THE MARTYRS, AS DISCIPLES AND IMITATORS OF OUR LORD, WE WORTHILY LOVE, BECAUSE OF THEIR PRE-EMINENT GOOD-WILL TOWARDS THEIR OWN KING AND TEACHER, WITH WHOM MAY WE BECOME PARTAKERS, AND FELLOW DISCIPLES!

"The centurion," it is added, "seeing the determination of the Jews, placed him in the midst, and burnt him as their manner is. And thus we collecting his bones, more valuable than precious stones, and more esteemed than gold, deposited them where it was meet. There, as we may be able, collecting ourselves together in rejoicing and gladness, the Lord will grant to us to observe the birth-day of his martyrdom, for the remembrance of those who have before undergone the conflict, and for exercise and preparation of those who are to come."

Such is the record of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and how full is it of interesting and important suggestions! In this work of primitive antiquity we find

the prayer of a holy martyr, at his last hour, offered to God alone through Christ alone. Here we find no allusion to any other intercessor, no commending of his soul by the dying Christian to saint or angel. Polycarp pleads no other merit; he seeks no other intercession; he prays for no aid, save only his Redeemer's. How strongly does Polycarp's prayer contrast with the commendation made by Thomas à Becket of his own soul, when he was murdered in his own cathedral of Canterbury, as that commendation is recorded in the ancient Romish services for his day, to which we have referred at length in a previous number! The comparison will impress upon us the difference between religion and superstition, between the purity of primitive Christian worship, and the unhappy corruptions of a degenerate age. "To God, (such is Thomas à Becket's prayer) and the blessed Mary, and Saint Dionysius, and the holy patrons of this Church, I commend myself and the Church."

In the record of Polycarp's martyrdom we find also an explicit declaration, that Christians then offered religious worship to no one but God, while they loved the martyrs and kept their names in grateful remembrance, and honoured their ashes also when the spirit had fled.

Here too we find that the place of a Christian martyr's burial was the place which the early Christians loved to frequent; but then we are expressly told with what intent they met there—not as in later times to invoke the departed spirit of the martyr, but to call to mind, in grateful remembrance, the sufferings of those who had already endured the awful struggle; and by their example to encourage and prepare other soldiers of the cross to fight the good fight of faith, assured that they would be more than conquerors through Him who loved them.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. VII.

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ON THE  
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.  
EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
AGAINST IT.

*Continued.*





## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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*Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of the  
Primitive Church against it.*

IN the previous number, we examined those remains of Christian antiquity which are called the works of the Apostolical fathers; persons who at the very lowest calculation lived close upon the Apostles' time, and who, according to the conviction of many, had all of them conversed with the Apostles, and heard the Gospel from their mouths. We may well rejoice to find the fundamental articles of our faith witnessed by these holy men, not so much by direct and positive statements, (though we find many such,) as by what is far more satisfactory and beyond cavil, incidental, and, as they seem, unintentional allusions to those articles as familiar truths, taking them for granted as well known and received principles. Now suppose no such statements or allusions at all were found in these early documents; suppose, for example, we could find no reference to the atoning sacrifice of our Saviour's death; no incidental allusion to it; no trace of any cognizance of it on the part of the writers either as a doctrine of their own creed, or as received by their contemporary Christians; with what force of argument would the absence of all such vestiges of the doctrine be urged against the existence and prevalence of the doctrine in those times? And how, in

plain honesty, can we avoid a similar process of reasoning on the subject of the invocation of saints? If the doctrine and the practice of praying to saints or to angels for their succour, or for their intercession, had been known, and recognised, and approved, and acted upon by the Apostles, and those who were the very disciples of the Apostles, would not some plain, palpable, intelligible, and unequivocal indications of it have appeared in such writings as these? In these writings much is said of prayer, of intercessory prayer, of the one object of prayer, of the subjects of prayer, of the time and place of prayer, of the spirit in which we are to offer prayer, and the persons for whom we ought to pray; does it then accord with common sense and common experience,—with what we should expect and require in other cases, that we should find a profound and total silence on the subject of any prayer or invocation to saints and angels, if the invocation of saints and angels had been recognised, approved, and practised by the primitive Church?

If we proceed with our inquiry into the evidence left us by the Christian writers of times following the age usually assigned to the Apostolical fathers, we arrive at the same result.

Till the middle of the fourth century, or rather the closing years of it, we find no signs of the prevalence of the doctrine and practice of the worship of saints and angels. Then, unhappily, innovations began to spread through the Church itself, which had before retained the original divine doctrine of one God, to whom Christians must pray, and one Mediator and Intercessor through whom they must pray. But instead of being surprised that such innovations should have so soon prevailed, when we reflect on the general tendency of the natural man as to the objects of religious worship, and also how great is the temptation in teachers, either unenlightened or guided by a crooked policy, to accommodate the dictates of truth to the prejudices and desires of those whom they instruct, our wonder might rather be, that

Christianity was so long preserved pure and uncontaminated in this respect, than that corruptions should gradually and stealthily have mingled themselves with the simplicity of Gospel worship. The tendency of the natural man is to multiply to himself the objects of religious worship, and to create, by the help of superstition and the delusive working of the imagination, a variety of unearthly beings, whose wrath he must appease, or whose favour he may conciliate. That tendency is plainly evinced by the history of every nation under heaven; it was the same tendency which rendered such guards and fences necessary to preserve the children of faithful Abraham from its contamination; and even those laws of the Most High often failed of securing his worship from its inroads. Greek and Barbarian, Egyptian and Scythian, would have their "gods many, and their lords many." To one they would look for one good; on another they would depend for a different benefit in mind, body, and circumstances. Some were of the highest grade, and to be worshipped with supreme honours; others were of a lower rank, to whom an inferior homage was addressed; whilst a third class held a sort of middle place, and were approached with a reverence far above the least, though infinitely below the greatest. In the heathen world we find exact types of the *dulia*, the *hyperdulia*, and the *latria*, with which unhappily the practical theology of modern Christian Rome is burdened<sup>1</sup>.

It is, indeed, a cause of wonder, that when, under the Christian dispensation, the household and local, male and female deities, the heathens' tutelary gods, and the genii, had been dislodged by the light of the Gospel, angels, and male and female saints, were not even at a much earlier date forced by superstition to occupy the vacated places: especially when we bear in mind

<sup>1</sup> In the Roman Church, the word *dulia* is said to mean the worship paid to saints and angels; *hyperdulia*, the worship paid to the Virgin; *latria*, the worship paid to God.

what powerful helps and extraordinary facilities were afforded to these external causes, by the religious proceedings which were taking place among Christians themselves at the tombs and "memories," as they were called, of the martyrs. We shall be led to refer to some passages in the early Christian writers, representing in strong but true colours, the weakness and folly of deeming a multitude of inferior divinities necessary, whose good offices we must secure by acts of attention and worship. We anticipate the observation in this place merely to remind the reader, that the appetency of the human mind to secure a variety of unseen protectors and benefactors, to be appeased and conciliated by man, was among the many obstacles with which the first preachers of the Gospel had to struggle. When we come to those passages, the reflection will force itself upon us, how hardly it would have been possible for those early Christian writers to express themselves in so strong, so sweeping, and so unqualified a manner (making no exceptions or limitations), had the practice of applying by invocation to saints and angels then been prevalent among the disciples of Christ. But we now proceed with our inquiry into the evidence of the primitive writers.

*Justin Martyr*<sup>2</sup>, A.D. 150.

Justin, who flourished about the year 150, was trained from early youth in all the learning of Greece and Egypt. He was born in Palestine of heathen parents, and after a patient examination of the evidences of Christianity, and a close comparison of them with the systems of philosophy with which he had been familiar, he became a Christian. In those systems he found nothing solid or satisfactory; nothing

<sup>2</sup> Paris, 1742.

on which his mind could rest. In the Gospel he gained all that his soul yearned for, as a being destined for immortal life, conscious of that destiny, and longing for its accomplishment. The testimony of such a man on any doctrine connected with our Christian faith, must be looked to with interest.

In Justin's works we are unable to find a single vestige of the invocation of saints. Though he speaks much on the subject of prayer, and has left some testimonies as to the primitive mode of conducting public worship, full of interest in themselves, as well as bearing on the points at issue; still no expression is found which can be construed to imply the doctrine or practice among Christians of invoking the souls of the departed. He speaks of private as well as of public prayer, and he offers prayer; but the prayer which he offers, and the prayer of which he speaks are to God alone; and he alludes to no mediator or intercessor in heaven, except only the eternal Son of God Himself. Nor is this all. Justin maintains a doctrine which utterly overturns the very foundation on which the entire theory of the invocation of saints is built. He holds that the souls of the blessed are not admitted into heaven now, but are waiting for the general resurrection; whereas the very essence of the advocacy of the saints is, that they are now in heaven with God, and reigning with Christ.

Thus in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, (sect. v.) he says, "Nevertheless, I do not say that souls all die; for that were in truth a boon to the wicked. But what? That the souls of the pious remain somewhere in a better place, and the unjust and wicked in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment, when it shall be; thus the one appearing worthy of God do not die any more; and the others are punished as long as God wills them to exist, and to be punished."

Not only so. Justin classes among renouncers of the faith, those who maintain the doctrine which

is now the acknowledged doctrine of the Church of Rome, and considered indispensable as the groundwork of the invocation of saints. In the same dialogue (sect. lxxx.) he thus strongly states his sentiments, "If you should meet with any persons called Christians who confess not this, but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and say there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls at the very time of their death are taken up into heaven, do not regard them as Christians."

But whilst Justin's testimony is so full and conclusive against the invocation of saints, a passage occurs in his first Apology<sup>3</sup>, admitting of two grammatical renderings; one which places the angels between the second and third persons of the ever blessed Trinity, as objects of the Christian's reverence and worship; the other, which represents them as being taught divine truths by the Son of God. The first interpretation is so full of impiety, that we at once reject it; the second is so entirely in accordance with the sentiments of many celebrated men in the earliest times, that we feel no doubt in receiving it. The subject is, however, fully discussed in "Primitive Christian Worship," page 107; and we must, therefore, refer the reader, who desires to enter into the question more at large, to that work.

We have already said, that not a single word can be found in Justin to sanction the invocation of saints; but his testimony is far from being merely negative. He strongly admonishes us against our looking to any other being than God for help or assistance. Without any exception or modification in favour of saint or angel, he says, among various passages of similar import,—“In that Christ said, Thou art my God, go not far from me, He at the same time taught, that all persons ought to hope in God, who made all things, and seek for safety and health from Him alone<sup>4</sup>.”

<sup>3</sup> Page 47.

<sup>4</sup> Trypho 102, p. 197.

*Irenæus*<sup>4</sup>, A.D. 180.

Justin sealed his faith by his blood about the year 165, and next to him in the noble army of martyrs, we must examine the evidence of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons. A very small proportion of his works survives in the original Greek; but that little will cause every scholar and divine to lament the calamity which theology and literature have sustained by the loss of the author's own language. We must now avail ourselves with thankfulness of the nervous, though inelegant, copy of that original, which the Latin translation, corrupt and imperfect in many parts, still affords.

There is not a single passage found in Irenæus to countenance the invocation of saints and angels; on the contrary, there is evidence which leaves no doubt that neither in faith nor practice would he sanction such invocation.

With regard to angels, we find these sentiments: "Nor does it [the Church] do any thing by invocation of angels, nor by incantations, nor other depraved and curious means, but with purity, and openness, directing prayers to the Lord who made all things; and calling upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, it exercises its powers for the benefit, and not the seducing of mankind<sup>5</sup>." It has been said, that by angelic invocations, Irenæus means addresses to evil angels and genii, such as the heathen superstitiously used to make. But that is a mere assumption, not warranted by the passage or its context. And surely, even were that so, had Irenæus known that Christians prayed to angels as well as to their Maker and their Saviour, he would not have used so unguarded and unqualified an expression; but would

<sup>4</sup> There is a passage in Irenæus often referred to, in which a contrast is drawn between Eve and the Virgin Mary, and to that our attention will be drawn, when we inquire into the worship of the Virgin Mary.

<sup>5</sup> Benedictine Ed., lib. ii. c. 32, sect. 5, p. 166.



have cautioned his readers against any misapprehension of his meaning.

Then, again, with regard to the invocation of the saints, beatified spirits of mortals supposed to be now with God, one passage is conclusive as to his faith and practice. Cardinal Bellarmin, and all who maintain the doctrine of the invocation of saints, assume that the saints are already in heaven: for, say they, if the saints are not already in the presence of God, they cannot pray for their brethren on earth, and prayer to them would therefore be preposterous<sup>6</sup>. But Irenæus is clear in stating the doctrine, that the souls of Christians go to the unseen place, and remain there till the resurrection and the re-union of body and soul. In the following quotation, the words printed in small capitals are found both in the Latin and the Greek copies<sup>7</sup>:

“ Since the Lord, in the midst of the shadow of death, went where the souls of the dead were, and then afterwards rose bodily, and after his resurrection was taken up, it is evident that of his disciples also, for whom the Lord wrought these things, **THE SOULS GO INTO THE UNSEEN PLACE ASSIGNED TO THEM BY GOD, AND THERE REMAIN TILL THE RESURRECTION, WAITING FOR THE RESURRECTION; AFTERWARDS RECEIVING AGAIN THEIR BODIES, AND RISING PERFECTLY, THAT IS, BODILY; EVEN AS THE LORD ALSO ROSE AGAIN, SO WILL THEY COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.** For no disciple is above his master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. As, therefore, our Master did not immediately flee away and depart; but waited for the time of the resurrection, appointed by his Father, which is evident even by the case of Jonah, after the third day rising again, he was taken up; so we, too, must wait for the time of our resurrection, appointed by God, and fore-announced by the prophets, and thus rising again, be

<sup>6</sup> Bell. lib. i. c. 4, vol. ii. p. 851.

<sup>7</sup> Lib. v. c. 32, sect. 2, p. 331.

taken up, as many as the Lord shall have deemed worthy of this."

*Clement of Alexandria*<sup>8</sup>.—*About the year 180.*

Contemporary with Irenæus, and probably less than twenty years his junior, was Clement, the celebrated Christian philosopher of Alexandria. We are not aware that any Roman Catholic writer has appealed to the testimony of Clement, in favour of the invocation of saints: nor is there probably a passage to be found which the defenders of that practice would be likely to quote in its support; and yet there are many passages, which any one anxious to trace the true Christian faith, in this respect, would not willingly neglect. The tendency of Clement's mind to blend with the simplicity of the Gospel the philosophy with which he so fully abounded, renders him the less valuable as a Christian teacher; but his evidence as to the question of fact, Was the invocation of saints prevalent among Christians in his day, or not? is rendered even more cogent and pointed by this tendency of his mind.

Clement has left us many of his meditations on the efficacy, the duty, and the comfort of prayer. When he speaks of God and of the Christian in prayer, (for "prayer" he defines to be "communion or intercourse with God,") his language becomes often exquisitely beautiful, and not unfrequently sublime. We can only add a few detached passages; and yet those few may show, that Clement is a man whose testimony cannot be slighted:

"Therefore, keeping the whole of our life as a feast, every where and on every part persuaded that God is present, we praise Him as we till our lands; we sing hymns as we are sailing. The Christian is convinced that God hears every thing; not the voice only, but the thoughts. Suppose any one should say

<sup>8</sup> Ed. Oxon. 1715.

that the voice does not reach God, revolving as it does in the air below; yet the thoughts of the saints cut through not only the air, but the whole world. And the divine power, like the light, is beforehand in seeing through the soul. He [the perfect Christian, whom he speaks of throughout as the man of divine knowledge] prays for things essentially good<sup>9</sup>.

“Wherefore, it best becomes those to pray who have an adequate knowledge of God, and possess virtue in accordance with Him—who know what are real goods, and what we should petition for, and when, and how in each case. But it is the extreme of ignorance to ask from those who are not gods, as though they were gods. . . . Whence, since there is one only good God, both we ourselves and the angels supplicate from Him alone, that good things might be either given to us, or remain with us. In this way, he [the Christian] is always in a state of purity fit for prayer. He prays with angels, as being himself equal with angels; and as one who is never beyond the holy protecting guard. And if he pray alone, he has the whole choir of angels with him<sup>1</sup>.”

Clement alludes to instances alleged by the Greeks of the effects of prayer, and he adds, “Our whole Scripture is full of instances of God hearing and granting every request according to the prayers of the just<sup>2</sup>.” Having in the same section referred to the opinion of some Greeks, as to the power of demons over the affairs of mortals, he says<sup>3</sup>, “But they think it matters nothing whether we speak of these as gods, or as angels, calling the spirits of such ‘demons,’ and teaching that they should be worshipped by men, as having, by divine providence, on account of the purity of their lives, received authority to be conversant about earthly places in order that they may minister to mortals.” Is it possible to suppose that this

<sup>9</sup> Stromata, lib. vii. sect. 7, p. 851.

<sup>2</sup> Sect. iii. p. 753.

<sup>1</sup> Sect. xii. p. 879.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. vi. sect. 3, p. 753.

teacher in Christ's school had any idea of a Christian praying to saints or angels? In the last passage, the language in which he quotes the errors of heathen superstition to refute them, so nearly approaches the language of the Church of Rome, when speaking of the powers of saints and angels to assist the supplicant, that we conceive if Clement had any thought whatever of a Christian praying for aid and intercession to saint or angel, he must have mentioned it, especially after the previous passage on the absurdity and ignorance of praying for any good, at the hands of any other than the one true God. In common with his contemporaries, Clement considered the angels to be, as we mortals are, in a state requiring all the protection and help to be obtained by prayer; he believed that the angels pray with us, and carry our prayers to God: but the thought of addressing them by invocation does not appear to have occurred to his mind. At the close of his "Pædagogus" he has left us a form of prayer to God alone, very peculiar and interesting. He closes it by an ascription of glory to the blessed Trinity. But to saint, or angel, or the Virgin, there is no allusion.

*Tertullian*<sup>4</sup>.—About A.D. 180.

Tertullian of Carthage, was a contemporary of Clement of Alexandria, and so nearly were they of the same age, that it has been doubted which should take precedence in point of time. There is a very wide difference in the character and tone of their works, as there was in the frame and constitution of their minds. The lenient and liberal views of the erudite and accomplished master of the school of Alexandria, stand out in broad contrast with the harsh and austere doctrines of Tertullian.

Cardinal Bellarmin calls Tertullian a heretic, and

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Paris, 1675.

says he was the first heretic who denied that the saints went at once, and forthwith, to glory. We have already seen how entire a misrepresentation of the sentiments of the early fathers is conveyed in this judgment of Bellarmin. And Jerome, from whom the Roman Church is unwilling to allow any appeal, as being himself an oracle on such subjects, would lead us to form a very different opinion of the estimation in which Tertullian was held by the fathers of the early Church: for he tells us, that after Tertullian had remained a presbyter of the Church to middle age, he was, by the envy and revilings of the members of the Roman Church, driven to fall from its unity, and espouse Montanism. He also informs us, that "St. Cyprian never passed a single day without reading Tertullian, whom he called The Master, often saying to his secretary, give me The Master, meaning Tertullian<sup>5</sup>."

Tertullian fell into serious errors by joining himself to Montanus. Still we see in him, throughout, traces of that spirit which animated the early converts of Christianity; and his whole soul seems to have been bent on promoting the practical influence of the Gospel. A wide distinction is drawn by Romanist writers between the works of Tertullian written before he espoused Montanism and afterwards. But this distinction does not affect his testimony on the historical fact before us. If, indeed, he held the doctrine of the invocation of saints before he took that unhappy step, and rejected it afterwards, no one conducting such an argument as the present could quote against the practice his later opinions. But we are only inquiring into the matter of fact. Is there, in the works of Tertullian, any evidence that the invocation of saints formed part of the doctrine and practice of the Christian Church in or before his time?

<sup>5</sup> Jerome, ed. 1584, tom. ii. p. 183.

The following passages cannot be read but with interest:—

“We invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God, for the safety of the emperor. Thither [heavenward] looking up with hands extended, because they are innocent; with our head bare, because we are not ashamed; in fine, without a prompter, because it is from the heart, we Christians pray for all rulers a long life, a secure government, a safe home, brave armies, a faithful senate, a good people, a quiet world. . . . For these things I cannot ask in prayer from any other except Him from whom I know that I shall obtain, because He is the one who alone grants, and I am the one who needs to obtain by prayer; his servant, who looks to Him alone, who for the sake of his religion am put to death, who offer to Him a rich and greater victim, which He has commanded, prayer from a chaste frame, from a harmless soul, from a holy spirit. . . . So let hoofs dig into us, let crosses suspend us, let fires embrace us, let swords sever our necks from the body, let beasts rush upon us; the very frame of mind of a praying Christian is prepared for every torment. This do, good presidents! tear ye away the soul that is praying for the emperor<sup>6</sup>.”

In the opening of his reflections on the Lord's Prayer, we find these words:—

“Let us consider, therefore, beloved, in the first place, the heavenly wisdom in the precept of praying in secret, by which He required in a man faith to believe, that both the sight and the hearing of the Omnipotent God is present under our roofs, and in our secret places; and desired the lowliness of faith, that to Him alone, whom he believed to hear and to see every where, he would offer his worship<sup>7</sup>.”

We will only add Tertullian's solemn profession of his faith, the last clause of which, though in perfect accordance with the sentiments of his contemporaries,

<sup>6</sup> Apolog. sect. xxx. p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Page 129.

seems to have been regarded unfavourably by modern writers of the Church of Rome, because it bids us look to the day of judgment for the saints being taken to the enjoyment of heaven; and consequently implies, that they cannot be properly invoked now. "To profess now what we maintain: by the rule of our faith we believe that God is altogether one, and no other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing by his Word first of all sent down: that that Word, called his Son, was variously seen by the patriarchs in the name of God; was always heard in the prophets, at length borne by the Spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, was born of her, and was Jesus Christ. Afterwards He preached a new law, and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; wrought miracles, was crucified, rose again the third day, and being taken up into heaven, sat on the right hand of the Father; and He sent in his own stead the power of the Holy Ghost to guide believers: that He shall come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of eternal life, and the heavenly promises, and to condemn the impious to eternal fire, making a reviving of both classes with the restoration of the body<sup>8</sup>."

*Origen, A.D. 230.*

Jerome informs us that Tertullian lived to a very advanced age. Long before his death, flourished Origen, one of the most celebrated lights of the primitive Church. He was educated a Christian. Indeed his father is said to have suffered martyrdom about A.D. 202. Origen was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria. His virtues and his labours have called forth the admiration of all ages; and what still remains of his works will be delivered down as a rich treasure to future ages. He was a most voluminous writer,

<sup>8</sup> De Præscript. Hæret. sect. xiii. p. 206.

and Jerome<sup>9</sup> asked the members of his Church, Who is there among us that can read as many books as Origen composed? A large proportion of his works are lost; and of those which remain few are preserved in the original Greek. We are often obliged to study Origen through the medium of a translation, of which we have no means of verifying the accuracy. A difficult and delicate duty also devolves upon the theological student to determine which of the works attributed to Origen are genuine, and which are spurious; and what parts moreover of the works received as genuine came from his pen. While we trust in this examination of his evidence to appeal to no work which is not confessedly his, nor to exclude any passage not decidedly spurious, we must refer the reader for a statement of reasons for rejection or admission of the several writings in detail, to the work above adverted to, "*Primitive Christian Worship*," lately adopted on the Catalogue of the Society, p. 103, &c. and 151, &c.

Proceeding, then, in our inquiry into the testimony of Origen, we would premise, that no doubt can be entertained of his having believed angels to be ministering spirits, fellow labourers with us in the momentous work of our salvation. He represents the angels as members of the same family with ourselves, as worshippers of the same Lord, as servants of the same Master, as children of the same Father, as disciples of the same heavenly Teacher, as learners of one and the same heavenly doctrine. He contemplates them as members of our Christian congregations, as joining with us in prayer to our heavenly Benefactor, and as taking pleasure when they hear in our assemblies what is agreeable to the will of God. But does Origen, therefore, countenance any invocation of angels? Let his own words testify.

Celsus accused the Christians of being Atheists,

<sup>9</sup> Vol. iv. Epist. 41, p. 346.



godless men, without God in the world, because they would not worship those "gods many, and lords many," and those secondary, subordinate, and ministering divinities with which the heathen mythology abounded. Origen answers, We are not godless, we are not without an object of our prayer; we pray to God Almighty alone through the mediation of his only Son. "We must pray to God alone, who is over all things; and we must pray also to the only-begotten and first-born of every creature, the Word of God; and we must implore Him, as our High Priest, to carry our prayer, first coming to Him, to his God and our God, to his Father and the Father of those who live agreeably to the Word of God<sup>1</sup>." But Celsus, in this well representing the weakness and failings of human nature, still urged on the Christian the necessity, at all events the expediency, of conciliating those intermediate beings, who executed the will of the Supreme Being, and might haply have much left at their own will and discretion to give or to withhold; and securing their good offices by prayer. To this Origen answers, "The one God—the God who is over all is to be propitiated by us, and to be appeased by prayer—the God who is rendered favourable by piety and all virtue. But if he, Celsus, is desirous to propitiate, after the Supreme God, some others also, let him bear in mind, that just as a body in motion is accompanied by the motion of its shadow, so also it follows that a person, by rendering the Supreme God favourable, has all God's (his) friends, angels, souls, spirits, favourable also; for they sympathize with those who are worthy of God's favour. And not only do they become kindly affected towards the worthy, but they also join with those in their work, who desire to worship the Supreme God: and they propitiate Him, and they pray with us, and supplicate with us; so that we boldly

<sup>1</sup> Cont. Cels. vol. i. sect. 8, c. 26, p. 761.

say, that together with men, who on principle prefer the better part, and pray to God, ten thousands of holy powers join in prayer UNCALLED UPON [UN-ASKED, UNINVOKED].

If Christians in Origen's time called upon, invoked, asked the angels of Heaven to aid them in their pilgrimage, what an opportunity had Origen here (not only naturally offering itself, but even forced on him) to state, that though Christians do not call upon demons and the inferior divinities of heathenism, yet that they do call upon the ministering spirits, the holy angels, messengers, and servants of the Most High God! But while speaking of them, and magnifying the blessings derived to man through their ministry, so far from encouraging us to ask them for their good offices, his testimony is not merely negative against such a proceeding; but he positively asserts, that when they assist mankind, it is without any request or prayer from man. Could these sentiments have come from one who invoked angels?

On Origen's testimony as to the invocation of the souls of saints departed, a few words will suffice, for he plainly records his belief, that the faithful are still waiting for us; and that till we all rejoice together, their joy will not be full.

We must, however, first advert to a passage in Origen's treatise on prayer, alleged with much confidence, as important and explicit evidence in proof of that father's having supported the doctrine of the invocation of saints. This supposed testimony of Origen is thus cited:—

“He comments on 1 Tim. ii. 1, ‘I desire, therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving, be made for all men.’ He says, that intercessions and thanksgiving may be made to men,

<sup>2</sup> On this same point the reader is referred to many most convincing passages in Origen's works, among the rest, *Cont. Cels.* vol. i. lib. viii. sect. 60, p. 786; lib. v. sect. 4, p. 579; lib. viii. sect. 34, p. 766.

but that supplications are only to be offered to the saints, whilst prayers are due to God alone. He teaches that we may supplicate a Peter or a Paul to assist us, and make us worthy to profit by the power given to them to remit sin. And he argues *à fortiori* from this that Christ is to be supplicated."

Now, in answer to this most strange perversion of Origen's meaning, we need only put his own words side by side with this comment, to show that the commentator has laid before us a totally mistaken view of the primitive father's sentiments. Origen is here speaking not one word of the saints in glory with Christ in heaven, or any supplication to them; he is referring solely to the addresses which a Christian may make to his fellow-creatures here on earth. With the accuracy of his elaborate distinctions between the several words of St. Paul, and with the soundness of his doctrine in another point of view our argument has no concern. He refers in this passage to the authority given to Christ's holy ones, the ministers of his Church on earth, to absolve the penitent; and to the propriety of the penitent supplicating at their hands such absolution; but that this passage has nothing whatever to do with the invocation or supplication of the saints in bliss by mortals on earth, the words of the passage themselves will be the best proof. Origen's words are these:—

"Supplication, and intercession, and giving of thanks, it would not be improper to offer even to *holy* men; yet the two, I mean intercession and giving of thanks, may be offered not only to the holy, but also to *all* men; but SUPPLICATION only to the holy, IF ANY ONE MAY BE FOUND a Paul or Peter, in order that they may benefit us by making us worthy to partake of the authority given to them for the remitting of sins. Still, however, even though a person be not holy, and yet we have injured him, it is allowable for us, becoming conscious of our wrong towards him, to SUPPLICATE even such an one, to grant pardon to us

who have injured him. But if we ought to offer these to HOLY MEN, how much more must we give thanks to Christ, who hath, by the will of the Father, conferred on us so great benefits?"

And yet, in the present day, this passage is triumphantly quoted as the crowning evidence of the second and third century in favour of the invocation by men on earth of the saints reigning with Christ in heaven<sup>3</sup>!

But to proceed. In his seventh homily on Leviticus, we read, "Not even the apostles have yet received their joy; but even they are waiting, in order that I also may become a partaker of their joy. For the saints departing hence do not immediately receive all the rewards of their deserts; but they are also waiting for us, though we be delaying and dilatory. For they have not perfect joy, so long as they grieve for our errors, and mourn for our sins." Then having quoted the Epistle to the Hebrews, he proceeds, "You see, therefore, that Abraham is yet waiting to obtain those things that are perfect; so is Isaac and Jacob; and so are the prophets all waiting for us, that they may obtain with us eternal blessedness. Wherefore, even this mystery is kept to the last day of delayed judgment."

Again we may ask, Could the following passage have come from the pen of one, who prayed to the saints as already reigning with Christ in heaven, able to succour us, and to forward the salvation of us on earth?

"Whether the saints who are removed from the body, and are with Christ, act at all, and labour for us, like the angels who minister to our salvation?"

<sup>3</sup>The two words in italics, "holy" and "all," are restored by the editors of Origen's works, as necessary to be supplied: the addition of them does not affect our argument. See Benedictine Ed., vol. i. p. 221. See also the annotations in the same edition, copied from the edition of a "Learned Englishman."

Let this be considered among the secret things of God, mysteries not to be committed to writing<sup>4</sup>.”

These, and very many other passages of a similar tendency stand out in striking contrast with those passages from the spurious works attributed to Origen, which have thoughtlessly and unjustifiably been cited by Roman Catholics of the present day, as evidences of Origen on the other side. We cannot but refer, for example, to the citation made by Dr. Wiseman in his Lectures delivered in Moorfields' Chapel, in 1836, of a passage from a work ascribed to Origen on The Lamentations, of which Huet, the learned and celebrated Roman Catholic Bishop of Avranches, quoted at large by the Benedictine editors in 1733, thus pronounces his opinion, “It is wonderful that, WITHOUT ANY NOTICE OF THEIR BEING FORGERIES, they should be sometimes cited in evidence by some theologians.” To the work thus condemned (and that not only by the Bishop of Avranches, but by all theological scholars,) an appeal is now made in these words, “Again he (Origen) thus writes on The Lamentations, ‘I will fall down on my knees, and not presuming on account of my crimes to present my prayer to God, I will invoke all the saints to my assistance. Oh, ye saints of Heaven, I beseech you with a sorrow full of sighs and tears, fall at the feet of the Lord of mercies for me, a miserable sinner!’”

As long as theologians in high station in the Church of Rome will “cite in evidence, without any notice of their being forgeries,” such forgeries as these; and as long as people will receive such evidence, there can be no end to controversy on any question. But is not the time coming when such quotations, made either in ignorance, or carelessness, or design, on any side, will bring with them their own antidote?

<sup>4</sup> Epist. ad Rom., lib. ii. vol. iv. p. 479. See Hom. III. vol. iii. p. 372.

*St. Cyprian*<sup>5</sup>, A.D. 258.

In the middle of the third century, Cyprian<sup>6</sup>, a man of substance, and a rhetorician of Carthage, was converted to Christianity. He was then fifty years of age, and his learning, virtues, and devotedness to the cause which he had espoused, soon raised him to the dignity, the responsibility, and the danger of the episcopate. Many of his writings, of undoubted genuineness, are preserved, and they have been appealed to in every age as the works of a faithful son of the Church of Christ. On the subject of prayer he has written powerfully and affectingly; but after the most careful examination of his works, especially of those passages to which Roman Catholics used to appeal, we are unable to find a single expression, which can be made to imply that he practised or countenanced the invocation of saints and angels.

In one passage<sup>7</sup>, he exhorts certain living virgins to encourage themselves by mutual exhortations, to remain firm, to conduct themselves spiritually, and gain the end happily, finishing his exhortation thus, "Only remember us then, when your virgin-state shall begin to be honoured." Whatever be the meaning of the last words, the persons addressed were still alive on earth, and their case therefore does not bear on the question before us.

Another instance to which an appeal has been made is equally inapplicable. Cyprian, at the close of his letter to Cornelius, puts before us a beautiful act of friendship and brotherly affection, deserving the imitation of every Christian brother and friend. The supporters of the invocation of saints consider Cyprian as suggesting to his friend, that whichever of the two should be first called away, he would continue, when in heaven, to pray for the survivor on earth. Suppose it for a moment to be so, the request is made in writ-

<sup>5</sup> Benedict. Paris, 1726.    <sup>6</sup> Jerom., vol. iv. p. 342.    <sup>7</sup> P. 180.

ing, from a living man to a living man, and has nothing whatever to do with our praying, on earth, to one who is already dead, and gone to his reward. But Cyprian's words suggest a very different meaning, namely, that the two friends should continue to pray each in his place, mutually for each other, and for their friends, and relieve each other's wants and necessities whilst both survived; and whenever death should remove the one from earth to happiness, the survivor should not forget their bond of friendship, but should still continue to pray to God for their brothers and sisters. The passage translated to the letter runs thus<sup>8</sup>: "Let us be mutually mindful of each other, with one mind and one heart. On both sides, let us always pray for each other, let us by mutual love relieve each other's pressures and distresses; and if either of us, from hence, by the speed of the Divine favour, go on before the other, let our love persevere before the Lord; for our brothers and sisters, with the Father's mercy, let not prayer cease. My desire, most dear brother, is that you may always prosper<sup>9</sup>." Bishop Fell thus comments on the passage, "The sense seems to be, When either of us shall die, whether I, who preside at Carthage, or you, who are presiding at Rome, shall be the survivor, let the prayer to God, of him whose lot shall be to remain longest among the living, persevere and continue." "Meanwhile," continues the Bishop (whom the Benedictine editors call "the most illustrious Bishop of Oxford"), "we by no means doubt that souls admitted into heaven apply to God, the best and greatest of beings, that He would have compassion on those who are dwelling on the earth. But it does not thence follow, that prayers should be offered to the saints: **THE MAN WHO PETITIONS THEM MAKES THEM GODS<sup>1</sup>.**"

<sup>8</sup> Epist. 57, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> The reader will find this passage examined more fully in "Primitive Christian Worship."

<sup>1</sup> *Deos qui rogat ille facit.* Oxford, 1682, p. 143.

We have room here for only one of those beautiful passages with which Cyprian's works abound, and to the sentiments of which every Christian will respond. It is at the close of the address by which he comforted and exhorted his fellow-Christians during the plague that raged at Carthage in the year 252.

“ We must consider, most beloved brethren, and frequently reflect, that we have renounced the world, and are meanwhile living here as strangers and pilgrims. Let us embrace the day which assigns each to his own home; which restores us to Paradise and the kingdom of heaven, snatched from hence, and liberated from the entanglements of the world. What man, when he is in a foreign country, would not hasten to return to his native land? . . . We regard Paradise as our country. We have begun already to have the patriarchs for our parents. Why do we not hasten and run, that we may see our country, and salute our parents? There a large number of dear ones are waiting for us, of parents, brothers, and children; a numerous and full crowd are longing for us, already secure of their own immortality, and still anxious for our safety. To come to the sight and the embrace of these, how great will be the mutual joy to them and to us! What a pleasure of the kingdom of heaven is there, without the fear of dying, and with an eternity of living! How consummate and never-ending a happiness! There is the glorious company of the apostles, there is the assembly of the exulting prophets, there is the unnumbered family of the martyrs, crowned for the victory of their struggles and sufferings! There are virgins triumphing, who, by the power of chastity, have subdued the lusts of the flesh and the body! There are the merciful recompensed, who, with food and bounty to the poor, have done the works of righteousness, who, keeping the Lord's commands, have transferred their earthly inheritance into heavenly treasures! To these, O most dearly beloved brethren, let us hasten with most eager



longing; let us desire that our lot may be to be with them speedily, to come speedily to Christ. Let God see this to be our thought; let our Lord Christ behold this to be the purpose of our mind and faith, who will give more abundant rewards of his glory to them whose desires for Himself have been the greater."

*Lactantius*<sup>2</sup>, A.D. 300.

Cyprian suffered martyrdom about the year 260. Towards the close of the same century, and at the beginning of the fourth, flourished Lactantius. He was intimately conversant with classical learning and philosophy. As Jerome<sup>3</sup> informs us, before he appeared as an author, he taught rhetoric in Nicomedia; and afterwards, in extreme old age, he became tutor of Cæsar Crispus, son of Constantine, in Gaul.

Among the writings of Lactantius enumerated by Jerome, he mentions the book "On the Anger of God," as a most beautiful work. The supporters of the adoration of spirits and angels allow that his testimony is decidedly against them; they do not refer to a single passage in their favour, and their chief desire is to depreciate his merits. We need quote only one or two passages from this learned man:—"God hath created ministers whom we call messengers [angels]—but neither are they gods, nor do they wish to be called gods, or to be worshipped, as being those who do nothing beyond the command and will of God<sup>4</sup>."

In his work on a Happy Life, we find this conclusive evidence against the whole doctrine of the invocation of saints:—"Nor let any one think that souls are judged immediately after death. For all are kept in one common place of guard, until the time come when the great Judge will institute an inquiry into their deserts. Then those whose righteousness shall be approved

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Longlet Dufresnoy, 1748.

<sup>3</sup> Jerom., vol. iv. part 2, p. 119. Paris, 1706.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 31.

will receive the reward of immortality; and those whose sins and crimes are laid open shall not rise again, but shall be hidden in the same darkness with the wicked—appointed to fixed punishments<sup>5</sup>.” This testimony is generally considered to be of the date 317.

*Eusebius*<sup>6</sup>, A.D. 314.

The evidence of Eusebius on any subject connected with primitive faith and practice, cannot be regarded without deep interest. He flourished about the beginning of the fourth century, and was Bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine. His writings were voluminous, and diversified in their character. But in his works, historical, biographical, controversial, or by whatever other name any of them may be called, overflowing as they are with learning, both philosophical and scriptural, we find no one single passage to countenance the doctrine of the invocation of saints or angels, whether the request were that they would grant us any favour, or would pray for us.

Bellarmin and others indeed quote three passages on the invocation of saints and angels. The first is cited to show that the souls of the saints are removed forthwith from earth to heaven. In this instance the translation is entirely wrong; the words of Eusebius being “And such was the struggle of the celebrated virgin, which she accomplished;” which Bellarmin quotes thus, “In this manner the blessed Virgin Potamiæna migrated from earth to heaven<sup>7</sup>.”

In the second passage the misquotation is far more serious. Eusebius, marking the resemblance, in many points, between Plato’s doctrine and Christianity, makes this observation on the reverence due, as Plato holds, to the good departed. “And this corresponds

<sup>5</sup> Ch. xxi. p. 574.

<sup>6</sup> Camb. 1720, and Paris, 1628.

<sup>7</sup> Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 854. Eusebius, Cantab., vol. i. lib. vi. c. 5, p. 263.

with what takes place on the death of those lovers of God whom you would not be wrong in calling the soldiers of the true religion. Whence also it is our custom to proceed to their tombs, and AT THEM (the TOMBS) to make our prayers, and to honour their blessed souls, inasmuch as these things are with reason done by us." This Bellarmin thus quotes, "These things we do daily, who honouring the soldiers of true religion as the friends of God, approach also to their tombs, and make our PRAYERS TO THEM, as to holy men, by whose intercession to God we profess to be not a little aided <sup>8</sup>."

The third quotation is from the letter from the Church of Smyrna relating the martyrdom of Polycarp; and the misquotation is for the purpose of taking off the edge of the evidence borne by that letter against the worship of saints. The Christians of Smyrna declare, without any limitation or qualification, that they could never worship any fellow mortal, however honoured or beloved; but the Paris edition interpolates the word "as God" after "worship," implying that they would offer a secondary worship to a saint. Again, whereas Eusebius, in contrasting the worship paid to Christ with the feelings of Christians towards a martyr, employs the word "love," Bellarmin (following in this Ruffinus) interpolates the word "worship," "we love and worship" (*diligimus et veneramur*). The latter word, though often used by ancient writers to mean the religious worship offered by man to God, might undoubtedly be used to signify the reverence properly shown towards holy men. Still, how lamentable is it to attempt to maintain any cause by such tampering with ancient testimonies!

Eusebius gives us the same view of the feelings and sentiments of the primitive Christians towards the holy angels as we have already found in Origen and the other Fathers of the Church.

<sup>8</sup> Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 902. Euseb. Paris, vol. i. lib. xiii. c. 11, p. 613. Cantab., vol. i. p. 163.

“In the doctrine of his Word we have learned that there exist, after the Most High God, certain powers, in their nature incorporeal and intellectual, rational and purely virtuous, who keep their station around the Sovereign King—the greater part of whom, by certain dispensations of salvation, are sent by the will of the Father even as far as to men: whom indeed we have been taught to know and to honour according to the measure of their dignity, rendering to God alone, the Sovereign King, the honour of worship:” “Knowing those divine Powers which serve and minister to the Sovereign God, and honouring them as far as it is becoming, but confessing God alone, and Him alone worshipping<sup>9</sup>.”

*Apostolical Canons and Constitutions.*

The works known by the name of the Apostolical Canons and Apostolical Constitutions, though confessedly not productions of the Apostolic age, have been always held in much esteem. The most learned writers fix their date at a period not more remote than the beginning of the fourth century. A perusal of these documents, especially the Constitutions, will supply the reader with convincing evidence that the invocation of saints was not then practised in the Church. Minute rules are given for the conducting of public worship; forms of prayer are prescribed to be used in the Church by the Bishops, and Clergy, and by the people; forms of prayer and thanksgiving are recommended for the use of the faithful in private, at night, in the morning, and at their meals; forms too there are of creeds and confessions; but not one single allusion to any religious address to saint or angel. Again and again prayer is directed to be made to the one living and true God, and that exclusively through the mediation and intercession of the

<sup>9</sup> See Cotelerius, vol. i. p. 194. 424. Beveridge, in the same vol. p. 427. Conc. Gen. Florence, 1759, tom. i. p. 29. 254.

one only Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. Honourable mention is made of the saints of the Old Testament, and the Apostles and Martyrs of the New. Directions are also given for the observance of their festivals; but not the shadow of a thought appears that their good offices could benefit us, much less the most distant intimation that Christians might invoke them for their prayers and intercessions.

In Book v. c. 7, we read an exceedingly interesting dissertation on the general resurrection, but not one word of saint or angel being beforehand admitted to glory; on the contrary, the declaration is distinct, that not the martyrs only, but all men will rise. Surely such an opportunity would not have been lost of stating the doctrine, that the martyrs were already reigning with Christ in heaven, had such been at that early period the doctrine of the Church.

In Book viii. c. 13, we find this exhortation, "Let us remember the holy martyrs, that we may be counted worthy to be partakers of their conflict." Not a word occurs about Christians asking them to pray in heaven for their brethren on earth.

*St. Athanasius, A.D. 350.*

Athanasius, the renowned and undaunted defender of the Catholic faith, was born about the year 296, and after presiding in the Church as Bishop for more than forty-six years, died about A.D. 373, approaching his eightieth year.

It is impossible for any one interested in the question, What is the truth on these subjects? to look with indifference on the belief and practice of this primitive Christian champion. On the subject of our present investigation, few among the early writers of the Church have been so seriously and recklessly misrepresented as St. Athanasius. Bellarmin and others cite him as a witness in favour of the invocation of

saints<sup>1</sup>, but the passages are from works confessedly spurious. Since, however, the principal passage relates to the blessed Virgin Mary, it is thought desirable to postpone our examination of it till the evidence against the Romish worship of the Virgin comes under our review.

A careful and upright study of the remains of St. Athanasius cannot but impress us with the right and scriptural views taken by him of the Christian's hope and confidence being in God alone. The glowing fervour of his piety centered only in the Lord; his sure and certain hope in life and in death anchored only on the mercies of God, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

But while there is not found a single passage in Athanasius to countenance the invocation of saints, many of his expressions and arguments go far to demonstrate that such a belief, and such a practice, as are now acknowledged and insisted upon by the Church of Rome, were neither adopted nor sanctioned by him. He repeatedly speaks of the exclusion of angels and men from any share in the work of man's restoration, without any expressions to qualify his assertions, or to preserve them from being misunderstood. He directs our thoughts to holy men and holy fathers as our examples, in whose footsteps we ought to tread, but not the least intimation occurs that they ought after death to be invoked<sup>2</sup>.

We have not, however, space for many extracts from this great authority; but to one the reader's patient and impartial thoughts are invited. It occurs in his third oration against the Arians, where he is proving the unity of the Father and the Son from St. Paul's expressions (1 Thess. iii. 11). The argument at large will amply repay a careful examination; its opening sentences are these:

“Thus then again, when he is praying for the

<sup>1</sup> Book viii. p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. i. part i. p. 58. 265.

Thessalonians, and saying, 'Now our God and Father himself, AND the Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you,' he preserves the unity of the Father and the Son. For he says not 'may THEY DIRECT,' as though a twofold grace were given from Him AND Him, but 'may HE direct,' to show that the Father giveth this through the Son. . . . Thus no one would pray to receive any thing from God AND the angels, or from any other created being: nor would any one say, May God AND the angels give it thee; but from the Father and the Son, because of their unity and the oneness of the gift. For whatever is given, is given through the Son—nor is there any thing which the Father works except through the Son: for thus the receiver has the gracious favour without fail. But if the patriarch Jacob, blessing his descendants, Ephraim and Manasseh, said, 'The God who nourished me from my youth unto this day, the angel who delivered me from all the evils, bless the lads;' he does not join one of created beings, and by nature angels, with God who created them; nor, dismissing Him, God, who nourished him, does he ask the blessing for his descendants from an angel, but by saying, He who delivered me from all the evils, he showed that it was not one of created angels, but the Word of God; and joining Him with the Father, he supplicated Him through whom God delivers whom He wills. For he used the expression, knowing Him, who is called the Messenger of the great counsel of the Father, to be no other than the very one who blessed and delivered from evil. For undoubtedly he did not aspire to be blessed himself by God, while he was willing for his descendants to be blessed by an angel. But the same whom he addressed, saying, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me' (and this was God, as he says, I saw God face to face), Him he prayed to bless the sons of Joseph. The peculiar office of an angel is to minister at the appointment of God; and often he went on before to cast out the Amorite, and was sent to

guard the people on the way; but these are not the doings of him, but of God who appointed him, and sent him, and to whom it belongs to deliver whom He wills."

"For this cause David addressed no other on the subject of deliverance but God Himself. But if it belongs to no other than God to bless and deliver, and it was no other that delivered Jacob than the Lord Himself, and the patriarch invoked for his descendants Him who delivered him, it is evident that in his prayer he joined no one except His Word, whom he called an angel for this reason, because He alone reveals the Father."

"But this no one would say of beings produced and created; for neither when the Father worketh does any one of the angels, or any other of created beings work the things; for no one of such beings is an effective cause; but they themselves belong to things produced. The angels, then, as it is written, are ministering spirits sent to minister; and the gifts given by Him through the Word they announce, to those who receive them."

Now, if the invocation of angels had been practised by the Church at that time, can it for a moment be believed that a man of such a mind as was the mind of St. Athanasius, clear, cultivated, logical, with ardent zeal for the doctrines of the Church, and fervent piety, would have sent forth such passages as these, without one saving or modifying clause in favour of the invocation of angels? He tells us, that they act merely as ministers, ready indeed and rejoicing to be employed on errands of mercy, but not going one step or doing one thing without the commands of God. Had the thought of the lawfulness, the duty, the privilege, the benefit of invoking them, been present to the mind of St. Athanasius, could he have dispensed with the introduction of some words to prevent his expressions from being misunderstood and misapplied?



We close the catalogue of our witnesses down to the Council of Nice with the testimony of St. Athanasius, whose genuine and acknowledged works afford not one jot or tittle in support of the doctrine and practice of the invocation of saints and angels, as now insisted upon by the Church of Rome; and the direct tendency of whose evidence is decidedly hostile both to that doctrine and that practice.

It may be right in this place to observe, that in order to escape from such a conclusive argument against the invocation of saints, as Bishop Fell's would be if left unanswered, viz. that it is making them gods, investing them with the attribute of omnipresence, the defenders of that doctrine have had recourse to several expedients explanatory of the manner in which the saints in heaven may be supposed to become acquainted with the prayers addressed to them by Christians on earth. Cardinal Bellarmine (vol. ii. p. 735) enumerates four chief modes adopted by his fellow-believers, two of which he pronounces to be inadequate, and therefore to be rejected; of the other two, that which he considers the less tenable and right in itself, he recommends to be adopted, because heretics have less vantage ground from which to assail it.

The first opinion, he says, is, That angels carry up the prayers to the saints, and bring down the answers and blessings.

The second is, That angels and glorified spirits are endowed with such swiftness of motion, that they can in a way be present and hear different prayers uttered in different places at the same time.

But the Cardinal objects, that neither of these views can hold, because not swiftness of motion, but true and real ubiquity would be necessary; and to ascribe that property to saints and angels, he felt would be to invest them with the attribute of God himself.

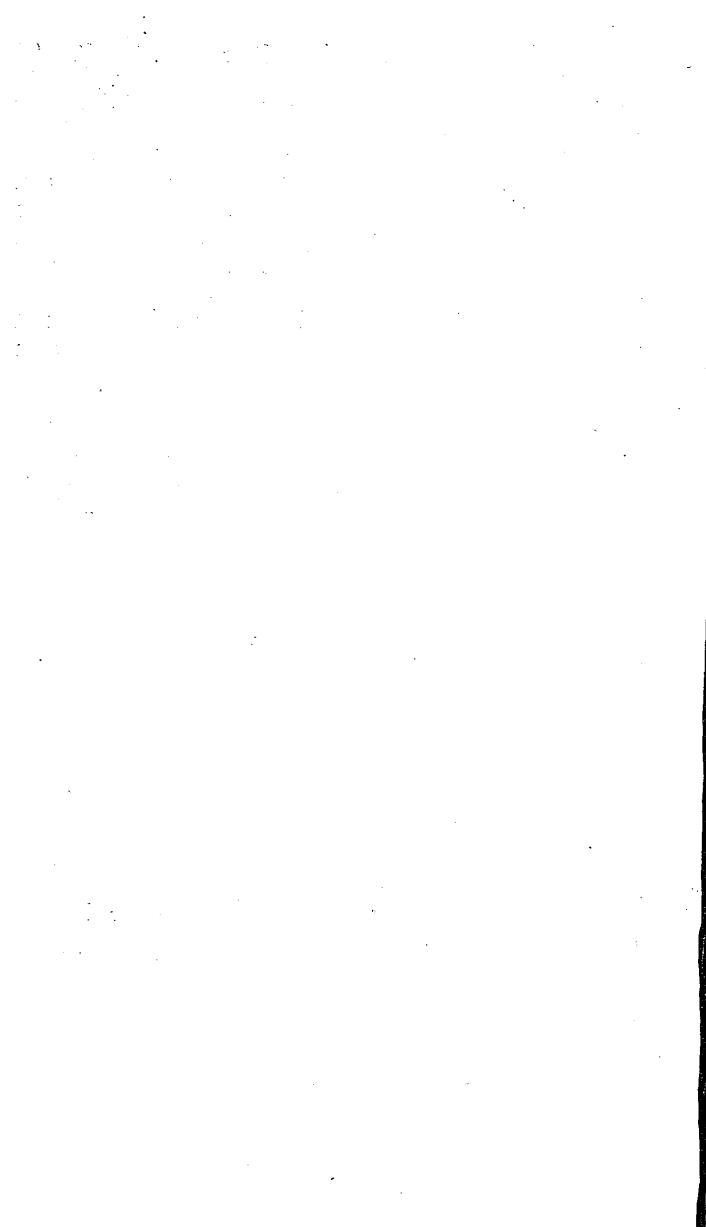
The third theory, and that which he most ap-

proves, is, That the saints, at the very commencement of their blessedness, have imparted to them, by God, a knowledge of all the prayers, that will be addressed to them, together with all that can happen relating to themselves; so that when the prayer is afterwards at any time uttered, though they do not hear it, they know it, and receive it, and act upon it.

The fourth, he says, is, That the saints do not thus see our prayers from the beginning of their own blessedness, but that God reveals our prayers to them when and as we utter them.

On these two last the Cardinal makes the following remarkable reflections:—The former, he says, seems in itself simply the more probable; because, if according to the latter supposition, the saints needed a new revelation every time a prayer was addressed to them, the Church would not so boldly say to all the saints, “Pray for us,” but would, sometimes, ask of God to reveal our prayers to them. In the next place, he says, were this latter theory held, a reason could not be so easily given, why the saints should be now invoked, though they were not invoked before the coming of Christ! Yet this latter opinion, though not in itself the best, may, nevertheless, be better calculated to convince heretics; for they would not admit the former view, since they think that the saints do not see God before the day of judgment; but they cannot reject this latter view, because though the saints do not see God, yet he may still reveal our prayers to them.

To such unworthy expedients are men driven, when they leave the word of God, as the only authority without appeal, and teach as essential doctrines the inventions of men!



# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. VIII.

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ON THE  
WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN  
MARY.  
DOCTRINE, AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES  
OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

*Doctrine and Authorized Services of the Church of  
Rome.*

ON the title of the present number we would offer a few prefatory words, to prevent any misunderstanding of either the principles or the subject of our inquiry. The word "worship" admits of various significations, implying sometimes merely the respect which one human being may entertain towards another, and sometimes the highest religious and divine honour which a creature can render to the supreme Lord of the universe. We are consequently admonished, on the ground of common justice, not to charge the Romanists with a spiritual offence in paying "worship" to a creature, but rather to attach to their words "worship" and "adoration" those ideas only which are naturally suggested by what they say and do. In the justice of this warning we acquiesce; and, in one point of view, our first proceeding in this treatise is, we hope, a dispassionate inquiry into the very nature and kind of worship which is actually offered to the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome.

In pursuing this subject honestly and reverently, surely we need not lie under the suspicion of believing that "the cause of the Son of God is to be pro-

moted, and his mediatorship and honour exalted, by decrying the worth and dignity of his mother." This, we are told, has been assumed<sup>1</sup>. But whatever persons may have given occasion for that remark, they cannot certainly be enlightened members of our communion. No true son of the Reformed Church of England can speak disparagingly or irreverently of the blessed Virgin Mary. Our Church, in her Liturgy, her Homilies, her Articles, and the works of her standard divines and most approved teachers, ever speaks of St. Mary the blessed Virgin in the language of reverence and affection. She was a holy virgin, and a holy mother, "highly favoured," "blessed among women." The Lord was with her, and she was the earthly parent of the only Saviour of the world. She was herself blessed, and blessed was the fruit of her womb. Should any person entertain a wish to interrupt the testimony of every succeeding age, and to check the continuous fulfilment of the Virgin's own prophecy, "All generations shall call me blessed," we could not acknowledge that wish to be the legitimate and genuine desire of a true member of our Church.

But when we are required either to offer prayers to God through the intercession and mediation of the Virgin Mary, to plead her merits, to address our supplications to her, imploring her prayers, and even to seek at her hands temporal and spiritual blessings which God alone can bestow, and to offer praises to her; or else to protest against the errors of our fellow-Christians who still adhere to the faith and practice of Rome, we cannot hesitate—the case presents no alternative to our choice—our love of unity, however strong and ardent, must yield to our love of the truth as it is in Jesus. We cannot join in that worship which we believe to give to a departed mortal a share at least of the honour due to God alone,

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 92.

and to exalt the Virgin Mary into that office of mediation, advocacy, and intercession between God and man, which the written word of inspiration and the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church have taught us to ascribe exclusively to that divine Saviour who was God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the world, and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world; whose "blood cleanseth from all sin," and who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them<sup>2</sup>."

We now proceed with our proposed inquiry.

While the Church of Rome has departed so widely and essentially from the scriptural and primitive standard of belief and worship with regard to angels and the souls of departed mortals, as we have seen in the foregoing numbers, the full extent to which she has carried her lamentable error, is witnessed chiefly in her worship of the Virgin Mary; a worship which exhibits in its most complete form the fundamental error of that Church, as to the one object of religious worship, and to the one Mediator between God and man.

The practical doctrine of the Church of Rome is this, that as the Virgin Mary surpasses inestimably all saints and angels, cherubim and seraphim, and all the powers of Heaven in authority, and purity, and dignity, so a worship ought to be addressed to her inestimably higher and more sacred than the worship paid to them. To stamp this difference in a more distinguishing manner, they have coined a new word to signify it alone, neither the Greek nor the Latin language supplying one adequate to this purpose. The worship paid to saints and angels they call by the Greek word *dulia*, i. e. "service;" to the worship paid to the one supreme God they assign the name

<sup>2</sup> 1 John i. 7. Heb. vii. 25.



of *latria*, also meaning "service;" whilst to the worship of the Virgin they appropriate the newly invented word "hyperdulia," implying "a service above the other services called *dulia* <sup>3</sup>."

We are now to inquire in what that worship of the Virgin Mary consists; and then to ask our consciences, and to suggest the same solemn inquiry to any of our brethren who may be tempted to espouse the doctrines and practices of Rome, Can such worship be consistent with our duty to God, who has given to us a revelation of his will; or to his ever-blessed Son, our only mediator and advocate? that God, who will not share his glory with another; that Son, who has most mercifully assured us that He is the only Mediator we need,—“Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do;” “If ye ask any thing in my name, I will do it<sup>4</sup>.”

We will proceed then in our examination of the same heads of inquiry with regard to the worship of the Virgin Mary, which we adopted in our examination of the worship of saints and angels. Those heads were chiefly the four following,

First, Prayers made to the Almighty in the name

<sup>3</sup> It may be well to observe that this distinction has no ground whatever to rest upon beyond the will and the imagination of those who draw it. Both the words *dulia* and *latria* are used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and in the original of the New, as entirely equivalent expressions without any such distinction. Whoever wishes to satisfy himself on this point will immediately do so by examining Deuteronomy xxviii. 36. 47, 48; 1 Sam. xvii. 9, xii. 24, xxvi. 19; Ezekiel xx. 40, and especially 1 Thess. i. 9, in comparison with Heb. ix. 14, where we find the two words "dulia" and "latria" in the form of verbs, used to signify the true worship of God in a person changed from a state of alienation to a state of grace. "How ye turned to God from idols to serve [*dulia*] the living and true God." "How much more then the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve [*latria*] the living God." And that, at least, down to the 5th century the words were equally synonymous, is evident from Theodoret, i. 319, edit. Halle.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 13.

of the Virgin, pleading her merits, and offered through her mediation, advocacy, and intercession.

Secondly, Prayers to herself, beseeching her to employ her good offices of intercession with the eternal Father and with her Son.

Thirdly, Prayers to her, imploring directly at her hands protection from bodily and spiritual evil, guidance and aid, and the influences of grace, from herself; blessings which God alone can bestow.

Fourthly, Ascription of divine praises to her, in acknowledgment of her attributes and acts of power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy; of her exalted state above all the spirits of life and glory in heaven; and of her share in the redemption of mankind.

In this examination we will first consider the authorized formularies and prescribed services in the Missals and Breviaries used in the Church of Rome; and then endeavour to ascertain the practical working of the system, in the writings of her canonized saints, accredited teachers, and devotional guides. In the Missal and Breviary indeed we do not find the same startling expressions of unqualified divine worship, but we find the same principles there; and after a general survey of the worship of the Virgin under its various aspects, the unavoidable impression left on the mind is, that deplorable as are those extravagant excesses into which the votaries of the Virgin Mary have run, their unequivocal ascriptions of divine homage to her may be defended by an appeal to the authorized Ritual of the Church of Rome.

I. Under the first head, the Roman Missal and Breviaries supply too abundant a store of examples, some more than others encroaching on the peculiar office of our blessed Saviour as the one Mediator between God and man. To establish the fact, one or two instances may suffice; while the incessant recourse to the advocacy of the Virgin cannot but suggest a painful idea of a want of confidence

in the sole mediation of our Lord Himself, or the absence of implicit trust in his promise, that the eternal Father will never reject any one, however humble or unworthy, who comes to Him in faith by his Son.

In the post-communion of the day of the Assumption this prayer is offered, "We, partakers of the heavenly board, implore thy clemency, O Lord our God, that we who celebrate the Assumption of the Mother of God, may, BY HER INTERCESSION, be freed from all impending evils."

We add a few more instances.

"We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the glorious intercession of the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary protect us and bring us to life eternal." Vern. clv.

On the vigil of the Epiphany this prayer is offered at the Mass, "Let this communion, O Lord, purge us from guilt, and by the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mother of God, let it make us partakers of the heavenly cure." "O God, who hast granted to mankind the reward of eternal life by the fruitful virginhood of the blessed Mary, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have experience of HER INTERCESSION, through whom we were deemed worthy to obtain our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, as the Author of life, who liveth with thee." Vern. clxv.

On the second Sunday after Easter we find, in the service of the Mass, a still more lamentable departure from true Christian worship, when the Church of Rome declares, that the offerings made to God at the Lord's Supper were made for the honour of the Virgin: "Having received, O Lord, these helps of our salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be every where protected by the patronage of the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, IN VENERATION OF WHOM we have made these offerings to thy Majesty."

On the octave of Easter, in the Secret at the Mass, the INTERCESSION of the Virgin is made to appear as

essential a cause of our peace and blessedness as is the PROPITIATION OF CHRIST JESUS our Lord ; or rather the two are represented as joint concurrent causes, as though the office of our blessed Saviour Himself were confined to propitiation, and the office of intercession were assigned to the Virgin. "BY THY PROPITIATION, O Lord, AND by the INTERCESSION of the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, may this offering be profitable to us for our perpetual and present prosperity and peace."

II. Of the second class, the Breviary abounds throughout with so great a variety of instances, as to make any selection difficult. These prayers are no longer addressed to God Almighty, but are offered to the Virgin herself, imploring her to intercede for her worshippers, yet still asking nothing beyond her intercession.

"Blessed Mother, Virgin undefiled, glorious Queen of heaven, intercede for us with the Lord<sup>5</sup>." "Blessed Mother of God, Mary, perpetual Virgin, the Temple of the Lord, the Holy Place of the Holy Spirit, thou alone without example hast pleased our Lord Jesus Christ ; pray for the people, mediate for the clergy, intercede for the female sex who are under a vow<sup>6</sup>." In the form of prayer called *Litanix Lauritanæ*, between the most solemn prayers addressed to the ever-blessed Trinity, and to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," are inserted more than forty addresses to the Virgin, invoking her under as many varieties of title—"Holy Mother of God, Mirror of Justice, Cause of our joy, Mystical Rose, Tower of David, Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, Refuge of Sinners, Queen of Angels, Queen of all Saints, &c. &c., pray for us<sup>7</sup>."

The following invocation seems to stand midway between these appeals to the Virgin merely for her intercession, and those prayers to her, which ask for blessings temporal and spiritual at her own hands.

<sup>5</sup> Autum. cxliv.

<sup>6</sup> Vern. clxiii.

<sup>7</sup> Æst. ccxxix.

“Hail, O Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, Sweetness, and Hope, hail! To thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this valley of tears. Come then, our Advocate, turn those compassionate eyes of thine on us; and after this exile, show to us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.”

III. But, in the THIRD place, we find in the Roman Ritual examples of prayer addressed directly to the Virgin, for benefits as her own gifts, both spiritual and temporal, without any reference to her prayers and intercession. It is no reasonable defence of these prayers to affirm, that all intended in these forms is to ask for her advocacy and intercession<sup>8</sup>: for the mass of the people will not, do not, cannot, understand it in that light. That the people are led by these prayers to look for the blessings as her gifts, and at her own disposal, we shall have abundant evidence, when we examine, in the works of divines, and in the present practice of the people, the full extent to which the worship of the Virgin has reached. And can it be right and safe to lay such snares for the conscience? If the Virgin's prayers are the sole object of the petitioner's invocation, why, in the solemn services of the Church, is an example set him of prayers which make no allusion to her intercession, but ask of herself for her aid and blessing, as directly and unequivocally as the supplications addressed to the supreme Being ask for his? In an act, of all human acts the most solemn and holy, can recourse be had to such refined distinctions and subtleties, without awful spiritual danger?

Among a great variety of prayers of this class, we frequently find this supplication—“Deem me worthy to praise thee, O hallowed Virgin! give me strength against thy enemies!”

The following seems to rank among the most favour-

<sup>8</sup> See Cardinal du Perron's “Réplique à la Rép. du Roy de la G. Bretagne.” Paris, 1620. p. 920.

ite addresses to the Virgin<sup>9</sup>—"Hail, Star of the Sea, and kind Mother of God, and ever Virgin; Happy Gate of Heaven! Do thou, taking that 'Hail' from the mouth of Gabriel, changing the name of Eve, establish us in peace. Do thou loose their bands for the accused, for the blind bring forth a light, drive away our evils, demand for us all good things. SHOW THAT THOU ART A MOTHER! Let Him who endured for us to be thy son, through thee receive our prayers. O excellent Virgin! meek among all, DO THOU MAKE US MEEK AND CHASTE, FREED FROM FAULT; MAKE OUR LIFE PURE; prepare for us a safe journey, that beholding Jesus, we may always rejoice together. Praise be to God the Father, Glory to Christ most High, and to the Holy Ghost: one Honour to the Three. Amen."

"SHOW THAT THOU ART A MOTHER!" Can such a call upon the Virgin Mary, to show her influence and power over the eternal Son of the eternal Father, be fitting in the hearts and in the mouths of us poor sinners, for whose salvation He left his Father's glory, and came down on earth to die? "Show thyself to be a mother." In later times, some versions of this address have translated the passage as though the prayer to Mary was, that she would show herself to be OUR mother, by her maternal good offices in our behalf. We rejoice to see such indications of a feeling of impropriety in the sentiment, if received in its plain and obvious meaning: but the change is inadmissible, as not only doing violence to the sense, and militating against the whole drift and plain meaning of the passage, but being altogether at variance also with the interpretation put upon it by Roman Catholic writers, both before and after the Reformation. In the second line, the Virgin is addressed as the MOTHER OF GOD; the Lord Jesus is immediately mentioned in the very next line, and through the entire stanza as her Son, and

<sup>9</sup> Vern. cliii.

the prayer to her is, that she would so show the exercise of her maternal influence over that Being who endured to be her Son, as that He would hear the supplications of the worshippers. And this obvious grammatical and logical meaning of "Show thyself to be a mother," is the sense attached to it before the Reformation, not incidentally, but of set purpose. In a work dedicated to the "Youth of Great Britain studious of good morals," and written expressly for the purpose of explaining the Ritual according to the use of Sarum, the interpretation of the passage is thus expressed—"Show thyself to be a mother, that is, by APPEASING THY SON, and let the Son, who endured for us miserable sinners to be thy Son, take our prayers through thee." Nor can any other meaning be attached to the interpretation of the words as given by Cardinal du Perron, in the work above referred to, than this, "Use the authority of a Mother over a Son."

The other interpretation does not appear to have had a place in any one book of former days. In the plain obvious sense of the prayer, we see in it, in softened colours, an exact prototype of Bonaventura's broad and shocking summons to the Virgin, to put forth her full maternal authority, and to command the Lord of Life—"BY THE RIGHT OF A MOTHER COMMAND THY SON," and of Damianus<sup>10</sup>, "NOT ONLY ASKING, BUT COMMANDING; A MISTRESS, NOT A HAND-MAID." To these and similar instances we shall hereafter refer.

Another prayer in the authorized Ritual of Rome is thus expressed:—"Under thy protection we take refuge, Holy Mother of God; despise not our supplications in our necessities, but from all dangers do thou deliver us, O glorious and blessed Virgin." *Æst.* cxlvi.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Damiani was a Bishop and Cardinal, whose works received the Papal sanction so late as the commencement of the seventeenth century, though he lived some centuries before.—His words are "Non solum rogans sed imperans; domina non ancilla." Paris, 1743, vol. ii. p. 107, ser. 44. Of Bonaventura we shall speak in the next number.

Let us suppose the object of these addresses to be changed, and in place of the Virgin's, let the name of the eternal Father of us all, the only God, the Almighty One, be substituted, and we shall find the very words here applied to the Virgin applied to Him in some of the most affecting prayers and praises in Holy Scripture.

But another hymn in the same ritual, addressed in part to our blessed Saviour Himself, and in part to the Virgin Mary, seems a still more lamentable and revolting departure from true Christian worship. In this joint prayer, undoubtedly, glory is ascribed at its close to the Holy Trinity, yet in its supplicatory sentences the Redeemer is merely asked to remember his mortal birth; no blessing is petitioned for at his hand; his protection is not the subject of the prayer; deliverance at the hour of death is sought not from Him; for these blessings supplication is made exclusively to the Virgin. Can such a mingled prayer, can such a contrast in prayer, be the genuine fruit of that Gospel, which invites and commands us to seek in prayer to God for all we need of temporal and eternal good in the name and for the sake of his blessed Son?

“O Author of our salvation, remember that once being born of a spotless Virgin, Thou didst take the form of our body. O Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, do thou protect us from the enemy, and receive us at the hour of death. Glory to Thee, O Lord, who wast born of a Virgin with the Father and the Holy Spirit, through eternal ages. Amen.” *Æst.* cxlv.

It has been asserted by Roman Catholic writers<sup>1</sup>, that at the altar, in the office of the Mass, prayer is not made directly to any saint, but only obliquely, the address being always made to God. But while this assertion would suggest the most sound principle, that a prayer which is not used in the service of the

<sup>1</sup> See Cardinal du Perron, agreeably to the former reference.



#### 14. *On the Worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

Mass, and for the use of which in other services its absence from that office is pleaded as an excuse, ought to have no place at all in the worship of Almighty God; it is difficult to see what is gained by such a plea, if in other parts of the service prayer is offered directly to the Virgin. Surely it is trifling in things concerning the soul to make such distinctions. If priests about to officiate are to address a prayer directly to the Virgin for HER ASSISTANCE, that she would stand by them, and BY HER GRACE enable them to offer a worthy sacrifice, how does this become a less objectionable prayer, because it is not repeated during the service of the mass? Does not such a plea intimate a misgiving in those who make it, as to the lawfulness of any addresses of the kind. The following is called in the Roman Breviary, "A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, before the celebration of the Mass," and is immediately followed by another, called, "A Prayer to the Male or Female Saint, whose feast is celebrated on that day," and from whose merits the priest professes to derive his confidence, and to whose honour and glory he declares that he offers the holy sacrament:

"O Mother of pity and mercy, most Blessed Virgin Mary, I, a miserable and unworthy sinner, flee to thee with my whole heart and affection: and I pray thy sweetest pity, that as thou didst stand by thy sweetest Son upon the cross, so thou wouldest vouchsafe of thy clemency to stand by me a miserable priest, and by all priests who here and in all the holy Church offer HIM this day, that, AIDED BY THY GRACE, we may be enabled to offer a worthy and acceptable victim in the sight of the Most High and undivided Trinity. Amen."

"O holy one [*sancte vel sancta*], behold, I, a miserable sinner, DERIVING CONFIDENCE FROM THY MERITS, now offer the most holy sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ FOR THY HONOUR AND GLORY. I humbly and devoutly pray

thee, that thou wouldest deign to intercede for me to-day," &c. Hyem. ccxxxiii.

IV. The FOURTH particular in the worship of the Virgin Mary which we specified, was the ascription of divine praises to her. This ascription pervades all the services appointed for her honour; and abundant examples are at hand.

"The Holy Mother of God is exalted above the choir of angels to the heavenly realms. The gates of paradise are opened to us by thee, who, glorious this day, triumphest with the angels." "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou alone hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Deem me worthy to praise thee, hallowed Virgin. Give me strength against thy enemies." Æst. dxcviii.

Substitute the name of our ever-adorable Redeemer, and many of these expressions would become the heart and the lips of a Christian worshipper. We will only add one more instance: it is the prayer, the repetition of which Pope Leo X. prescribes as the condition on which he three centuries ago (as we have observed in a previous part) granted pardon to any priest for defects and faults in celebrating divine service, contracted by human frailty.

"To the most holy and undivided Trinity, to the manhood of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ, to the fruitful purity of the most blessed and most glorious ever Virgin Mary, and to the whole body of all the saints, be everlasting praise, honour, virtue, and glory from every creature, and to us forgiveness of sins through the boundless ages of ages. Amen."

Thus to join the Holy Trinity with the Virgin Mary, and the entire aggregate of the saints in one and the same ascription of eternal praise, honour, and glory, (even by those who are aware of the assumed distinction of *dulia*, *hyperdulia*, and *latria*,) must be regarded as utterly subversive of primitive worship, repugnant to the plain sense of Scripture, and derogatory to the dignity and majesty of the Supreme

Being, who will not share his honour with another. The attempt to justify these joint ascriptions of praise and glory to the Creator and his creatures by such passages as Hebrews xii. 22, is nugatory; in the only point now under consideration, there is not the shadow of resemblance between the two cases.

We said that in the midst of the praises offered to the Virgin Mary, we find a share in the work of the salvation of lost and ruined man from sin and death ascribed to her. In some instances this ascription is made in such a manner as to lead the unwary to form the same estimate of the debt of gratitude due from us to Mary, as that which is due to the Saviour Himself; and in such a manner, too, as to countenance and justify to the faithful that lamentable and shocking union of the names "of Jesus and Mary," in the devotional exercises which are now prepared for the people. One example of this occurs in "the office of the Virgin" on Saturdays in the month of June. It purports to be from a sermon of S. Bernard Abbot. "Grievously, indeed, most dearly beloved, did one man and one woman injure us; but thanks be to God, not the less by ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN are all things restored; and that not without great increase [usury] of grace." Here the restoration of mankind from the danger and misery into which the fall had plunged us, is just as much equally ascribed to our blessed Saviour and to Mary, as that fall itself is referred equally to Adam and Eve. Mary is here represented just as much our joint saviour with Christ, as Eve is regarded the joint source with Adam of our original fall.

Such being the result of our inquiries into the authorized and prescribed forms of public worship in the Church of Rome, can it be a matter of wonder that individuals, high in honour with that Church, and her accredited teachers, have carried on the same system of worship to far greater lengths? Undoubtedly the principle should be ever present to our

minds of fixing upon a Church itself only what is to be found in its canons, decrees, formularies, authoritative teaching, and acknowledged practices: and unhappily in the authorized and prescribed Liturgies of Rome we find far more than enough of that which directly contravenes the Gospel rule, and primitive faith and worship, to compel all who adhere to Holy Scripture and the example of primitive times, to withhold their consent from her worship. But with this principle steadily before us, justice and prudence combined require us to trace for ourselves the practical workings of the whole system. And, indeed, the deplorable excesses to which priests, bishops, cardinals, and canonized persons have run in the worship of the Virgin Mary, might well induce upright and enlightened Roman Catholics to look anxiously for themselves to their principles, in order to determine, with tender caution, doubtless, and pious care, yet still with an eye bent on the truth, whether the corruptions be not in the well-head; whether the stream be not already impregnated with the poison as it flows from the very fountain itself; whether the prayers authorized and directed to be offered to the Virgin in public worship, be not, in very truth, in opposition to the first principles of the Gospel,—faith in one God, the Giver of every good, and in one Mediator and Intercessor between God and man, the Lord Jesus Himself alone, whose blood cleanseth from all sin? in a word, to weigh well and reflect, whether all the aberrations of her children, in this department of religious duty, have not their prototypes in the ordinances, the injunctions, the precepts, and practical example of their Church itself. In point of principle, it will be hard to find any of the most unequivocal ascriptions of divine worship made to the Virgin Mary by her most zealous votaries, for which those votaries would not be able to appeal, in justification, and that not without reason, to the authorized ritual of the Church of Rome.

Before we proceed, as we shall do in the next number, to an examination of the practical workings of the system, two considerations seem naturally to suggest themselves.

First, Were it really and bonâ fide intended that the invocation of the Virgin should be exclusively confined to requests that she would pray and intercede by prayer for her petitioners, why should language be addressed to her, which in its plain, obvious, grammatical, and common-sense interpretation, conveys in form and substance divine prayers to her for benefits at her own disposal?

Secondly, Supposing it had been the intention of the Church of Rome to instruct her members, when they "suppliantly invoke" the Virgin Mary, and have recourse to her aid, that they should offer to her direct and immediate prayers for temporal and spiritual blessings to be dispensed to mortals on earth, at her own will, and by her own authority and power, what words could that Church have prescribed to the petitioners, what expressions could have been put into their mouths, which would have conveyed that intention more explicitly and unequivocally than the very words themselves which have been sanctioned and prescribed?

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. IX.

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ON THE  
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.  
PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE  
SYSTEM.



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- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
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- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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### *On the Worship of the Virgin—Practical Working of the System.*

FEW can be long engaged in any wide and varied inquiry into the actual state of the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome, without being surprised at the mass of error and corruptions which presses itself into notice on every side. The extraordinary excesses to which the adoration of the Virgin has been carried, not by obscure individuals only, and the general body of her worshippers, but by celebrated doctors, prelates, and canonized persons, seem to introduce us to another religion, for the very germ of which we search the Gospel in vain.

If, indeed, we could regard such instances as we meet with of the worship of the Virgin in its most shocking forms, as marks of ages long passed away, and of times less enlightened than our own, we might draw a veil over them, rather than contemplate, in any persons calling themselves by the name of Christ, such departures from primitive faith and worship. But when we find the solemn addresses made to the people by present chief authorities in the Roman Church, and even the epistles of the Sovereign Pontiff himself, countenancing and encouraging the same superstitions, it becomes a duty in those who would rescue or preserve the truth from such corruptions, to lay bare the facts of the case without exaggeration or disguise.

There is, however, one feature in the Roman worship of the Virgin, to which our thoughts will be especially drawn by the examination on which we are now entering. Its direct tendency, as practically illustrated in the works of accredited divines of the Church of Rome, and in the devotional exercises prepared for the daily use of the people, is to make the Almighty Himself an object of fear, and the Virgin an object of love; to invest Him, who is the Father of mercy and God of all comfort, with unapproachable majesty and awe, and with the terrors of eternal justice; and then, in direct and striking contrast, to array Mary with mercy, and benignity, and compassionate tenderness, and omnipotence in her love. But so far is our heavenly Father from terrifying us and repelling us from Himself by alarming representations of his overwhelming and unapproachable majesty, that his own word abounds with assurances and representations of a directly opposite tenour: the Bible invites us to regard Him and to draw nigh to Him in full assurance of faith, not only as a God of love, but as Love itself, and moreover, as exercising his feeling of love toward us individually. "The God of love shall be with you<sup>1</sup>." "The Father Himself loveth you<sup>2</sup>." "God is love<sup>3</sup>." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." And so far is the same holy Volume from suggesting to us the necessity or expediency of our applying to some mediator and advocate, who "not uniting the divine with the human nature, as the Son of God and man does in his person, but, being simply human, might more intimately sympathize with our weaknesses and wants," that it is impossible for language to express more strongly and plainly the entire completeness and perfectness of our Divine Redeemer's advocacy and

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 8.

<sup>3</sup> John xvi. 27.

mediation, exclusive of all others. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins<sup>4</sup>." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them<sup>5</sup>." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things<sup>6</sup>?" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full<sup>7</sup>." "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus<sup>8</sup>." "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me<sup>9</sup>."

How entirely opposed to such blessed intimations as these, breathing the spirit that pervades the Scriptures throughout, are those doctrines which represent the Virgin Mary as the mediator through whom and by whom we must sue for the Divine clemency; as the dispenser of all God's blessings and graces; as the sharer of God's kingdom, leaving to Him the department of vengeance, and taking mercy to herself; as the fountain of pity, as the moderator of the Almighty's justice, and the appeaser of his wrath.

"Compel God to have mercy upon sinners." "Show thyself to be a mother." "By thy right of mother, command thy Son." "Calm the rage of thy heavenly husband." "If any one feels himself aggrieved by the justice of God, let him appeal to Mary." "God is a God of vengeance, but thou, Mary, dost incline to be merciful." "Thou approachest before the golden altar of human reconciliation, not asking only, but commanding: a mistress, not a handmaid."

<sup>4</sup> 1 John ii. 1.    Heb. iv. 8, 9.    <sup>5</sup> Heb. vii. 25.    <sup>6</sup> Romans viii. 32.

<sup>7</sup> John xvi. 23, 24.

<sup>8</sup> Gal. iii. 20.

<sup>9</sup> John xiv. 6.

Now, in drawing attention to such results of the Romish system as these, which shock our feelings, and from which our reason turns away, while we think of God's perfections, and the full atonement and all-powerful intercession of our blessed Redeemer, our object is not to fasten such sentiments on any professed Roman Catholic who may disavow them; it is to impress on all persons some idea of the excesses into which even celebrated teachers are tempted to run, when once they allow the smallest inroad to be made upon the integrity of God's worship; and at the same time to caution our countrymen against encouraging in any way that revival of the worship of the Virgin, to promote which the highest authorities of the Church of Rome have lately expressed their anxiety. Though these excessive departures from Gospel truth and the primitive worship of one God through one Mediator, may be disowned by some who still profess to be in communion with the Church of Rome; yet, as we shall now see, they are the tenets of her chief doctors, who though dead yet still speak with authority, men who were raised to her highest dignities in their lifetime, and were solemnly enrolled among her canonized saints after death, and to whose words and actions appeals continue to be made at the present day. But even in their mildest and least startling forms, the doctrines and practices of Rome in the worship of the Virgin are awfully dangerous; and well does it become every one who loves the truth in sincerity to avoid whatever may even seem to countenance them.

Before we proceed to ascertain from the testimony of men whose writings are in a measure stamped with authority, the actual doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome in the worship of the Virgin, one more of the many examples, meeting us on every side, which characterize her public worship, seems to require some notice. The service adverted to appears

to take a sort of middle station between the enjoined formularies, and the devotions of individuals, or family worship. On the one hand it partakes too much of a public character to be viewed in the light of private religious exercises; on the other, not being found in the Breviary, it seems to be without that authority which would rank it among the liturgical offices of their Church. The service is performed with great ceremony in the churches; a priest presides; the host is presented for the adoration of the people, and a sermon is generally preached. The service is performed (in Paris, for example) every evening through the month of May, and is celebrated expressly in honour of the Virgin. For not only is the Saturday in every week (with some exceptions), dedicated to her, but in every year the month of May is called "Mary's month." Temporary altars are raised to her, surrounded by flowers and evergreens, and adorned with garlands and drapery, her image usually standing in a conspicuous place before the altar<sup>10</sup>. Societies or guilds are formed chiefly for the celebration of the Virgin's praises, who bear the chief parts in these religious festivities. A collection of religious poems used in the churches in Paris on these occasions is dedicated, "To the glory of Jesus and Mary<sup>1</sup>." Many of its hymns are addressed exclusively to the Virgin without a shadow of reference either to the Son of God the only Saviour, or to the Almighty, who will not share his glory with another. The following is a literal translation of one of the hymns:—

"Around the altars of Mary, Let us her children press.  
To that mother so endeared, Let us address the sweetest prayers.  
Let a lively and holy mirth Animate us on this holy day:

<sup>10</sup> The whole service painfully reminds us, that the Institution took its rise in the Floralia of Pagan Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Nouveau Recueil de Cantiques à l'usage des Confréries des Paroisses de Paris, 1839.

There exists no sadness For a heart full of her love.  
 Let us adorn her sanctuary with flowers; Let us deck her revered  
 altars;  
 Let us redouble our efforts to please her. Be this month consecrated  
 to her.  
 Let the perfume of these crowns Form a delicious incense,  
 Which, ascending even to her throne, May carry to her both our hearts  
 and our prayers.  
 Let the holy name of Mary Be unto us a name of salvation;  
 Let our softened soul Ever pay to her a sweet tribute of love;  
 Let us join the choir of angels The more to celebrate her beauty;  
 And may our songs of praise Resound in eternity.  
 O holy Virgin! O our mother! Watch over us from the height of  
 Heaven!  
 And when from this sojourn of misery We present our prayers to you,  
 O sweet, O divine Mary! Lend an ear to our sighs ;  
 And after this life, Make us to taste of deathless pleasures <sup>2</sup>."

It is lamentable to find among these hymns shocking proof that those corruptions of the faith which in former years, as we shall now see, drew the contrast in favour of the Virgin and against God, with reference to the attribute of mercy, are adopted by her present worshippers. The hymn on the Assumption represents the Eternal Father as Mary's husband full of rage, who must be softened by her influence into tenderness towards her votaries.

"Vouchsafe, Mary, on this day To hear our sighs,  
 And second our desires. Vouchsafe, Mary, on this day  
 To receive our incense, our love:  
 OF THY HEAVENLY HUSBAND CALM THE RAGE,  
 Let Him show Himself kind To all those that are thine!  
 Of thy heavenly husband calm the rage <sup>3</sup>:  
 Let his heart be softened towards us <sup>4</sup>."

The course of our argument now leads us to examine the works of some among the canonized saints and acknowledged doctors of the Church of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Page 175.

<sup>3</sup> The word here translated "rage" is in the original "courroux," which, as lexicographers tell us, "breathes highly of vengeance or punishment."

<sup>4</sup> Page 183.

*Bonaventura.*

Among the most remarkable monuments of past years are the devotional works of Bonaventura; and it is difficult to conceive how any Church can give the impress of its own name and approval in a fuller or more unequivocal manner to the productions of any human being, than by the process adopted by the Church of Rome in stamping her authority on the works of this her canonized saint.

In the "Acta Sanctorum<sup>5</sup>," Bonaventura is said to have been born in 1221, and to have died in 1274. He was of the Franciscan order, and passed through all the degrees of ecclesiastical dignities, short only of the pontifical throne itself. Pope Clement IV. in 1265 offered to him the Archbishopric of York, which he declined; but Gregory X. elevated him to the dignity of cardinal-bishop. More than two centuries after his death, his claims to canonization were urged upon Sixtus IV., who pronounced him a saint in 1482. That Pope in his diploma declares that the proctor of the order of Minors had proved that the blessed Trinity testified to the fact of Bonaventura being a saint in Heaven; the Father proving it by the miracles wrought on him and by him, the Son by the wisdom of his doctrine, the Holy Spirit by the excellence of his life. The Pontiff then adds in his own words, "He so wrote on divine subjects, that the HOLY SPIRIT SEEMS TO HAVE SPOKEN IN HIM."

This testimony of Sextus IV. is referred to by Pope Sextus V., who more than a century after the canonization of Bonaventura, and more than three centuries after his death, ordered his works to be "most carefully emendated<sup>6</sup>." This Pope's decretal letter, 1588, pronounced Bonaventura to be

<sup>5</sup> Acta Sanctorum, Antwerp, 1723, July 14, pp. 811—823. 831. 837.

<sup>6</sup> The edition of Bonaventura's works here used was published at Mentz in 1609; and the passages referred to occur in vol. vi. between pp. 400 and 500.



an acknowledged doctor of holy Church, and directed his authority to be cited in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies. Plenary indulgence also is promised, in the same act, to all who assist at the mass on his feast in certain specified places. In these documents Bonaventura is called the "Seraphic Doctor;" and it may be again asked whether it is possible for any human authority to give a more entire and unreserved sanction to the works of any human being than the Church of Rome has actually given to the works of Bonaventura? And what do these works present to us on the invocation and worship of the Virgin Mary?

*Bonaventura's Psalter.*

In the first place, taking every one of the hundred and fifty psalms singly, he so changes the commencement of each as to address them, not as the inspired Psalmist did to the Lord God Almighty, but to the Virgin Mary, interspersing in some cases much of his own composition, and then adding to each the "Gloria Patri." A few examples will suffice.

In the 30th Psalm, "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, let me not be confounded for ever," &c., this Psalter of the Virgin substitutes these words:—

"In thee, O Lady, have I trusted, let me not be confounded for ever; in thy grace take me.

"Thou art my fortitude and my refuge; my consolation and my protection.

"To thee, O Lady, have I cried while my heart was in heaviness; and thou didst hear me from the top of the eternal hills.

"Bring thou me out of the snare that they have hid for me; for thou art my succour.

"Into thy hands, O Lady, I commend my spirit, my whole life and my last day."

In Psalm 31 we read, "Blessed are they whose hearts love thee, O Virgin Mary; their sins shall be mercifully blotted out BY THEE."

In Psalm 35, "Incline thou the countenance of God upon us; COMPEL HIM to have mercy upon sinners. O Lady, thy mercy is in the heaven, and thy grace is spread over the whole earth."

In Psalm 67, instead of "Let God arise," &c. this Psalter has, "Let Mary arise, and let her enemies be scattered."

In the opening of the 93rd Psalm there is what we cannot but regard as an impious and blasphemous comparison of the supreme God and the Virgin, drawing the contrast in favour of Mary and against God, in reference to the very attribute which in HIM shines first and last and brightest—his eternal mercy.

"The Lord is a God of vengeance; but thou, O Mother of Mercy, inclinest to be merciful."

The penitential Psalm (129th) is thus addressed to Mary:

"Out of the depths have I called to thee, O Lady: O Lady, hear my voice. Let thine ears be attent to the voice of my praise and glorifying: deliver me from the hands of my enemies; confound their imaginations and attempts against me. Rescue me in the evil day, and in the day of death forget not my soul; carry me unto the haven of salvation: let my name be enrolled among the just."

As the penitential Psalms were thus turned from HIM to whom the inspired penman addressed them, so are his hymns of praise to God constrained through the same channel to flow to the Virgin. Thus in the 48th Psalm we read:

"Praise our Lady of Heaven; glorify her in the highest. Praise her, all ye men and cattle, ye birds of the heaven and fishes of the sea. Praise her, sun and moon; ye stars and circles of the planets. Praise her, Cherubim and Seraphim, thrones, dominions, and powers. Praise her, all ye legions of angels. Praise her, all ye orders of Spirits on high."

The last sentence of the Psalm is thus perverted:

"Let every thing that hath breath praise our Lady."

May God hasten the time when the only reading in Christendom shall again be in the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel :

“Let every thing that hath breath praise THE LORD!”

For various examples of the same perversion of Holy Scripture, and of the miserable distortion of Christian Hymns (especially the *Te Deum*) and Creeds and Litanies, made by Bonaventura, substituting as he does the Virgin Mary as the object of belief and prayer and praise for the only God and his only Son, we must refer to the work on the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, “The Romish Worship of the Virgin.” We would only remark, that in his unhallowed parody on the Athanasian Creed, the assumption of the Virgin into heaven, which is proved to have no foundation whatever in fact, is specified as one of the points to be believed on pain of forfeiting all hopes of salvation.

At the close of one of his Canticles he thus addresses the Virgin :

“O thou blessed one, our salvation is placed in thy hands. Remember our poverty, O thou pious one. Whom thou willest, he shall be saved; and he from whom thou turnest away thy countenance, goeth into destruction.”

In his *Te Deum* are these words :

“O Lady, SAVE THY PEOPLE, that we may partake of the inheritance of thy Son;

“And govern us and guard us for ever.

“Vouchsafe, O sweet Mary, to keep us now and for ever without sin.

“Have mercy upon us, O pious one, have mercy upon us. Let thy mercy be magnified upon us, because in thee, O Virgin Mary, do we put our trust; in thee, sweet Mary, do we hope. Defend us for ever. Praise becomes thee. Empire becomes thee. To thee be virtue and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Can the most subtle refinement make this merely a request to her to pray for us?

To this catalogue of prayers and praises we will only add the translation of one prayer more from the same canonized Saint. Its existence has been denied, but there it stands in his works, admitted as genuine by the Vatican editors. Vol. vi. p. 406.

“Therefore, O Empress, and our most benign Lady, BY THE RIGHT OF A MOTHER COMMAND THY MOST BELOVED SON, our Lord Jesus Christ, that He vouchsafe to raise our minds from the love of earthly things to heavenly desires, who liveth and reigneth.”

“JURE MATRIS IMPERA tuo dilectissimo filio.”

If such a man as Bonaventura, one of the most learned and celebrated men of his age, could be tempted by the seductive doctrine of the Roman Church to employ such language, what can be fairly expected of the large mass of persons who find that language published to the world with the very highest sanction which their religion can give, as the production of a man whom the Almighty declared by miracles to be a chosen vessel, and who was so under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit seemed to speak by him; and concerning whom they are taught, by the infallible<sup>7</sup> testimony of his canonization, that he is now reigning with Christ in heaven, and himself the lawful and appointed object of religious invocation?

While the devotional works of Roman Catholic writers abound to the overflow with such miserable errors as these, the writings of their expositors and accredited teachers are to the full as pregnant with the same lamentable departures from Christian truths. Referring for other examples to the work above-mentioned, “The Romish Worship of the Virgin,” we shall here confine ourselves to two authors, whose partial sameness of name has not unnaturally led to some confusion as to the writings of each.

<sup>7</sup> Cardinal Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 871, states, that in the act of canonization the Church of Rome is infallible.

*Bernardinus De Bustis.*

Bernardinus, called from a place in the country of Milan, De Bustis, was the author of "The Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin," which was confirmed by the bull of Sixtus IV., and has since been used on the 8th of December. He composed various works in honour of the Virgin, to one of which he gave the title *Mariale*. In this work, among a great variety of sentiments of similar import, he thus expresses himself :

"Of so great authority in the heavenly palace is that Empress, that, omitting all intermediate saints, we may appeal to her from every grievance. With confidence let every one appeal to her, whether he be aggrieved by the devil or by any tyrant, or by his own body, or by **DIVINE JUSTICE.**" Then, having illustrated the three other sources of grievance, he proceeds:—"In the fourth place he may **APPEAL TO HER**, if any one feels himself aggrieved by the **JUSTICE OF GOD.** The Empress Esther was a figure of this Empress of the Heavens with whom God divided his kingdom. For whereas God has justice and mercy, He retained justice to Himself, to be exercised in this world, and granted mercy to his mother; and thus, if any one feels himself aggrieved in the court of God's justice, let him appeal to the court of mercy of his **Mother<sup>s</sup>.**"

If we weigh the import of these words, is it any thing short of robbing the Eternal Father of his own eternal attribute, and sharing his glory with another? Is it not encouraging us to turn our eyes from the God of Mercy, as a stern and ruthless judge, and habitually to fix them on Mary, as the dispenser of all we want for the comfort and happiness of our souls?

In another place this Bernardine thus exalts Mary: "Since the Virgin Mary is Mother of God, and God

<sup>s</sup> Cologne, 1607, Part iii. Serm. ii. p. 176.

is her Son, and every son is naturally inferior to his mother, and the mother is preferred above and is superior to her son, it follows that the Blessed VIRGIN IS HERSELF SUPERIOR TO GOD, and GOD HIMSELF IS HER SUBJECT by reason of the humanity derived from her." And again: "O the unspeakable dignity of Mary, who was worthy to command the Commander of all<sup>9</sup>!"

We cannot pass on without translating one more passage from this famed doctor; it appears to rob God of his justice and power, as well as of his mercy, and to turn our eyes to Mary for the obtaining of all we can desire, and for safety from all we can dread.

"We may say that the Blessed Virgin is Chancellor in the Court of Heaven. For we see that in the Chancery of our Lord the Pope, three kinds of letters are granted: some are of simple justice, others are of pure grace, and the third mixed, combining justice and grace. . . . . The third Chancellor is he to whom it appertains to give letters of pure grace and mercy. And this office hath the blessed Virgin, and therefore she is called the Mother of Grace and Mercy; but those letters of mercy she gives only in the present life; for to some souls, as they are departing, she gives letters of pure grace; to others, of simple justice; and to others, mixed, namely, of justice and grace. For some have been very much devoted to her, and to them she gives letters of pure grace, by which she COMMANDS that glory be given to them without any fear of purgatory; others are miserable sinners, not devoted to her, and to them she gives letters of simple justice, by which she COMMANDS that condign vengeance be done upon them; others were lukewarm and remiss in their devotion, and to them she gives letters both of justice and of grace, by which she COMMANDS that grace be given unto them, and yet on

<sup>9</sup> Part ix. Serm. ii. p. 605. Part xii. Serm. ii. p. 816.

account of their negligence and sloth some pain of purgatory be also inflicted on them<sup>1</sup>."

*Bernardinus Sennensis.*

This Bernardine, distinguished as "of Sienna," was a canonized saint. A full account of his life, and of his enrolment by the Pope among the saints of heaven, is found in the "Acta Sanctorum," vol. v. May 20, the day especially dedicated to his honour. This Roman saint and doctor is explicit in maintaining that all the blessings which Christians can receive on earth are dispensed by Mary; that her principedom equals the Eternal Father's; that all are her servants and subjects who are the servants and subjects of the Most High; that all who adore the Son of God should adore his Virgin Mother; and that the Virgin has repaid the Almighty for all that HE has done for the human race. Some of these doctrines are truly startling, and it is painful to rehearse them; but it seems necessary to probe the evil. A few examples however will suffice:—

"So many creatures do service to the glorious Mary as do service to the Trinity; for He who is the Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin, wishing (so to speak) to make the principedom of his Mother equal in a manner to his Father's, He who was God served his Mother on earth. Moreover this is true, all things, even the Virgin, are servants of the Divine empire; and again this is true, all things, even God, are servants of the Empire of the Virgin<sup>2</sup>." "Therefore all the angelic spirits are the ministers and servants of this glorious Virgin<sup>3</sup>." "To comprise all in a brief sentence, I have no doubt that God granted all the pardons and liberations in the Old Testament on account of his love and reverence for this blessed maid, by which God pre-ordained from eternity that she should by predestination be honoured above all his

<sup>1</sup> Part xii. Serm. i. p. 825.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, 1636, vol. iv. Serm. v. c. vi. p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Serm. iii. c. iii. p. 104.

works. On account of the immense love of the Virgin, Christ Himself, as well as the whole blessed Trinity, frequently grants pardon to the most wicked sinners<sup>4</sup>."

"By the law of succession and right of inheritance, the primacy and kingdom of the whole universe is due to the Blessed Virgin. Nay, when her only Son died on the cross, since He had no one on earth of right to succeed Him, his mother, by the laws of all, succeeded, and by this acquired the principality of all. . . . But of the monarchy of the universe, Christ never made any testamentary bequest, because that can never be done without prejudice to his mother. Moreover, He knew that a mother CAN ANNUL THE WILL OF HER SON, if it be made to the prejudice of herself<sup>5</sup>."

"The Virgin-mother, from the time she conceived God, obtained a certain jurisdiction and authority in every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit, so that no creature could obtain any grace of virtue from God, except according to the dispensation of his Virgin-mother. . . . I fear not to say, that the Virgin has a certain jurisdiction over the flowing of all graces. And because she is the mother of such a Son of God, who produces the Holy Spirit, therefore all the gifts, graces, and virtues of the Holy Spirit are administered by the hands of HERSELF, to whom she will, when she will, how she will, and in what quantity she will<sup>6</sup>."

"She is the Queen of Mercy, the Temple of God, the habitation of the Holy Spirit, always sitting at the right hand of Christ in eternal glory; therefore she is to be venerated, to be saluted, to be adored with the adoration of hyperdulia; and she therefore sits at the right hand of the King, that as often as you adore Christ the King, you may adore also the mother of Christ."

"The Blessed Virgin Mary has done more for God, or, so to speak, as much as God has done, for the whole human race. I verily believe that God will excuse me, if I now speak for the Virgin. Let us,

<sup>4</sup> Serm. v. c. ii. p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> Serm. v. c. vii. pp. 116. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Serm. v. c. viii.; and Serm. vi. c. ii. pp. 120. 122. 119. 121.



then, gather into one heap what things God hath done for man; and let us consider what satisfaction the Virgin Mary hath returned to the Lord." Bernardine then enumerates various particulars (many of which the ordinary feelings of reverence and delicacy forbid us to transfer into these pages), putting one against another, in a sort of debtor and creditor account, and then summing up the total thus:—

“Therefore setting each individual thing one against another, namely, what things God hath done for man, and what things the Blessed Virgin has done for God, you will see that MARY HAS DONE MORE FOR GOD THAN GOD HAS FOR MAN; so that thus, on account of the Blessed Virgin (whom, nevertheless He Himself made), GOD IS, IN A CERTAIN MANNER, UNDER GREATER OBLIGATIONS TO US THAN WE ARE TO HIM!”

These are not the sentiments of some ordinary writer, for the soundness of which the Church of Rome could not be held responsible; they are the doctrines of one whom the Pope (Nicholas V.), in full conclave, enrolled among the saints of heaven, on the day of Pentecost, 1450, and that, as we are expressly told, to the joy of all Italy! Pius II. said, ten years afterwards, that this Bernardine was taken for a saint, even in his lifetime; and soon after the end of another ten years, Sextus IV. issued a bull, in which he extolled this saint, and authorized the removal of his body into a new church, dedicated, as others had been, to his honour; and he is now a lawful object of invocation himself to those who worship saints and the Virgin.

*Theophilus Raynaud.*

In bringing these references to a close, we cannot but invite especial attention to the work of Theophilus Raynaud, a Jesuit of Lyons, which supplies us with evidence as singular and curious as it is conclusive, on the enormous excesses to which the worship of the Virgin Mary has been carried in the Church of Rome. We have already intimated, that those excesses and

extravagancies, when brought to light, exceed all that we have been accustomed to meet with in books and in conversation. So revolting are many of them, that Romanist writers have not been wanting to regard the exposure and refutation of them as a pious work, due even to the Virgin herself, in order to preserve what they deem her legitimate worship from disparagement and ridicule. It is indeed curious to find these very writers, while they bring before us a mass of superstition and idolatry and blasphemy, with the existence of which we might not otherwise have become acquainted, and while they expose and reprove what they call unwarrantable excesses in the votaries of Mary, yet themselves supplying us with the strongest and most convincing evidence of the deplorable extent to which, even with the countenance and support of their own arguments and their own example, the worship of the Virgin, in its most modified form, entrenches upon the honour due to God only, and tempts Christians to anchor on Mary that holy hope which should rest only on Christ Himself.

One of the professed principles of this work of Raynaud, called *Diptycha Mariana*, is to reduce within reasonable bounds the worship of the Virgin, and to explode those excesses which, by exciting disgust or suspicion, might endanger what he maintains as her rightful praise and glory. But fearing lest his intention should be misinterpreted, he makes first an explicit profession of his sense of the boundless merits of the Virgin, to express which he adopts the words of a former writer. "The torrents of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep, I would rather open than close, in homage of the Virgin. And if HER SON JESUS HAS OMITTED any thing as to the pre-eminence of the exaltation of his own mother, I, a servant, I, a slave, not indeed with effect, but with affection, would delight in filling it up. Verily I had rather have no tongue, than say one word against our Lady; I would rather have no soul, than diminish aught of her glory<sup>8</sup>."

<sup>8</sup> Lugduni, 1665, vol. vii. p. 4.

Many of the dissertations examined by this author, on which men have dared to enter, as to the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, we cannot here quote, even to reprove them, without setting at nought both piety and delicacy. They warn us, at every step, to avoid all curiosity on such mysteries, and never to pry into those things which belong to the Lord our God. And of the many vain questions savouring of ensnaring superstition, we can refer only to a few. Among those numerous tenets which Raynaud records as having been maintained by the votaries of the Virgin, but which he discountenances himself, are these:—"That the Virgin had rescued and snatched some souls out of hell, that they might do penance<sup>9</sup>." "That the very flesh of the Virgin is adored daily in the Church with supreme worship, and is a victim offered to God, for a sacrifice of sweet savour to the Lord, because her flesh is one with Christ's<sup>1</sup>," and "is to be worshipped in the eucharist with the adoration of hyperdulia<sup>2</sup>." "That, by reason of her maternity, the Virgin may be worshipped with the worship with which God is Himself worshipped—the adoration of latria<sup>3</sup>;" and he tells us that both Suarez and Mendoza maintained this doctrine.

He disapproves of the sentiment (a sentiment by no means confined to the author whom he cites, and whose works he says had immense circulation), that Christians love Christ on account of, and in consequence of, the love which they bear to his mother. He quotes this address to our Lord—"I love Thee, O Christ God, because of thy mother whom I love<sup>4</sup>."

St. Ildefonsus, he tells us, "with a faithful presumption and pious boldness," extended the power of the Virgin to hell, saying that "she granted to the damned some remedy and refreshing, and freedom from the vexation of the devils, on the day of her Assumption<sup>5</sup>."

<sup>9</sup> P. 15.<sup>1</sup> P. 237.<sup>2</sup> P. 65.<sup>3</sup> P. 229.<sup>4</sup> P. 235.<sup>5</sup> P. 228.

One of the main objects of this member of the College of Jesuits was to condemn what he deemed excessive and extravagant in the acts of worship and adoration which he witnessed in his predecessors or contemporaries; we must therefore infer, that while his own practice, at all events, did not exceed the average, it may fairly be supposed to fall below it. And what does he profess to allow or to maintain? or what worship does he feel himself justified in offering to the Virgin? Although many more passages are at hand, we need quote only two, one which he calls "a pious daily form of worshipping and religiously invoking the Blessed Virgin in private," supplied by Richard of St. Lawrence; the other the closing words of his work, in which he declares it to be his delight to address to the Virgin a hymn in imitation of the *Te Deum*.

The first he thus explains:—"The will of the Son is, that we should bless his mother our Sovereign Lady at all times, by night and by day, in prosperity and adversity; and that her praise should ever dwell in our heart and in our mouth, by meditating upon her, by praising her, by praying, blessing, and giving thanks to her, by preaching forth her greatness; and that her praise should ever be as a curb in our jaws, curbing us in from the vices of the tongue. Wherefore SHE ALSO HERSELF PROMISES WITH HER SON, to him who praises her, 'with my praise will I curb thee, that thou perish not<sup>6</sup>.' Also that thou mayest fulfil that Psalm, 'All that is within me bless HER holy name<sup>7</sup>.' And daily are her [bodily] members to be individually blessed, that we may receive back a blessing to our members individually from her. In the same manner are her feet to be blessed, with which she carried the Lord; the womb in which she carried Him; the heart whence she courageously believed in Him and fervently

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah xlvi.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. cii. The word '*ejus*' is ambiguous; but the sense is fixed by the '*ab eâ*' in the next line.

loved Him ; the breasts with which she gave Him suck ; the hands with which she nourished Him ; the mouth and tongue with which she gave to Him the happy kiss of our redemption ; the nostrils with which she smelled the sweet-smelling fragrance of his humanity ; the ears with which she listened with delight to his eloquence ; the eyes with which she devoutly looked upon Him ; the body and soul which Christ consecrated in her with every benediction. And these most sacred members must be saluted and blessed with all devotion, so that separate salutations must be addressed to the several members separately ; that is to say, ‘ Hail, Mary ! ’ two to the feet, one to the womb, one to the heart, two to the breasts, two to the hands, two to the mouth and tongue, two to the lips, two to the nostrils, two to the ears, two to the eyes, two to the soul and body. And thus in all there are twenty salutations, which, after the manner of a daily payment, with separate and an equal number of kneelings, if it can be done, before her image or altar, are to be paid to the glorious Virgin, according to that Psalm, ‘ Every day will I give thanks unto THEE, and praise THY name for ever and ever <sup>8</sup>.’ And as those persons say who have experienced it, and have heard it from holy men, scarcely can be found any other form of service which would so much please the Virgin, or from which so much devotion would flow back to those who love her. Likewise through all her members separately, after the kneeling, adoration, and salutation, this must be said, ‘ Sweet Lady, I adore and bless those most blessed feet, by which thou didst carry the Lord upon the earth ; I adore and bless that most blessed womb in which thou didst carry Him ;’ and so to the other members and senses, commemorating their acts by which they served the Lord ; and this will devotion prescribe better than a discourse, grace better than writing <sup>9</sup>.”

<sup>8</sup> Ps. cxliv.

<sup>9</sup> P. 232.

This, be it remembered is a branch of Mary's worship, approved and recommended by one whose professed object was to shorten and limit and purify her worship, and reduce it within reasonable bounds. Can we any longer wonder at the dreadful blasphemies which meet us on every side, too dreadful many of them to be repeated, but still upon record? If one who reproves those that indulge in extravagant and excessive worship of the Virgin will himself calmly and deliberately sanction such condensed superstition as the above service involves, what must have been the extravagancies and excesses which he condemned? Here the worshippers of the Virgin are directed to perform daily a peculiar service to her, in order that they might fulfil the prophetic measure of the Psalmist's devotions, when he called upon his soul and all within him to bless God the Lord Jehovah! Here it is declared that it was "Mary with her Son," who made that promise to her votaries of safety from destruction, which promise, whatever it be, the inspired word of truth declares to have been made not by Mary, but by the Lord omnipotent. In the passage of Isaiah containing the promise now ascribed to the Virgin first (though her Son is joined with her), God, the speaker and the promiser, announces Himself to be "the first and the last." The Bible declares the speaker to be God Almighty; this writer substitutes Mary for God; and although her ever-blessed Son is named as joining in the promise, yet it is to the offering of praise to Mary and not to Christ, that the promise is applied here.

In his accommodation of the *Te Deum* to the Virgin Mary, Raynaud, following the example of Bonaventura, addresses to her these words:—

"We praise thee, Queen of Heaven; we honour thee, Sovereign Lady of the world.

"All creatures of right praise thee, Mother of immense splendour, Chamber of the Trinity most High.

“Thou art the beloved daughter of the Eternal Father; thou art the Elect Mother of the Son of God, and also the Holy Bride of the Comforter.

“Thee all angels obey. Thee the heavens of heavens love inestimably.

“To thee Cherubim and Seraphim cry aloud with ineffable voice, ‘Hail, hail, hail, O Lady of Glory; the heavens and earth are full of the sweetness of thy grace.’

“Thou art the Queen of the Apostles, thou the teaching of the Evangelists. Thee the praiseworthy company of the Prophets, thee the band of Patriarchs worship.

“Thou art the victory of martyrs, thou the glory of confessors. Thee the roses of Paradise, glorious virgins, praise; as do the chaste in their choir, singing, ‘Hail, O sweetest Queen; rejoice, O our most worthy Mother, who pourest grace upon the Saints, and deliverest souls from the depths.’

“We sinners, therefore, beseech thee, O Mother of God, help that people whom the precious blood of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, redeemed.

“MAKE us to be numbered with THY Saints in glory most high.

“Through thee may we, O holy Mother, be deemed worthy to be piously comforted.

“Thou who art crowned with so many prerogatives of holiness in the glory of the Father, rejoicing by thy right of Mother in so many privileges of dignity, joy, rejoice, be glad, who art greater than all praise, O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.”

As his closing expression, the author says:—

“May these be my words through the whole of this life; and may I, with the holy angels, break forth into the same through all eternity.”

And then adopting the words of Damiani, he adds, “I have treated concerning Christ; I have treated concerning his mother. Sweet is the Lord; sweet is the Lady: because He my God is my mercy, she my Lady is my gate of mercy. May the mother conduct

us to her Son, the daughter to the Father, the bride to her husband, who is blessed for evermore. Amen<sup>1</sup>."

Can any refinement take from these words the character of a direct prayer to the Virgin for benefits in her power to bestow? Can Raynaud's address be freed from an ascription of Divine attributes to Mary? In the very words in which the Christian Church has been long wont to seek for God's mercy and to praise Him, does this author ask for the Virgin's help, and proclaim her praises!

And yet this is the worship offered to the Virgin by one who puts himself forward as a pattern of moderation and prudence in her worship. "Others among her votaries," he says, "flew through the air, while he was contented to walk on foot as long as he remained on earth; others poured forth words like torrents in her praise, he weighed his words in the balance of judgment."

The writer's evidence is unexceptionable; it cannot be suspected, and it is conclusive.

<sup>1</sup> P. 240.



1917  
The following is a list of the names of the persons who were members of the  
Board of Directors of the [Name of the Corporation] during the year 1917.  
The names are listed in alphabetical order of their surnames.  
[List of names follows]

1918

**WHAT IS ROMANISM?**

**PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.**

**PART II.**

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**PRESENT SENTIMENTS AND PRACTICE  
IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.**



## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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### *Present Sentiments and Practice in the Church of Rome.*

It may, however, perhaps be surmised, that the authors above cited having lived so many years ago, the sentiments of those who profess the Roman faith now have undergone many changes. Assurances have, moreover, been given from time to time, that the invocation of the Virgin implies nothing more than a request that she would intercede with God for her supplicants, just as one Christian may ask a brother on earth to pray for him<sup>1</sup>. We can, however, discover no satisfactory method of reconciling with this representation the form of prayer and the sentiments which meet us on every side. We have already seen what the offices of the Virgin Mary in the Breviary and the Missal still contain. We find the same sentiments expressed towards her by the chief men in the Roman Church; the same forms of devotion both in prayer and praise are provided for the use of individuals in their daily exercises. Whatever meaning may possibly be attached to the expressions written or uttered (and surely in the most holy and solemn of all things, religious worship, it is dangerous and unjustifiable to employ one language for the ear and

<sup>1</sup> See Sermon by Dr. Baines at Bradford, July 27, 1825, p. 15.

eye, and another for the understanding and the heart), the prevailing expressions remain the same as we have found them to have been in past ages.

At the head of these modern proofs we reasonably place the circular letter of the present Pope, addressed to all Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops, through which the spirit of the Virgin's worship seems to diffuse itself in its full strength. When we refer his words to a test which has been already applied to a similar case, it is difficult for us to see how the spirit of this Pontiff's sentiments falls in the least below the highest grade of religious worship. In the third paragraph of this letter we read these words<sup>2</sup> :

“But having at length taken possession of our see in the Lateran Basilic, according to the custom and institution of our predecessors, we turn to you without delay, venerable brethren, and in testimony of our feelings towards you, we select for the date of our letter this most joyful day on which we celebrate the festival of the most Blessed Virgin's triumphant assumption into heaven; that she, who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress, MAY WATCH OVER US WRITING TO YOU, AND LEAD OUR MIND BY HER HEAVENLY INFLUENCE to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock.”

For the name of the Virgin let us substitute the holiest name of all, and let us fix on Christmas day, or Easter, or Holy Thursday; and what word, expressive of thankfulness for past mercies to the supreme Giver of all good, or of hope and trust in the guidance of the Spirit of counsel, and wisdom, and strength, who alone can order the wills and ways of men, might not a Christian pastor take from this declaration of the present Pope, to use in its first and

<sup>2</sup> We adopt the translation of the letter as circulated in the *Romanist Annual*, called the “*Laity's Directory*,” for the year 1833.

natural sense, when he was speaking of the Lord God Almighty? However direct and immediate the prayers of any supplicants may be to the Virgin for her protection and defence from all dangers, spiritual and bodily, and for the guidance of their inmost thoughts in the right way, such petitioners to Mary would be sanctioned to the utmost by the principles and examples of the present Roman Pontiff.

The next example of the worship of the Virgin at this day to which we would refer, is that of a writer who was canonized by the present Pope so recently as the year 1839, Alphonso Liguori. He died in 1787, and the Congregation of Rites at Rome pronounced his works unexcusable, and Pope Pius VII. in 1803, approved of their sentence. In his works we find sentiments the same with those already cited from the Bernardines, Bonaventura, and others of former days, and which show that the worship of the Virgin is now what it was four or five centuries ago.

Alphonsus Liguori, in the estimation of Roman Catholics, is an authority of no ordinary value. Dr. Wiseman speaks of him as a "venerable man," "a pattern and a light," "whose life and writings inspire us," he says, "with an admiration scarcely surpassed by that which we feel towards the early lights of the Church;" and his work called, "The Glories of Mary," is recommended in Ireland as a manual for all the faithful. He must, therefore, be considered as speaking the sentiments, not only of the Court of Rome and of the Pope who canonized him, but also especially of the bishops and clergy of Rome ministering at present in these islands. The following passages, with numberless others of the same character, occur in that work<sup>3</sup>:—

"If Ahasuerus heard the petition of Esther through

<sup>3</sup> "The Glories of Mary, mother of God, translated from the Italian of blessed Alphonso Liguori," Dublin, 1833.

love, will not God, who has an infinite love for Mary, fling away at her suit the thunderbolts which He was going to hurl on wretched sinners? . . . Indeed, every petition she offers is as a LAW emanating from the Lord, by which HE OBLIGES Himself to be merciful to those for whom she intercedes <sup>4</sup>.”

“St. Anselm, to increase our confidence in Mary, assures us that our prayers will often be more speedily heard in invoking her name, than in calling on that of Jesus Christ <sup>5</sup>.”

“Dispensatrix of the Divine grace, you save whom you please: to you, then, I commit myself, that the enemy may not destroy me <sup>6</sup>.”

“We, Holy Virgin, hope for grace and salvation from you; and since you need but say the word, Ah! do so, you shall be heard, and we shall be saved <sup>7</sup>.”

The searcher after truth on the subject of our present inquiry is often distressed on finding modern writers making reference to works which have been long since condemned as spurious, and citing them in evidence as genuine productions. But the most perplexing cases of all occur, when persons of note and authority cite the testimony of the ancient fathers without giving any clue to the passage in which the alleged testimony is contained. Of this, very striking instances occur in the works of Alphonsus Liguori, to a few of which it will not be out of place to point here.

“Before Bonaventura, St. Ignatius had pronounced that a sinner can be saved ONLY by having recourse to the Blessed Virgin, whose INFINITE mercy obtains salvation for those who would be condemned by infinite justice. Some pretend that the text is not taken from Ignatius, but we know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to him <sup>8</sup>.”

“With what efficacy, with what tender charity does not Mary plead our cause! From the considera-

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 16, 17.

<sup>5</sup> P. 96.

<sup>6</sup> P. 100.

<sup>7</sup> P. 137.

<sup>8</sup> P. 190.

tion thereof, St. Augustine says to her, ‘Men have but one sole advocate in heaven, and it is you, Holy Virgin.’”

“Poor sinners, how lamentable would be your lot, if you had not this powerful advocate; this advocate so wise, so prudent, and so tender, that her Son CANNOT condemn those whom she defends<sup>1</sup>!”

“The glorious St. Gratian affirms, that though we may ask as many graces as we please, we cannot obtain them but through the intercession of Mary. St. Antoninus says, ‘To ask favours without interposing Mary, is to attempt to fly without wings.’”

“Mary,” says St. Chrysostom, “has been elected from all eternity as mother of God, that she may save by HER mercy those to whom her Son, in justice, cannot grant pardon<sup>3</sup>.”

This book, “The Glories of Mary,” was not written by a person living centuries ago, amidst those whose excesses Theophilus Raynaud wrote his book to check and discountenance; it contains the sentiments of one who has been dead not sixty years, and to whose teaching the highest authority in the Church of Rome only seven years since set its seal by its most solemn act of all, even his canonization. And what is the doctrine here proclaimed and spread through the world? That the mercy of Mary is infinite, and obtains salvation for those whom God in his infinite justice would condemn: that the Lord Jesus, whose own gracious lips assure us that the merciful Father of us all sent Him into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, whatever be his will, CANNOT condemn those whom she defends: and though the Holy Scripture assures us that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is also the propitiation for our sins, yet here we are told that the Virgin is our sole advocate in heaven. Whereas the

<sup>9</sup> P. 170.

<sup>1</sup> P. 171.

<sup>2</sup> P. 154.

<sup>3</sup> P. 179.



Lord Himself declares, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in MY name, that will I do;" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in MY name, He will give it you<sup>4</sup>;" this saint of the Roman Church tells us we may ask what we will, but that without Mary's intercession we can obtain no grace. The warrant of the heavenly covenant is, "that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," and that "in Him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins;" but here we are taught that Mary is to save by HER MERCY those to whom her Son cannot in justice grant pardon.

These are, indeed, very startling positions, deplorable departures from the truth as it is in Jesus: and when we find an appeal made to St. Ignatius, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine, in defence of these doctrines, we cannot conceal our feelings of astonishment and sorrow. For the authorities here cited by Liguori most diligent search has been made, and not a trace of either of them can be found. In no one of the works of Ignatius can any allusion to such a position be discovered; and though Liguori says, "We know that St. Chrysostom attributes the text to Ignatius," every other part of the writings of St. Chrysostom, as well as his biographical work on St. Ignatius, has been ransacked for any allusion to such a statement, but in vain. For the testimony also here directly drawn from St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, their works have been searched with unremitting scrutiny, but with the same result. Not a shadow of any such doctrine can be detected. In neither of these, nor in St. Ignatius, is there found any the most distant allusion to the mercy, the intercession, or the advocacy and saving power of Mary. Their uniform teaching is, that the Eternal Father is infinite in mercy, and will freely pardon believing penitents who come to Him by his ever-merciful Son.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 13; xvi. 23.

We need add only a few more examples from devotional books which are in use at the present day. Such examples might be multiplied exceedingly, but the subject is too painful for us to dwell longer upon it than the necessity of the truth requires.

In the devotional work called "The New Month of Mary," this prayer is offered to the Virgin: "O most powerful, because most faithful of God's creatures, I presume to approach thee with a lively sentiment of my own unworthiness to address God, whose indignation I have so much deserved, and with a strong conviction in the efficacy of thy intercession with Jesus, thy Divine Son, who has placed in thy hands all power and strength. May these sentiments always increase within me, that I may never presume, but PLACE ALL MY CONFIDENCE IN THEE."

The "Hebdomas Mariana," a devotional work "for every day in the week, in honour of the most glorious Virgin Mother of God, in order to obtain the grace of a happy death," in the midst of many other prayers to the same effect, contains the following:

"O Holy Mary, merciful Queen of Heaven, Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Noble Couch of the whole Trinity; elected by the Father, preserved by the Son, loved by the Holy Ghost; overshadowed by the Father, inhabited by the Son, filled with all grace by the Holy Ghost; THROUGH THEE AND FOR THEE may I be blessed by God the Father, who created me; may I be blessed by God the Son, who redeemed me by his most precious blood; may I be blessed by God the Holy Ghost, who sanctified me in baptism; and may the most sacred Trinity, THROUGH THY INTERCESSION, receive my soul at the hour of death."

"O Holy Mary, Mother of our Redeemer, say at the hour of my death that thou art my mother, that I may be blessed, and that my soul may live FOR THEE. And if I shall be sent to that prison of burning until

I pay the last farthing, may thy mercy descend with me to refresh me in the flames, to solace me in my torments, that I may say, 'According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, may THY consolations rejoice my soul.' Thou, O Mother, then hasten to assist me: let not thy Son depart until He shall have blessed me, and remitted all my debts, BECAUSE THOU HAST REQUESTED HIM. Amen<sup>5</sup>."

The following is found among the prayers published for those who are admitted into the "Pious Confederation of the Most Holy Mary, Mother of Providence, the Auxiliatrix of Christians, canonically established at Rome<sup>6</sup>."

"O Mother of God, Most Holy Mary, how many times have I by my sins deserved hell! Already, perhaps, would the sentence on my first sin have been executed, if THOU HADST not compassionately delayed the Divine justice; and then overcoming my hardness, hadst drawn me to have confidence in thee. And O! into how many crimes, perhaps, should I have fallen in the dangers which have happened to me, if thou, affectionate Mother, hadst not preserved me with the grace which thou hadst obtained for me."

In a work entitled "The Imitation of the Blessed Virgin," London, 1816, we read the following prayer to the Virgin. It is stained by the error with which our inquiries have already made us but too familiar, of contrasting the justice and stern dealing even of the Saviour Himself with the mercy, and loving-kindness, and fellow-feeling of Mary; making God an object of fear, Mary an object of love.

"Mother of my Redeemer, O Mary; in the last moments of my life, I implore thy assistance with more earnestness than ever. I find myself, as it were, placed between heaven and hell. Alas! what will become of me, if thou do not exert in my behalf thy powerful influence with Jesus? . . . I die with SUBMISSION, because Jesus has ORDAINED it; but

<sup>5</sup> Pp. 13, 14.—Rome, with permission, 1835.

<sup>6</sup> Pp. 3, 4.

notwithstanding the natural horror which I have of death, I die with PLEASURE, because I die under THY protection."

In the following passage<sup>7</sup> how unworthy of the Christian faith is the thought, that we must pay reverence to one saint in order to gratify and propitiate another! Joseph must be especially honoured, in order to do what is acceptable to Mary, and conciliate Mary to ourselves. And how miserable is the expedient of attempting to give an appearance of Scriptural sanction by quoting King Pharaoh's direction to his starving subjects, to apply to Joseph, Jacob's son, for food in Egypt, when the unscriptural doctrine is urged of applying to Joseph, Mary's husband, for his intercession in heaven!

"It is giving to the Blessed Virgin a testimony of love particularly dear and precious to her, to make her holy spouse Joseph the first object of our devotion next to that which consecrates us to her service. The name of Joseph is invoked with singular devotion by all the true faithful. They frequently join it with the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. Whilst Jesus and Mary lived at Nazareth, if we had wished to obtain some favour from THEM, could we have employed a more powerful protector than St. Joseph? Will he now have less power and credit? GO THEREFORE TO JOSEPH, Gen. xli. 55, that he may intercede for you. Whatever favour you ask, God will grant it you at his request. . . . Go to Joseph in all your necessities; but especially to obtain the grace of a happy death. The general opinion that he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary has inspired the faithful with great confidence, that through his intercession they will have an end as happy and consoling as his. In effect, it has been remarked, that it is particularly at the hour of death that those who have during their life been careful to honour this great saint, reap the fruit of their devotion."

<sup>7</sup> Chap. xiii. p. 344; xiv. p. 347.

In the "Little Testament of the Holy Virgin,"<sup>8</sup> we find, among other devotional addresses, "A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin." Can any words place on an entire level with each other the Eternal Son of God and the Virgin? We can only quote a few passages.

"O Mary, what would be our poverty and misery, if the Father of Mercies had not drawn you from his treasury to give you to earth! O my Life and Consolation, I trust and confide in your holy name. . . . At the name of Mary my hope shall be enlightened, my love inflamed. Oh that I could deeply engrave the dear name, on every heart, suggest it to every tongue, and make all celebrate it with me. Mary! sacred name under which no one should despair. Mary! it shall be life, my strength, my comfort. Every day shall I invoke IT AND THE DIVINE NAME OF JESUS. The Son will awake the recollection of the Mother, and the Mother that of the Son. Jesus and Mary! this is what my heart shall say at the last hour, if my tongue cannot: I shall hear them on my death-bed; they shall be wafted on my expiring breath, and I with them, to see THEM, know THEM, bless and love THEM for eternity. Amen."

When we read in the works of different ages and of distant countries such tenets as these, expressed in the solemn act of prayer:—

That the sentence on our sins might have been executed by our all-merciful Father, if Mary had not stayed the Divine justice;

That the Holy Spirit might have suffered us to fall into sins, had not Mary preserved us from falling;

That our prayers may be more speedily heard, when we invoke Mary's name, than when we call on the Lord Jesus;

That she is the way through which alone we can go

<sup>8</sup>. Dublin, 1836, p. 46.

to Jesus, and the only channel through which Divine grace can reach our souls;

That when our sins make us unworthy or afraid to address God, we are to approach Mary, and place our entire hope and confidence in her;

That God, for the infinite love He has to Mary, will fling away at her suit the thunderbolt which He was on the point of hurling on wretched sinners;

That when the eternal and omnipotent Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right, WISHES TO CONDEMN THE GUILTY, MARY KNOWS HOW TO PREVENT THE EXECUTION OF THE SENTENCE;

That the self-condemned sinner finding death to be at hand, and feeling himself to be placed between heaven and hell, meets death with submission, because God has ordained it, but despite of the natural horror of death, will die with pleasure because he dies under Mary's protection;—

When we find these, and unnumbered other sentiments of the same force and bearing, we are constrained to say, can the religion which sanctions and prescribes these things be the Christian religion? the religion which the one Mediator brought down with Him from the eternal and only God in heaven? In these sentiments we hear no sound of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus; in these representations we see no sign of that Lamb of God whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and who for the great love wherewith He loved us, is gone before to prepare a place for us to be with Himself in glory for ever.

Let, moreover, every refinement of distinction be applied between the honour due to God and the honour paid to the Virgin; between the advocacy of Christ and the intercession of Mary; between prayers direct and prayers oblique (as they have been called); between the hope and confidence which the Apostles, both by their example and teaching, bid the faithful Christian rest on God's mercy in Jesus Christ, and the hope and confidence which the canonized saints, and the doctors, and Popes of the Church of Rome profess

to place, and teach their people to place, in the power and mercy of Mary; let every explanation which ingenuity can devise be applied here, and still the practical result of the whole is a tendency to dispossess our Saviour of his functions of saving and redeeming lost mankind, and to leave to Him only the severe and unapproachable character of a judge; to wean our affections from God, and fix them on Mary; to make our personal application to ourselves of his merits and atonement (whereby alone we can stand in the place of sons, and realize the spirit of adoption) dependent on her intercession; to represent all the blessings and graces of the Holy Spirit as shut up in a sealed fountain till her benign and divine influence open it, and convey through herself such portions of the heavenly treasure as she wills to those who have, by devotion to her, secured her omnipotent patronage; to tempt believers to regard Mary as the way, and God in Christ as the truth and the life approachable only by that way;—in a word, to hold forth the Lord God of heaven, the gracious, merciful, loving Father, as an object of awe and terror, as the inflexible dispenser of Divine justice, (inflexible except when his love for Mary bends Him to be merciful to her votaries for her sake); and thus, though not confessedly and theoretically, perhaps, yet in very and practical truth, to make Mary the nearest and dearest object of a Christian's love.

But what saith the Scripture to these things?

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. X.

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ON THE  
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.  
EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE  
AGAINST IT.



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THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

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- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
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- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—[continued].
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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*On the Worship of the Virgin Mary.—Evidence of Holy Scripture against it.*

ON the principles by which persons, honestly searching for the truth, should be guided in their pursuit, we spoke in a former number, when we were inquiring into the evidence of Holy Scripture on the Invocation of Saints and Angels. In this place it will be enough to repeat generally the conclusions on the subject before us, to which a careful study of the Word of God cannot but lead.

If, then, there is one paramount and pervading principle more characteristic of Revelation than any other, it seems to be the preservation of a practical belief in the perfect unity of God, and the fencing of his worship against the admixture of any other, whatever be its character or form: it is the announcement that the Creator and Governor of the universe is the sole giver of every temporal and spiritual blessing, the one only Being to whom his creatures should pay any religious service whatever, the one only Being to whom mortals must apply, by prayer and invocation, for the supply of any of their wants. And to this principle the New Testament has added another equally essential, that there is one, and only one, Mediator between God and man, through whom every blessing must be

sought and obtained, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ever making intercession for us.

Through the entire Bible, the exclusive worship of God alone is insisted upon, and guarded with the utmost jealousy, by assurances, by threats, and by promises, as the God who heareth prayer, alone to be called upon, alone to be invoked, alone to be adored. Recourse is had (if we may so speak) to every expedient, for the express purpose of protecting the sons and daughters of Adam from the fatal error of embracing in their worship any other being or name whatever, or of seeking from any other than the one Supreme God the supply of their wants; not reserving supreme and direct adoration and prayer to Him, and allowing some subordinate worship, some indirect and inferior kind of invocation to be offered to his creatures, even the most exalted among them, but banishing at once and for ever, the most distant approximation towards prayer and religious honour, and excluding with uncompromising universality, the veriest shadow of spiritual invocation to any other being than the Most High, GOD HIMSELF ALONE.

With regard to the Gospel doctrine of the mediation of Christ, we read, without any qualifying, or limiting, or excepting expression whatever, these truths: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus<sup>1</sup>." "He is able also to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them<sup>2</sup>:" nay, the mouth of Him who spake as never man spake, thus solemnly and graciously announces the completeness of his own mediation, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME, he will give it you<sup>3</sup>." Many pages might be added to the same effect. One Mediator has been revealed in his person and in his office, and He is expressly declared to be the one only Mediator between God and men; we therefore seek God's covenanted mercies through Him.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> John xvi. 23.

But (it will be asked) is the mediatorship of the Son of God exclusive of all other mediators in heaven? May there not be other mediators of intercession as well as that one Mediator of redemption? We answer, What might have been man's duty, had the Almighty been pleased to give another revelation for man's guidance, is not the question; in the revelation which He has given, we find mention made only of one Mediator. And if it had been his will, that we should approach the throne of mercy through any secondary or subsidiary mediators and intercessors, our confidence in his mercy would teach us to expect a revelation of that will as clear and unquestionable as the revelation which we know He has vouchsafed of the mediation and intercession of his blessed Son. His own revealed will directs us to pray for our fellow-creatures on earth, and to expect spiritual benefits from the prayers made on our behalf by the faithful on earth through that Mediator. To pray for them, therefore, and to seek their prayers, and to wait patiently for a gracious answer, are acts of faith and of duty. But that He will favourably answer the prayers which we might supplicate others as our intercessors in the unseen world to offer, or which we might offer to Himself through their merits, and by their mediation, is nowhere revealed. On the contrary, we find no single act, no single word, nothing which even by implication can be forced to sanction any prayer or religious invocation of any kind to any other than God Himself alone; or any reliance whatever on the mediation or intercession of any being in the unseen world, save only our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But is not that Mediator's holy mother an exception? Does not Scripture lead us to infer that the blessed Virgin has great influence and power? May not her intercession and mediation, and her kind offices be sought in prayer addressed to her? We answer, that we can find no trace or intimation of

any thing of the kind; on the contrary, the evidence of Holy Scripture is not merely negative on this point, but it is decided and conclusive against any such doctrine and practice.

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The first intimation given to us that a woman was, in the providence of God, appointed to be the instrument or channel through which the Saviour of mankind should be brought into the world, was made immediately after the fall, and at the very first dawn of the day of our salvation. The authorized English version renders the passage thus: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Instead of the word "IT," the Roman Vulgate reads "SHE;" the Greek Septuagint translates it "HE." But whichever of the renderings of the Hebrew word be correct, for our present purpose it matters little. Whether the word originally dictated by the Holy Spirit to Moses, be so translated as to refer to the seed of the woman generally, or to the male child the descendant of the woman, or to the "woman," be this as it may, no Christian can doubt, that it was ordained in the counsels of the Eternal Godhead, that the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, should be born of a virgin, and that in the mystery of that incarnation the serpent's head should be bruised. Equally indisputable is it, that this prophetic announcement was in progress towards its final accomplishment when the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.

The only other reference made in the Old Testament to the mother of our Lord, seems to be the celebrated prophecy of Isaiah, about which, probably, no controversy can arise affecting the question before

<sup>4</sup> Gen. iii. 15.

us: "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel<sup>5</sup>."

To the many applications of other passages of the Old Testament to the Virgin Mary (however objectionable and unjustifiable they are), which are made both in the authorized services of the Church of Rome and in manuals of private devotion, we need not here refer, because they can never be cited in argument. Such, for example, are the addresses of the bride in the Song of Solomon, and that prophecy of the queen in the 45th Psalm, which has been of late applied to the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven<sup>6</sup>. The praise of wisdom, in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, is in the same manner applied to the Virgin. But through the Old Testament we find no passage which can by any, however circuitous or inferential, application be brought to countenance the doctrine, that Mary is a proper object of religious invocation.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the New Testament, mention by name is made of the Virgin Mary by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, and also, though not by name, yet as the mother of the Lord, by St. John in his Gospel, and by no other of the sacred writers. Neither does St. Paul, in any one of his various Epistles, though he mentions by name many of our Lord's disciples, nor St. James; nor St. Peter, who must often have seen the Virgin Mary during our Lord's ministry, and after his return to his Father, nor St. Jude, mention her as living, or allude to her as dead; nor St. John, though, as his own Gospel teaches us, she had been committed to his care of especial trust, in either of his three Epistles, or in the Revelation, refer to the Virgin Mary.

The first occasion on which, in the New Testament,

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah vii. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Manual of the Living Rosary.

any reference is made to the Virgin Mary, is the salutation of the angel, recorded in the opening chapter of St. Luke's Gospel; the last occasion<sup>7</sup> is, when she is mentioned by the same Evangelist as "Mary, the mother of Jesus," in conjunction with the brethren of our Lord, and with the Apostles, and "the women," all continuing in prayer and supplication, immediately after Christ's ascension. Between these two events the name of Mary occurs under a variety of circumstances, on every one of which we shall do well to reflect.

On the first occasion (The Salutation), the angel announces to Mary that she should become the mother of the Son of God. Doubtless, no daughter of Eve was ever so distinguished among women; and well does it become us to cherish her memory with affectionate reverence. The words then addressed to her on earth, with a change of expression, which many critics pronounce to be inadmissible, and to convey a meaning not warranted by the original, are daily addressed to her by the Roman Catholic Church, now that she is removed to the invisible world: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured [the Roman or Italian version renders it, "full of grace"]: the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." On the substitution of the phrase "full of grace," for "highly favoured," or, as our margin suggests, "graciously accepted," or "much graced," little need be said. It is to be regretted at all events that, since the Greek words are different here and in the first chapter of St. John, where the words "full of grace" are applied to the only Son of God, a similar distinction has not been preserved in the Roman translation.

The other expression, "Blessed art thou among women," is precisely the same with the ascription of blessedness made by an inspired tongue to another daughter of Eve, "Blessed *above* women<sup>8</sup>;" or (as

<sup>7</sup> Acts iv. 13, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Judges v. 24.

both the Septuagint and the Roman translations render the word), "Blessed *among* women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be." And in such ascription of blessedness, we see no ground of justification for the worship of the Virgin Mary.

The same observation applies, with equal strictness, to that affecting interview between Mary and her cousin, when Elizabeth, enlightened doubtless by an especial revelation, returned the salutation of Mary, by addressing her as the mother of her Lord, and hailing her visit as an instance of most condescending and welcome kindness: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?" Members of the Church of England are taught to regard this event in Mary's life with feelings of delight and gratitude. It was on this occasion that she uttered the beautiful hymn, "The Song of the blessed Virgin Mary," which our Church has selected for daily use at evening prayer.

These incidents bring before our minds the image of a pure virgin, humble, pious, obedient, holy; a chosen servant of God; an exalted pattern for her fellow-creatures; but still a fellow-creature, and a fellow-servant; a Virgin pronounced by an angel to be blessed. But further than this we cannot go, because further than this the Scripture does not lead us by the hand. We read of no power, no authority (neither the office and influence of intercession, nor the authority and right to command) being ever committed to her, and we dare not of our own minds venture to take for granted, and as the truth, a statement of so vast a magnitude, involving associations so awful. We reverence her memory as a holy and highly favoured daughter of Eve, the Virgin-mother of our Lord. We cannot supplicate any blessing at her hand; we dare not pray to her for her intercession.

The angel's announcement to Joseph, whether be-

<sup>9</sup> Luke i. 43.



fore or after the birth of Christ, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt and the return thence, in the record of all which events by St. Matthew the name of Mary occurs, seem to require no especial attention with reference to the immediate subject of our inquiry, however important in themselves and interesting these events are. To Joseph the angel speaks of the Virgin as "Mary thy wife." In every other of those cases she is called, "the young Child's mother," or "his mother."

In relating the circumstances of Christ's birth, the evangelist employs no words which call for any particular examination. Joseph went up into the city of David to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife; and there she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. And the shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Between the birth of Christ, and the flight of the holy family into Egypt, St. Luke records an event to have happened by no means unimportant—the presentation of Christ in the Temple. "And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord<sup>1</sup>." And Simeon "came by the Spirit into the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord," &c. "And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against (yea, a sword shall pass through thy own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In this incident it is

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 23.

worthy of remark, that Joseph and Mary are both mentioned by name, that they are both called the parents of the child Jesus, that both are equally blessed by Simeon, and that the good old Israelite, illuminated by the Spirit of prophecy, when he addresses himself immediately to Mary, speaks only of her future trials and sorrows, and does not even remotely or faintly allude to any exaltation of her above the other daughters of Abraham, "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also<sup>2</sup>."

The next occasion on which the name of the Virgin Mary is found in Scripture, is the memorable visit of her husband, herself, and her Son, to Jerusalem, when He was twelve years old. The manner in which this incident is related by the inspired evangelist, so far from intimating that Mary was destined to become an object of worship to the believers in her Son, affords evidence strongly bearing in the contrary direction. Here, again, Joseph and Mary are both called his parents. Joseph is once mentioned by name, and so is Mary. If the language had been so framed as on purpose to take away all distinction of preference and superiority, it could not more successfully have effected its object. And not only so; but of the three addresses recorded as having been made by our blessed Lord to his beloved mother (and only three are recorded in the New Testament), the first occurs during this visit to Jerusalem. That address was made in answer to the remonstrance made by Mary, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He makes no distinction here, "Know YE not?" We may appeal to any dispassionate reasoner to pronounce whether such a reproof, couched in such words, countenances the idea that our

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 35. See De Sacy, vol. xxxii. p. 128.

blessed Lord intended his mother to receive such divine honour from his followers to the end of time as the Church of Rome now pays to her; and whether St. Luke, whose pen wrote this account, could have been cognisant of any such right vested in the Virgin? The Evangelist adds, "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

The next passage requiring our consideration, is that which records the first miracle of our Lord. "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine (when the wine failed), the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come<sup>3</sup>." We need make no remark on the comments which different Roman Catholic writers have recommended for adoption here. Let the passage be interpreted in any way which fair and enlightened criticism, and the analogy of Scripture will sanction, and we may ask, Could any unprejudiced mind, after a careful weighing of the incident, the facts, and the words, in all their bearings, expect that the holy and beloved person, toward whom the meek, and tender, and affectionate Jesus employed this address, was destined by that omniscient Saviour to become an object of those religious acts with which (as we have seen) the Church of Rome daily approaches her? Indeed, Epiphanius considers our blessed Lord to have employed, on this occasion, the word "woman," for the express purpose of preserving believers in the Gospel from an excessive admiration of Mary: "Lest any one should think that the holy Virgin was a being of superior excellence<sup>4</sup>."

We must now advert to an incident recorded with little variety of expression, and with no essential dif-

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 1—4.

<sup>4</sup> Epiph. Paris, 1622, pp. 1056—1064.

ference, by the first three Evangelists. St. Matthew's, which is the fullest account, is this: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother<sup>5</sup>." Or, as St. Luke expresses it, "And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these who hear the word of God and do it<sup>6</sup>."

Humanly speaking, could a more favourable opportunity than this have presented itself to our blessed Lord, of referring to his mother in such a manner as to exalt her above her fellow-daughters of Eve; in such a manner, too, as that Christians in after-days, when the Saviour's bodily presence should have been taken away from them, and the extraordinary communications of the Spirit of truth should have been withdrawn, might have remembered that He had spoken such things, and have been countenanced by his words in doing her homage? But so far is this from the plain and natural tendency of his words, that had He intended to guard his disciples to the end of time against supposing that the love and reverence which they felt towards Himself should show itself in their exaltation of his mother above all created beings, language could scarcely have supplied words more fitted for that purpose. Nothing in the communication made to Him should seem to have called for

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xii. 46. Luke viii. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, *De Carne Christi* vii. Chrysostom, vol. vii. p. 467, and others, comment in very strong and plain language against this (as it appeared to them) unjustifiable intrusion of Mary.

such a remark. A plain message announces to Him, as a matter of fact, one of the most common occurrences of daily life, and yet He fixes upon the circumstance as the groundwork, not only of declaring the close union between Himself and faithful believers in Him, but of cautioning all against any superstitious feelings towards those who were nearly allied to Him by the ties of human nature. With reverence we would say, it is as though He desired to record his foreknowledge of the errors into which his disciples were likely to be seduced, warning them beforehand to shun and resist the temptation.

The evidence borne by this passage against the offering by Christians of any religious worship to the Virgin, on the ground of her having been the mother of our Lord, is clear and direct. She was the mother of the Redeemer of the world, and blessed is she among women; but that very Redeemer Himself, with his own lips, assures us, that every faithful and obedient servant of his heavenly Father shall be honoured equally with her, and possess all the privileges which so near and dear a relationship with Himself might be supposed to convey. "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? Behold my mother and my brethren!" "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

We have equal reason to take notice in this place of that most remarkable passage, in which our blessed Lord is recorded, under different circumstances, to have expressed the same sentiment, but in words which carry with them even stronger indications of his desire to prevent any undue exaltation of his mother. "As he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked<sup>7</sup>." On the truth or wisdom

<sup>7</sup> Luke xi. 27.

of that exclamation our Lord makes no remark; He refers not to his mother at all; not even to assure his audience that however blessed Mary might be in having brought forth the Saviour bodily, yet far more blessed was she (as St. Chrysostom<sup>8</sup> and others remind us) because she had borne Him spiritually in her heart. To his mother He does not allude, except for the purpose of immediately fixing the minds of his hearers on the sure and greater blessedness of his faithful disciples. "But he said, Yea rather [or as some prefer to translate the words, 'Yea, verily, and'], blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Again, it must be asked, Could such an exclamation have been met by such an answer, had our Lord's will been to exalt his mother, as she is now exalted by the Church of Rome? Rather, we would reverently ask, Would He have given this turn to such an address, had He not desired to check any such feelings towards her?

That affecting and edifying incident recorded by St. John as having taken place while the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross (an incident which speaks to every one that has an understanding to comprehend and a heart to feel), brings before us the last occasion on which the name of the Virgin Mary occurs in the Gospels.

No paraphrase could add force or clearness or beauty to the narrative of the evangelist; no exposition could bring out its parts more prominently, powerfully, or affectingly. The calmness and authority of our blessed Lord, his tenderness and affection, his filial love in the midst of his agony, it is impossible for the pen of man to describe with more heart-stirring and heart-soothing pathos. But not one syllable falls from the lips of Christ, or from the pen of the beloved disciple, which can be construed to imply that our blessed Lord intended Mary to be held by his followers in such honour as would be shown in the

<sup>8</sup> See Chrys. vol. vii. p. 467.

offering of prayer and praise to her after her dissolution. He who could by a word have bidden the whole course of nature and of providence to minister to the health and safety, the support and comfort of his mother, leaves her to the care of one whom He loves, and whose sincerity and devotedness to Him He had, humanly speaking, long experienced. He bids John look to Mary as he would to his own mother; He bids Mary look to John, as to her own Son, for protection and solace. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he said unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son: then said he to the disciple, Behold thy mother." And he added no more. If Christ willed that his beloved mother should end her days in peace, removed equally from the desolation of widowhood on the one hand, and from notoriety on the other, nothing could be more natural than such conduct in such a Being at such a time. But if his purpose had been to exalt her into an object of religious worship, that nations should kneel before her, and all people do her homage; and to teach all his followers to look to her as the channel through which the favour and blessings of heaven were to be conveyed to mankind, then the words and the conduct of our blessed Lord at this hour would be inexplicable; and so also would be the words of the evangelist closing the narrative, "And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home<sup>9</sup>."

Subsequently to this, not one word falls from the pen of St. John which can be made to bear on the station, the person, or the circumstances of Mary. After his resurrection, our Saviour remained on earth forty days before He finally ascended bodily into heaven. Many of his interviews and conversations with

<sup>9</sup> John xix. 25.

the disciples during that interval are recorded. Every one of the four Evangelists has told us of some act or some saying of our Lord on one or more of those occasions. Mention is made by name of Mary Magdalene, of the other Mary, of the mother of James, of Salome, of Joanna, of Peter, of Cleophas, of the disciple whom Jesus loved (at whose home the mother of our Lord then was), of Thomas also, of Nathanael, and generally of the eleven. But by no one of the Evangelists is reference made at all in the gospels to Mary the mother of our Lord, as having been present at any one of those interviews; her name is not alluded to throughout.

On one solitary occasion, subsequently to Christ's Ascension, mention is made of Mary his mother; it is in company with many others, and without any distinction to separate her from the rest. "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren<sup>1</sup>." Not one word is said as to Mary having been present to witness even the ascension of her blessed Son: we read of no command from our Lord, no wish expressed by Him, no distant intimation that they should show to her even marks of respect and honour; nor is any allusion made to her superiority or pre-eminence.

Sixty years at the least we may consider to be comprehended within the subsequent history of the New Testament before the Apocalypse was written; but neither in the narrative, nor in the epistles, nor yet in the prophetic part of the sacred writings, is there the most distant reference to Mary<sup>2</sup>. Of him

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> We need not allude to Rev. xii. 1, as a passage strangely perverted to apply to the Virgin in heaven, because Roman Catholics do not at all agree together in such an application. See De Sacy, in loc.



to whose filial care our dying Saviour committed his mother, we hear much. St. John we find putting forth the miraculous power of Christ at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; we see him imprisoned and arraigned before the Jewish authorities; but not one word is mentioned as to what meanwhile became of Mary. St. John we find confirming the Church in Samaria; we see him an exile in the island of Patmos; but no mention throughout is made of Mary. Nay, though we have three of his epistles, and the second of them addressed to one whom he loved in the truth, we can trace in them no allusion to the mother of our Lord, alive or dead.

We have no reason to suppose that St. Paul had any personal knowledge of the Virgin. At all events it is a fact of which, neither do his own epistles, nor does the inspired history of his life and labours give the slightest intimation. St. Paul does indeed refer to the human nature of Christ derived from his human mother; and had St. Paul been taught by direct revelation, or by his fellow Apostles, older in the ministry than himself, to entertain towards her such sentiments as the Roman Church now entertains, he could not have found a more inviting occasion to give utterance to them. But instead of thus speaking of the Virgin Mary, he does not even mention her name or condition at all, referring only in the most general way to a daughter of Adam, of whom the Son of God was born: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons<sup>3</sup>."

This absence of evidence in Holy Scripture as to the birth, life, death, glories, and power of the Virgin Mary, seems to have been sensibly felt by many of her zealous votaries. To supply such want of countenance and sanction to the honours now paid to her in the Church of Rome, various expedients have

<sup>3</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

been adopted. The doctrine of progressive development has been relied on; and revelations of her influence and majesty have been alleged, as having been supernaturally made by herself to many of her most famous worshippers; especially are we referred to the revelations made by the Virgin to St. Bridget<sup>4</sup>. But another solution of this difficulty has been suggested, on which we shall make no comment, since few probably of the most ardent propagators of the doctrine of development will acknowledge that solution as their own. "The silence of Holy Scripture as to Mary's birth and circumstances (less being recorded of her than of John the Baptist) was designed, and for this very purpose, to be an encouragement to the votaries of Mary. God, wishing to countenance and second their pious zeal, omitted the record of those particulars which are now celebrated by her worshippers, that they might have ample room for the full exercise of their piety and for their religious and reasonable invention and propagation of novelties concerning her<sup>5</sup>."

Others, however, affirm that though not in Holy Scripture, yet in the works of the early Fathers of the Church, the mediation of the Virgin is recognized and taught, and prayers to her for blessings from heaven are sanctioned and prescribed. An honest and careful and thorough search into the genuine remains of those early writers, must convince every one, that for at least five hundred years the worship of the Virgin had no place or name in the Church of Christ. And this will be made the subject of some future numbers.

<sup>4</sup> Diptycha Mariana, vol. vii. p. 20.    <sup>5</sup> Dipt. Mar. vol. vii. p. 4.



# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XI.

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ON THE

ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

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- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
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- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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*On the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, A.D. 47.*

THE worship of the Virgin Mary seems to be entirely built upon a belief in the supernatural and miraculous removal of her person, her body as well as her soul, from earth into heaven. This is called in the Roman Church her Assumption; the alleged event being celebrated by an annual festival on the 15th of August. That event is not represented by any one to have taken place subsequently to the time when the Canon of Holy Scripture closes: we are therefore induced to enter now upon an investigation into the evidence on which the belief in so marvellous a transaction rests, having in a preceding number examined the testimony of the Sacred Volume as to the worship of the Virgin; and purposing in some subsequent numbers to carry on our enquiries on the same subject, into the writings of the Fathers of the Church through the first five centuries.

By the Church of England two festivals are observed in commemoration of two events relating to the Virgin Mary as the mother of our Lord, in the titles of both of which her name occurs: one the announcement of our Saviour's incarnation by the message of an angel, called "The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary;" the other "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," called also "The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin." On the first of these solemnities we are taught to pray that as we have known

the incarnation of the Son of God by the message of an Angel, so by his Cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection. On the second we humbly beseech the Divine Majesty, that, as his only Son was presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto God with pure and clean hearts, by the same Jesus Christ our Lord. These days are appointed to commemorate events made known to us on the sure warrant of Holy Scripture; and these prayers are primitive and evangelical; they address God alone, and only through his Son. The second prayer was used in the Church from very early times, and is retained in the Roman Breviary<sup>1</sup>. But instead of the first, which has still a place in the Missal, we now find in the Breviary a prayer neither primitive nor evangelical, which supplicates that those who use it, "believing Mary to be truly the mother of God, may be aided by her intercession with Him<sup>2</sup>."

In the Roman Church, however, feasts are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in which we cannot join; among others, her Immaculate Conception, and her Assumption. By appointing a service<sup>3</sup> and a collect commemorative of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in her mother's womb, and praying that the observance of that solemnity may procure her votaries an increase of peace, the Church of Rome has not only acted without a shadow of countenance from Scripture, or primitive times<sup>4</sup>; but has herself given countenance and sanction, affixed her seal to a novel superstition, against which, at its commencement, so recently as the twelfth century, St. Bernard<sup>5</sup> strongly remonstrated with the monks of Lyons. It is unhappily, moreover, a superstition which has often been defended by arguments, and explained by discussions,

<sup>1</sup> H. 536.<sup>2</sup> V. 496.<sup>3</sup> H. 445.<sup>4</sup> Epiphanius says distinctly, that Mary's birth was not out of the usual course of nature. Paris, 1622, p. 1003, &c.<sup>5</sup> Paris, 1632. Ep. 174. p. 1538.

which have lost sight of all delicacy, and can in no way be profitable to the understanding or the heart.

But of all the institutions in honour of the Virgin, the Feast of the Assumption is regarded by the Roman Church as the head and crown. "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (we are told<sup>6</sup>) is the greatest of all the festivals which the Church celebrates in her honour. It is the consummation of all the other great mysteries by which her life was rendered most wonderful. It is the birth-day of her true greatness and glory, and the crown of all the virtues of her whole life, which we admire singly in her other festivals." Before such a solemn office of praise and worship as we find in the Church of Rome on the 15th of August were ever admitted among the institutions of the religion of the Gospel, its originators and compilers ought to have built upon sure ground: careful too should those persons be now who join in the service, and promote it by the countenance of their example; but more especially should the evidence on which it rests be sifted well by all who undertake to defend and uphold it, lest at last they prove to have loved Rome more than the truth as it is in Jesus. So solemn and marked a religious service in the temple, and at the altar of Him who is the Truth, ought to be founded on Holy Scripture; or at the very least, on undisputed historical evidence, the certain and acknowledged testimony of the Church from the very time of the actual occurrence of the fact on which it is based. Those persons incur a fearful responsibility, who aid in propagating for religious verities the inventions of men.

But what is the doctrine and the practice of the Church of Rome with regard to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary?

In the ritual of the Assumption, it is many

<sup>6</sup> Alban Butler, vol. viii. p. 175.



times reiterated in a brief space, and with a slight variation of expression, that the Virgin was taken up into heaven; and this is asserted not on any general and indefinite notion of her glorified state, but with reference to one specific and single act of divine interposition, performed at a fixed time, effecting her Assumption "to-day." "To-day, Mary the Virgin ascended the heavens. Rejoice, because she is reigning with Christ for ever<sup>7</sup>." "Mary the Virgin is taken up into heaven, to the ethereal chamber, in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne." "The Holy Mother of God has been exalted above the choir of angels, to the heavenly realms." "Come, let us worship the King of kings, to whose ethereal heaven the Virgin-mother was taken up to-day." And that it is her bodily ascension, her corporeal assumption into heaven, and not merely the transit of her soul from mortal life to eternal bliss, which the Roman Church maintains and proclaims by this service, is put beyond doubt by the service itself. In the fourth and sixth reading or lesson, for example, we find these sentences,—"She returned not unto the earth, but is seated in the heavenly tabernacles. How could death devour? how could those below receive? how could corruption invade **THAT BODY** in which life was received? For it a direct, plain, and easy path to heaven was prepared." Indeed, doctors of the Roman Church do not scruple to affirm distinctly, that one object which their Church had in view, was to condemn the heresy of those who maintained that the reception of the Virgin into heaven was the reception of her soul only, and not also of her body<sup>8</sup>.

Now on what authority does this doctrine rest? On what foundation-stone is this religious service built? It rests on no authentic history; it is supported by no

<sup>7</sup> Æst. 595. 603, 604.

<sup>8</sup> Lambecius, book viii. p. 306. See also the Lessons from John of Damascus, now appointed to be read on the day of the Assumption. Æst. 603.

primitive tradition. The most celebrated defenders of these Roman tenets and practices, instead of citing such evidence as would carry some faint semblance of probability, appeal to histories written more than a thousand years after the alleged event, to forged documents, and vague rumours. It is quite surprising to find many of them, instead of establishing by evidence what they say God once did, contenting themselves with asserting his omnipotence in proof that their tenets imply no impossibility; dwelling on the fitness and reasonableness of his working such a miracle in honour of so distinguished a vessel of mercy; and while they assume the fact as granted, substituting in place of argument, glowing and poetical descriptions of what must have been the joy in heaven, and what ought to be the corresponding feelings of mortals on earth. At every step of the inquiry into the merits of this case, that most sound principle, which is lamentably neglected, is brought again and again to our mind,—that as men really and in earnest looking onward to a life after this, we are bound to inquire, not what God could do, nor what man might pronounce it fitting for God to do, but what He has done, and what He has revealed. The moment a Christian writer betakes himself from evidence to possibilities, he deserts the first principles of Christian truth, and throws us back from the sure and certain hope of the Gospel of Christ, to the “beautiful fable” of Socrates, and his exclamation before his judges—“It were better to be there than here, IF these things are true.”

Now should any persons have resolved to adopt implicitly, without allowing any examination, and without admitting any appeal, the faith and present practice of the Church of Rome, they will take no interest in such an inquiry as we are now instituting; and they will find, in the sentiments of St. Bernard, countenance for thus surrendering their judgment and conscience. In the same letter in which, as we have seen, he reproves the monks of Lyons for promoting

the then rising superstition as to the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in her mother's womb, (a superstition sanctioned by a solemn service of the Roman ritual at the present day,) he professes himself to be not "over-scrupulous" in receiving what the Church had taught him as to the Assumption of the Virgin,—“that the day was to be observed with the highest veneration, on which she was taken up from this wicked world.” On the other hand, well-informed members of that Church assure us, that a general desire has gained ground among them, to have this and other similar questions examined without prejudice, and the results of the inquiry to be calmly laid open before them and before the world. To such persons, the following pages may seem worthy of consideration.

We would, however, here observe (before we enter upon the evidence), that the Romanist writers on this subject are by no means agreed as to the time or place of the Virgin's death. While some have maintained that she breathed her last at Ephesus, others affirm that her departure from this world took place at Jerusalem; and as to the time of her death, some have assigned it to the year 48 (that is, about the time when St. Paul and St. Barnabas returned to Antioch<sup>9</sup>), while others refer it to later dates; none, however, fixing it at a period subsequently to the time when the Acts of the Apostles closes. Epiphanius, indeed, towards the end of the fourth century, reminding us that Scripture is wholly and plainly silent on the subject of Mary's death and burial, as well as of her having ever accompanied St. John in his travels or not, without alluding to any known tradition as to her Assumption, thus sums up his sentiments: “I dare to say nothing, but after consideration am silent.” And again he says distinctly, “Her end is not known.”

We now proceed to inquire into the evidence on which so solemn a religious service in honour of

<sup>9</sup> Acts xiv. 26. Epiph. vol. i. p. 1043 and 1003.

the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, as the Church of Rome celebrates every year, is founded; a service, the spirit of which diffuses itself through the public services of the whole year, and is mingled with the daily devotional exercises of individual members of that Church.

In the first place, the Holy Scriptures are utterly and profoundly silent as to the time and the manner, and even the fact of the Virgin Mary's death. We then ask, if such an event, (witnessed, as this legend says, by the Apostles,) so marvellous in itself, and so important in its consequences, had actually taken place, is it within the verge of credibility, that no allusion to it should have been made in that inspired book, which records the actions and journeys and letters of those very Apostles, especially in the case of St. John, to whose filial care she had been committed by our blessed Saviour? Once after the ascension of our Lord, and that within eight days, we find mentioned the name of Mary promiscuously with others; and after that no allusion to her is made in life or in death; and yet no account places her death too late for mention to have been made of it in the Acts of the Apostles.

But, when we have in vain searched the holy volume, what light does primitive antiquity enable us to throw on this subject? The earliest testimony quoted by the supporters of the doctrine is a supposed entry in the Chronicon of Eusebius, written about A.D. 315, opposite the year of our Lord, 48. This is cited by Coccius<sup>1</sup> without any remark, and even Baronius rests the date of Mary's Assumption on this testimony. The words cited are these: "Mary the Virgin, the mother of Jesus, was taken up into heaven, as some write that it had been revealed unto them." Now, for one moment let us suppose that this came from the pen of Eusebius himself; and to what does it amount? A chronologist in the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 403.

fourth century would then have been found to record that some persons (whom he does not name, not even stating when they lived), had written, not what they had heard as a matter of fact, but that a revelation had been made to them of an event having taken place nearly three centuries before the time of the chronologist.

But instead of this passage deserving the name of Eusebius as its author, it is palpably and confessedly an interpolation. Suspicions must have arisen at a remote date as to its genuineness; for many manuscripts, especially the seven in the Vatican, were known to contain nothing of the kind. Indeed, the Roman Catholic editor<sup>2</sup> of the *Chronicon* at Bourdeaux, so far back as A.D. 1604, confesses that he was restrained from expunging it, only because nothing certain as to the Assumption of the Virgin could be substituted in its place! Its spuriousness, however, is no longer a question of dispute or doubt; in 1818 it was excluded from the Milan impression edited by Angelo Maio and John Zohrab; and no trace of it is to be found in the Armenian version, published that same year, with anxious care to secure accuracy, by the monks of the Armenian convent near Venice.

The next authority to which we must refer is a letter<sup>3</sup> said to have been written by Sophronius the presbyter about the commencement of the fifth century. It used to be ascribed to Jerome, but Erasmus referred it to Sophronius. To many this is an unwelcome document. Baronius shows great anxiety to detract from the value of the writer's evidence, whoever he was, sharply criticising him, because he asserts that the faithful in his time still expressed doubts as to the fact of the Virgin's Assumption. It is, however, to be remarked that Baronius, by

<sup>2</sup> P. 566.

<sup>3</sup> The letter is entitled, "Ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione B. M. Virginis." It is found in Jerome's Works, edit. J. Martian, vol. v. p. 82.

assigning to this letter a date still later than the works of Sophronius, adds strength to the arguments for the comparatively recent origin of the tradition. For he says it was written by "an egregious forger of lies," who lived after the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches had been condemned.

Be this as it may; that the letter is of very ancient origin cannot be doubted: and whoever penned it, whether we look to the sensible and pious sentiments contained in it, or to its undisputed antiquity, the following extract cannot fail to be interesting. Whatever other inferences may be drawn from it, it leaves no question, that so far from the tradition regarding the Virgin's Assumption being general in the Church when the writer lived, it was a subject of grave doubt and discussion among Christians, many of whom thought it an act of pious forbearance to abstain altogether from pronouncing any opinion on the subject. "4 Many of our people doubt whether Mary was taken up together with her body, or whether she went away leaving the body. But how, or at what time, or by what persons her holy body was taken hence and to what place removed, or whether it rose again, is not known; although some will maintain that she is already revived, and is clothed with a blessed immortality with Christ in heavenly places. And this very many affirm also of his servant the blessed John the Evangelist (to whom, being a virgin, the Virgin was entrusted by Christ); because in his sepulchre, as it is reported, nothing is found but manna, which also is seen to flow forth. Nevertheless which of these opinions should be thought the more true we doubt. Yet it is better to commit all to God, with whom nothing is impossible, than to wish to define rashly by our own authority any thing which we do not approve of. Because nothing is impossible with God, we do not deny that something of the kind was done

<sup>4</sup> Baronius, Cologne, 1609, vol. i. p. 408. See also Fabricius (Hamburgh, 1804), vol. ix. p. 160.

with regard to the blessed Virgin Mary; although for caution's sake, preserving our faith, we ought with pious desire to think rather than to define inconsiderately what without danger may remain unknown."

This letter, at the very earliest, was not written until the beginning of the fifth century.

Subsequent writers were not wanting to supply what this letter declares to have been, at its own date, unknown, as to the fact, and the manner, and the time of Mary's Assumption, and the persons connected with the transaction. The first authority appealed to in defence of the tradition, is usually cited as a well-known work written by Euthymius, a contemporary of Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem. The earliest author in whose reputed works the passage is found, seems to have been John of Damascus, a monk of Jerusalem, who lived somewhat before the middle of the eighth century. Much doubt exists as to the work from which the passage professes to be taken: the monk does not quote from it as "The history written by Euthymius" nor as "The history concerning Euthymius," but as "The Euthymiac History;" and Lambecius maintains, that it was not an ecclesiastical work written by Euthymius, who died in 472, but a biographical history concerning Euthymius himself, written, as he thinks probable, by Cyril the monk, who died 531. This opinion is combated by Cotelierius—the discussion only thickening the dense mist which involves the whole, from first to last. But whether Euthymius were the author, or the subject of the work, or neither the one nor the other, the work itself is lost; an epitome only survives; and in that abridgment, not a trace of the passage quoted by John of Damascus is found.

That author having represented himself as holding a conversation with the tomb of the Virgin, to which we must again advert, thus appeals to the passage in question: "Ye see, beloved fathers and brethren, what answer the all-gracious tomb makes to us; and, in proof that these

things are so, in the Euthymiac history, the third book, and fortieth chapter, it is thus written, word for word:—

“It has been above said, that the holy Pulcheria built many churches to Christ, at Constantinople. Of these, however, there is one built in Blachernæ, in the beginning of the reign of Marcian of divine memory. Marcian and Pulcheria, therefore, when they had built a venerable temple to the greatly-to-be-celebrated, and most holy mother of God, and ever Virgin Mary, and had decked it with all ornaments, sought her most holy body, which had conceived God. And having sent for Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem, and for the Bishops of Palestine, who were living in the royal city, on account of the synod then held at Chalcedon, they say to them, We hear that there is in Jerusalem, the first and famous church of Mary, mother of God, and ever Virgin, in the garden called Gethsemane, where her body, which bore the Life, was deposited in a coffin. We wish, therefore, her relics to be brought here for the protection of this royal city. But Juvenal answered, In the true and divinely inspired Scripture, indeed, nothing is recorded of the departure of the holy Mary, mother of God: but, from an ancient and most true tradition, we have received, that at the time of her glorious falling asleep, all the holy Apostles, who were going through the world for the salvation of the nations, in a moment of time borne aloft, came together to Jerusalem; and when they were near her, they had a vision of angels, and divine melody of the highest powers was heard; and then with divine and more heavenly glory, she, in an unspeakable manner, delivered her holy soul into the hands of God. But that which had conceived God, being borne with angelic and apostolic psalmody, with funeral rites was deposited in a coffin in Gethsemane. In this place, the chorus and singing of the angels continued for three whole days. But after three days, on the angelic music ceasing, since one of the Apostles had been



absent, and came after the third day, and wished to adore the body that had conceived God, the Apostles who were present opened the coffin; but the body, pure and every way to be praised, they could not at all find. And when they found only those things in which it had been laid out and placed there, and were filled with an ineffable fragrancy proceeding from those things, they shut the coffin. Being astonished at the miraculous mystery, they could form no other thought but that He who had in his own person, deigned to be clothed with flesh, and to be made man of most holy Virgin, and to be born in the flesh, God the Word and Source of Glory, and who after birth had preserved her virginity immaculate, had seen it good, after she had departed from among the living, to honour her uncontaminated and unpolluted body, by a translation before the common and universal resurrection<sup>5</sup>."

This, then, is the account of the Virgin's Assumption NEAREST to the time; and can any thing be more vague, and, in point of evidence, more utterly worthless? It stands thus: a preacher, in the eighth century, refers to a work, (the character of which is unknown, and to that part of the work of which not a line is extant,) in which the writer, near the middle of the sixth century, is said to have referred to a conversation reported to have taken place at Constantinople a hundred years before that writer's time, in which conversation the then Bishop of Jerusalem was said to have informed the Emperor Marcian of an ancient tradition, concerning a miraculous event nearly four hundred years before that bishop's time, namely, that the body of Mary was taken out of the coffin, without the knowledge of those who had deposited it there. Whereas, the primitive and inspired account (recording most minutely the jour-

<sup>5</sup> Jo. Damas; Paris, 1712, vol. ii: p. 875. 877. 881.

neys and proceedings of those very persons, before, and subsequently to, the alleged event, and the letters of others), makes no mention at all of any transaction of the kind; whereas, also, of all the intermediate historians and writers of every character, not one gives the slightest intimation that any rumour of it had ever reached them.

Before we proceed to the next adduced testimony, it may be well to advert to some particulars relative to the sermon said to have been preached by this John of Damascus. The passage occurs in the second of three homilies, on "The sleep of the Virgin," a term generally used by the later Greeks as an equivalent for the Roman word *Assumptio*. The publication of these homilies in Greek and Latin is of late date. Lambecius<sup>6</sup>, A.D. 1655, says, that he was not aware of any one having so published them before his time. We wish, however, to raise no question now as to their genuineness. But the preacher's introduction of this passage into his homily is preceded by a section that deserves the careful weighing of all who would honestly ascertain the real sentiments of the early writers of the Christian Church. It affords a striking example of the manner in which Christian orators used to indulge in addresses and appeals, not only to the spirits of departed men, but even to things which never had life. Here the speaker, in his sermon, addresses the very tomb of Mary, as though it had ears to hear, and an understanding to comprehend; and then he represents the tomb as having a tongue to answer, and as calling forth from the preacher and his congregation a response of admiration and reverence. Such apostrophes as these cannot be too steadily borne in mind, or too carefully weighed, when any argument is drawn from similar salutations offered by ancient Christian orators to saint, or angel, or the Virgin.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. viii. p. 281.

Among other salutations, John of Damascus, if the homily be his, thus addresses the tomb of the Virgin: "Thou, O tomb, of holy things most holy (for I will address thee as a LIVING BEING), where is the much-desired and much-beloved body of the Mother of God?" In this strange dramatic scene the answer of the tomb begins thus: "Why seek ye her in a tomb, who has been taken up on high to the heavenly tabernacles?" In reply to this, the preacher, first deliberating with his audience what reply he should make, thus speaks to the tomb; "Thy grace, indeed, is never-failing and eternal," &c.

By the maintainers of the invocation of saints and angels and the Virgin, many a passage, far more equivocal and indirect and less cogent than this, which a preacher here addresses to stone and earth, is adduced now to prove, that saints and martyrs and angels and the Virgin were invoked by primitive worshippers.

Of the lessons appointed by the Church of Rome for the Feast of the Assumption, to be read to believers assembled in God's house of prayer, three are selected and taken entirely from this very oration of John of Damascus.

Le Quien<sup>7</sup>, the editor of the works of John of Damascus, offers some very interesting remarks bearing immediately on the agitated question, as to the first institution of the Feast of the Assumption, as well as on the tradition itself. He infers from the words of Modestus, patriarch of Jerusalem, that scarcely any preachers before him had addressed their congregations on the departure of the Virgin out of this life; he thinks that the Feast of the Assumption was, at the commencement of the seventh century, only recently instituted. While all later writers affirm, that the Virgin was buried in the valley of Jehoshaphat, Le Quien observes, that this could not have been known to Jerome, who passed a great part of his life

<sup>7</sup> Le Quien refers to earlier homilies on the *Dormitio Virginis*, p. 857.

in Bethlehem, and yet preserves a total silence on the subject; though, in his "Epitaph on Paula," he enumerates all the places in Palestine distinguished by any remarkable event. Neither, he adds, could it have been known to Epiphanius, who, though he lived long in Palestine, yet declares that nothing was known as to the death or burial of the Virgin.

Again, in his criticism upon the writings falsely attributed to Melito<sup>8</sup> (their author being, on that account, generally referred to as the Pseudo-Melito), Le Quien observes, that since that author says many unworthy things of the Virgin (such, for example, as her great fear when death approached of being exposed to the wiles of Satan), the work was probably written before the council of Ephesus (*i. e.* A.D. 449); alleging this remarkable reason, that "after that time, there BEGAN to be entertained, as was right, not only in the east, but also in the west, a far better estimate of the Mother of God." Could any one urge a stronger proof that the worship of the Virgin Mary was neither apostolical nor primitive?

The same editor, Le Quien, insinuates the possibility of Juvenal (whose character he makes no scruple to stigmatize) having invented the whole story, in order, for his own sinister purpose, to deceive Marcian and Pulcheria; just, he says, as Juvenal forged certain writings for the purpose of securing to himself the primacy of Jerusalem,—a crime laid to his charge also by Leo the Great, in his letter to Maximus, bishop of Antioch<sup>9</sup>.

But the maintainers of the story of the Virgin's Assumption refer us with much confidence to the works of Gregory of Tours, who died at the very close of the sixth century, A.D. 595. On his testimony we need add little to the comments of his own

<sup>8</sup> Melito himself was Bishop of Sardis in the second century.

<sup>9</sup> P. 379. See also Leo's Works, vol. i. p. 1215, Epist. cxix. where we still find the charge referred to by Le Quien.

editor, one of the Benedictines. In his chapter "On the Apostles and the blessed Virgin," having referred to the ascension of our blessed Saviour, this Gregory thus proceeds: "At length the course of this life having been fulfilled by the blessed Mary, when she was now called from the world, all the Apostles were gathered together from every region to her house; and when they heard that she was to be taken from the world, they watched with her together. The Lord Jesus then came with his angels, and receiving her soul, delivered it to Michael the archangel, and withdrew. And at the dawn, the Apostles took up her body, with the couch, and placed it in a tomb, and guarded it, waiting for the arrival of the Lord. And, behold! again the Lord stood by them, and the holy corpse, taken up in a cloud, He ordered to be carried away into Paradise; where now, having resumed her soul, exulting with her elect, she is enjoying the good things of eternity, which will never end<sup>1</sup>."

On this statement of Gregory of Tours, his Benedictine editor makes these remarks:—"What Gregory here relates concerning the death of the blessed Virgin, and its circumstances, beyond doubt he drew from that book of the Pseudo-Melito, concerning the removal of the blessed Virgin, which is classed by Pope Gelasius among the apocryphal books, and which is published in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*. Now that she died at Ephesus, is the opinion of learned men; but no one before Gregory of Tours is found to have asserted in express words the resurrection of the blessed Mary, and the Assumption of her body, and also her soul into heaven. Nevertheless, this opinion not long after prevailed in Gaul, so that it was even introduced into the Liturgy. Yet the Roman Sacramentary of St. Gregory contains nothing of the kind." This editor then refers to several previous authors, among others to Adamnanus on Holy Places, to

<sup>1</sup> Greg. Tur., Paris, 1699, p. 724.

whose sentiments on the subject before us, he adverts in these words: "Of the sepulchre of the blessed Virgin Mary, which was shown near Jerusalem, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, he thus speaks,—'In which sepulchre being entombed she rested. But as to the same sepulchre—in what way, or at what time, or by what persons her holy corpse was removed, or else in what place she is waiting for the resurrection, no one as it is reported, can know for certain.'"

On these passages from Gregory of Tours, and his annotator, we would briefly remark,

That this Gregory is the first known to have asserted the Assumption of the Virgin, body and soul, as it is now held in the Roman Church;

That this account he drew from a forged work by one who is called the False Melito, the very work which just a century before (A.D. 494) the Roman Council, with Pope Gelasius at its head, denounced as apocryphal, and not to be read by the faithful, styling it "The book called the *Transitus*, that is, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin<sup>2</sup>;"

And that only after the time of this Gregory, the service of the Assumption crept into the Liturgy; and that there was nothing like the account of Gregory of Tours in the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great. To this latter point we shall have occasion again to advert.

Another authority to which the writers on the Assumption of the Virgin appeal, is Nicephorus Callistus, who at the end of the thirteenth, or beginning of the fourteenth century dedicated his work to Andronicus Palæologus. This Nicephorus was patriarch of Constantinople about the reign of our Edward I. or Edward II., and therefore cannot be quoted in any sense of the word as an ancient author writing on the events of the primitive ages; and yet the manner of citing him by Roman Catholic writers would lead us to

<sup>2</sup> P. 1264.

suppose that he was a person to whose evidence on early ecclesiastical affairs we ought now to defer. His account is as follows<sup>3</sup> :—

“In the fifth year of Claudius, the Virgin, at the age of 59, was made acquainted with her approaching death. Christ himself then descended from heaven, with a countless multitude, to take up the soul of his mother, summoning his disciples, by thunder and storm, from all parts of the world. The Virgin then bade Peter first, and afterwards the rest of the Apostles, to come with burning torches. The Apostles surrounded her bed, and an outpouring of miracles flowed forth. The blind beheld the sun, the deaf heard, the lame walked, and every disease fled away. The Apostles and others sang as the body was borne from Sion to Gethsemane, angels preceding, surrounding, and following it. A wonderful thing then took place<sup>4</sup>. The Jews were indignant and enraged; and one, more desperately bold than the rest, rushed forward, intending to throw down the holy corpse to the ground. Vengeance was not tardy, for his hands were cut off from his arms. The procession stopped; and at the command of Peter, on the man shedding tears of penitence, his hands were joined on again, and were restored whole. At Gethsemane she was put into a tomb, but her Son translated her to the divine habitation.”

Nicephorus then refers to Juvenal, as the authority on which the tradition was received, that the Apostles opened the coffin to enable St. Thomas, the one stated to have been absent, to embrace the body; and he

<sup>3</sup> Nicephorus, Paris, 1630, vol. i. p. 168, lib. ii. c. 21. Baronius also refers to lib. xv. c. 14.

<sup>4</sup> This tradition seems to have been much referred to at the time just preceding our English Reformation. In a volume called “The Hours of the most Blessed Mary, according to the legitimate rite of the Church of Salisbury,” Paris, 1526, the frontispiece gives an exact representation of the story at the moment of the Jew’s hands being cut off. They are severed at the wrists and lying on the coffin, on which also his arms are resting. In the sky, the Virgin appears, between the Father and the Son, the dove being seen above her.

proceeds to describe the personal appearance and looks of the Virgin.

It is unnecessary to dwell on such evidence as this; and yet on this evidence, one of the most solemn religious festivals in the Church of Rome, the crown and consummation of others, is built. Palpably it is not within the verge of credibility, that had such an event as the Virgin Mary's Assumption, an event so miraculous in its nature, and so important in its consequences, taken place either under the extraordinary circumstances which now envelope the tradition, or under any combination of circumstances whatever, there would have been a total silence respecting it in Holy Scripture; that the writers of the first four centuries should never have shown themselves cognizant of such an event; that the first writer who alluded to any thing of the kind, should have lived in the middle of the fifth century, or later; and that even he should have declared, in a letter to his contemporaries, that the subject was one on which many doubts were entertained; and that he himself would not deny it, not because it rested on probable evidence, but because nothing is impossible with God. Can any confidence, moreover, be placed in the relation of a writer in the middle of the sixth century, as to a tradition of what an archbishop, attending the Council of Chalcedon, had told the emperor at Constantinople, concerning a tradition of what was said to have happened nearly four hundred years before? Whereas, in the Acts of that Council, not the faintest trace is found of any allusion to the supposed fact or the alleged tradition; though the transactions of that Council, in many of its most minute details, are recorded; and though its discussions brought the name and circumstances of the Virgin Mary continually, and with most lively interest, before the minds of all who attended it. And what dependence can be placed on the bare statement of a bishop of France, at the very end of the sixth century, who is the first to assert that the Virgin Mary was taken, body and soul,



into heaven, and whom his own Roman Catholic editor and annotator professedly declares to have drawn his account from the forged work of one, whose very name proclaims the worthlessness of his testimony, the Pseudo-Melito; the very work, too, which Pope Gelasius and the Roman Council pronounced, a century before, to be apocryphal, and which they forbade Christians to read.

But we must not leave the present subject of investigation, without adverting to an argument which is put forth in the present day with as much apparent confidence in its conclusiveness, as if it had undergone the most severe test, and been acknowledged to be valid; whereas, its utter worthlessness, in point of evidence, a very few words would demonstrate. Since, however, the nature of the evidence in question affects many points of interest beyond the single subject of our present inquiry, the time will not be lost which we may now give to a fuller elucidation of the point at issue.

The persons who put forth the argument to which we refer, assert that all our reasonings drawn from the total silence of the Fathers of the first five centuries, both Greek and Latin, as to the Assumption of the Virgin, with respect either to their own knowledge and belief, or to the practice of the Christian Church in their times, are worth nothing, so long as it can be shown that the festival of the Assumption was celebrated by the Church of Rome before the close of the fifth century; and this they maintain to be proved by our finding that festival in the Calendars and Sacramentaries, or service-books of those days. Especially, it is urged, is this fact proved by the Sacramentaries of Gregory the Great, who died A.D. 604, and of Pope Gelasius, who preceded him by a century, and also by what has been called "The Roman Calendar, of the fourth, or the early part of the fifth century, published by Martene."

How utterly valueless, nay worse, how deceitful and misleading, are any conclusions drawn from these sources, is known to every one at all conversant with the subject, and is shown by the very books themselves, which are cited as depositaries of such evidence.

In the first place, we would observe, that we by no means dispute the fact, either that Gregory and Gelasius themselves wrote, or, at least, superintended and sanctioned each a Sacramentary, containing, as our Calendars and Liturgy contain, the Festival days, with the Collects, Gospels, &c. But that additions were made to these Sacramentaries or Calendars from time to time, is not only capable of proof by ourselves, but has been long acknowledged and asserted, and maintained and reasoned upon, by the best Roman ritualists. Take, for example, Muratori himself, in his preface to the Sacramentary of Gelasius. Having urged what he regards as conclusive arguments, that the work is correctly attributed to that pope, he proceeds to give an answer to objections which had been made to his view; an answer which recognizes the only correct mode of estimating the value of such evidence as these Sacramentaries and old Calendars contain on any subject to which it can be applied. "But, it is said, additions were made to the Sacramentary itself, after the time of Gelasius! We by no means, deny it. But this is no reason why St. Gelasius should not be called its author. Why even the very Liturgy of Gregory is not denied to be his, merely because other prayers, and festivals, and rites were introduced into it after St. Gregory's time." Muratori then refers to certain feasts found in his time in the manuscripts of the Sacramentary of Gelasius, which were festivals of the Gallican and not the Roman Church; the appearance therefore of which proves that the document did not continue as Gelasius left it. He adds, "In it is also found the Mass for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross,

a feast which, as all learned men know (*ut omnes eruditi norunt*), was instituted after the time of *Gelasius*." This, he says, shows that the manuscript in question was written after the time of *Gelasius*; and since in the time of *Charlemagne* the *Gallican Liturgy* was suppressed and the *Roman* substituted, he concludes that the manuscript was written before *A.D. 800*<sup>5</sup>. We need scarcely to remark that the appearance of the *Assumption* as a festival of the *Roman Church* in a *Calendar* at the close of the eighth century, cannot affect our question as to the worship of the *Virgin* through the first four centuries.

The *Calendar* published by *Martene*, as a *Roman Calendar* of the end of the fourth or the commencement of the fifth century, needs not detain us long. *Martene* found two manuscripts which he judged to be of that age; one of which was, as they say (*ut perhibent*), given to a convent by *Charlemagne*. But of the dependence to be placed on his judgment and experience in such matters we know nothing; and the value of the testimony depends wholly on the age, not only of the manuscript itself generally, but also of the very entry about which any question is entertained. We have seen that the insertion of the *Virgin's Assumption* into the *Chronicon* of *Eusebius* is now no longer denied to be spurious; and in those days when *Calendars* were not, as *Almanacs* are now, published annually, newly instituted feasts would naturally be inserted in old *Calendars*. But, after all, it is merely *Martene's* conjecture<sup>6</sup> that these manuscripts contained the *Roman Calendar* at all, whatever were their age; for neither of them was prefaced by any heading or title to that effect. The high antiquity fixed by *Martene* on those manuscripts cannot be maintained without setting at nought the deliberately pronounced judgment of critics and divines, of whose authority no *Roman Catholic* will speak lightly. For they

<sup>5</sup> *Murator*, *De Rebus Liturgicis*, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> *Thesaur. Anec.* vol. v. p. 76.

have both the feast of Hypapante on the 2nd of February, whereas Baronius<sup>7</sup> affirms that that feast was not observed till the fifteenth year of the Emperor Justinian, which was A.D. 542, nearly a century and a half later than the date assigned to these insulated manuscripts by Martene.

But the testimony to which Christians are now not only confidently but triumphantly referred for demonstration of the fact, that the Feast of the Assumption is older than the time of Gregory the Great, is the Sacramentary of that pontiff, in which it is found August 15, the day now observed as that festival in the Church of Rome. This question of the antiquity of the festivals does not involve merely a dry matter of fact, but has an immediate bearing on a most important and interesting subject, no less than the genuine or spurious character of many works attributed to the Fathers of the early Church. We would illustrate our meaning by a plain example. If it is clearly established that the festival of Hypapante, called also Simeon and Anna, and in more recent times the Purification, was not instituted till the fifteenth year of Justinian, A.D. 542; a Homily ascribed to Methodius, who lived in the third century, professing to have been preached on that festival, is proved by the same argument to be supposititious.

But, in our inquiry into the degree of dependence which may be placed on the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great, as an historical document to be employed in verifying dates, we must observe, in the first place, that many centuries ago, at the close of the eighth, or the beginning of the ninth century, so great uncertainty was felt as to what was the genuine work of Gregory, and what were additions and interpolations made to it subsequently to his time, that three divines<sup>8</sup> were appointed to distinguish the genuine from the

<sup>7</sup> Baronius; Paris, 1607, p. 57. Feb. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Du Pin, "Auteurs Eccles." Mons, 1681, vol. v. p. 143.

spurious part. But they could not agree as to what had been added; and naturally, if the manuscripts to which they had access did not agree. These three divines were Rodrade, a monk of Tours; Alcuin, otherwise called Albin, who was Charlemagne's master, and Grimoldas the abbot. The labours of the latter were published by Pamelius<sup>9</sup> nearly three centuries ago. Grimoldas maintained, that neither the festival of the Virgin's Nativity nor the Assumption was in Gregory's Sacramentary, into which, as we have already seen (according to Muratori's assertion), festivals, as well as prayers and rites, were inserted since Gregory's time. Indeed Muratori, though pleading for the antiquity of the festival, distinctly says, that Gregory had not inserted it himself in his Sacramentary.

Since that time, Menard published another copy of Gregory's Sacramentary, which contained the festivals of St. Prix<sup>1</sup>, or Præjectus, who died about A. D. 672, that is, sixty-eight years after Gregory's death, and of Leo II., who died twelve years still later than Prix. But it is a remarkable fact that, were all other proofs wanting, the very edition<sup>1</sup> to which we are now referred, bears in its forehead a palpably self-evident demonstration, that whoever rests on Gregory's Sacramentary as chronological evidence, builds on nothing that can stand the test of truth. For on IV. Idus Mart., the day now observed by the Church of Rome as the anniversary of Gregory's death, the very Sacramentary to which appeal is now made, contains the service for the annual festival of Gregory himself, including collects praying for the benefit of his intercession. That is, the self-same evidence which is now cited to prove the Feast of the Assumption to have been celebrated before Gregory's death, proves, with equal satisfaction, that the solemnities on the anniversaries of that pope's death were celebrated, and

<sup>9</sup> Pamelius; Cologne, 1571, vol. ii. p. 336. 388.

<sup>1</sup> Acta Sanct. vol. ii. p. 629.

that he was a canonized saint<sup>2</sup>, and that the efficacy of his intercession in heaven was prayed for while he himself was still alive bodily on earth, discharging his office as the sovereign pontiff of Rome.

And thus the Assumption of the Virgin, tried by Holy Scripture, by the testimony of the early Church, and on the very evidence proffered in its support by its advocates, proves to be in truth "a fond thing, vainly invented," built on no ground which reason or faith can rest their foot upon.

<sup>2</sup> Greg. Paris, 1705, p. 30.

THE END.

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XII.

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ON THE  
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.  
EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH  
AGAINST IT.



LONDON:

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
- XII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- XIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XIV. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XV. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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*On the Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the Early Church against it.*

BEFORE we proceed to examine the evidence concerning the worship of the Virgin Mary, as it is supplied by the works of the Fathers of the primitive Church, we would repeat on this subject the sentiments which we professed, before we entered on the corresponding inquiry with reference to the invocation of saints and angels. We are led, then, to examine the evidence of Christian antiquity not by any misgiving, lest the testimony of Scripture on the point might appear defective or doubtful; far less by any idea of God's word needing the support of man's suffrage. On the contrary, the voice of God in his revealed word gives to us no faint or uncertain sound, as it warns us against offering prayers, or any religious worship, or any invocation to the Virgin Mary; and it is a fixed principle with all right-minded Christians, that wherever God's written word is clear and certain, no human evidence can be weighed against it. But in testing the soundness of our interpretation of that word, the works of the earliest writers of the Church are most truly valuable; and in our investigation

of the prevalence of any doctrine and practice of primitive times, those ancient records are indispensable.

Now let us here, too, for argument's sake, suppose, that instead of the oracles of God having spoken, as we have seen, clearly and certainly on this point, the question had been left in Scripture an open question; then what evidence would be deducible from the writings of the primitive Church as to the worship of the Virgin Mary? What testimony do the first ages, after the canon of Scripture is closed, bear upon this point? When we, of the Church of England, religiously abstain from presenting any address in the nature of prayer, or supplication, entreaty, request, or invocation of whatever kind, and from acts of religious worship and praise to the Virgin, are we, or are we not, treading in the steps of the first Christians, and adhering to the very pattern which they set? And do the members of the Church of Rome by such acts of worship directed to the Virgin Mary, as we find in their authorized and appointed liturgies, and in their works of private devotions, or do they not, depart as far and as decidedly from the model of primitive Christianity, as they do from the plain sense of Holy Scripture?

The result of a careful examination of the body of Christian writers is an entire assurance, that, at the least, through the first five centuries, the worship of the Virgin now insisted upon by the decrees of the Council of Trent, prescribed by the Roman ritual, and actually practised in the Church of Rome, had neither name, nor place, nor existence among Christians. No single remark of any of these writers leads us to infer that the worship of the Virgin was known in their times. On the contrary, their silence, and that often on occasions when their silence is irreconcilable with their possessing knowledge on the subject, proves them to have been unconscious of any such doctrine and practice as now prevail in the

Church of Rome. But besides this, which may be called negative evidence, the principles which they habitually maintain, and the sentiments with which their works abound, are utterly inconsistent with such belief and practice. This might be exemplified in other cases, but more especially is it forced on our notice when we find many of the most venerable Fathers of the Church, in their comments on the passages of Scripture which record the actions of the Virgin, directly<sup>1</sup> charging her with errors and failings, altogether incompatible with those views of her perfections, which the doctrines of the Church of Rome put before us. It is also worthy of remark, that the spurious writings ascribed to the Fathers<sup>2</sup>, of a date not more remote at furthest than the seventh century, abound with ascriptions of power, and mercy, and glory to the Virgin, with declarations of implicit belief in her influence and intercession, and with prayers to her for temporal and spiritual blessings; while for any traces of such, the genuine works of the same Fathers will be searched in vain.

Among those, indeed, who adhere to the Tridentine confession of faith, there are some on whom such an investigation, as we are now instituting, would have no influence. The sentiments of Huet, the Roman Catholic commentator and bishop, wherever they are adopted, would set aside such inquiries altogether. His words in his dissertations on Origen, are of far wider application than the immediate occasion on which he used them: "That the blessed Mary never conceived any sin in herself is, in the present day, an established principle in the Church, and confirmed by the Council of Trent; in which it

<sup>1</sup> This will hereafter be shown to be the case with Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Cyril of Alexandria.

<sup>2</sup> This we find exemplified in the spurious works of Ignatius, Methodius, Athanasius, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Gregory of Nazianzum, Ephraim Syrus, Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Pope Leo, &c.

is our duty to acquiesce, rather than in the dicta of the ancients, should any of them appear to think otherwise, among whom must be numbered Origen<sup>3</sup>.”

In entering upon our present inquiry; we take for granted that the reader is open to conviction, desirous of arriving at the truth, and as one efficient means of attaining it, ready to sift honestly and patiently the evidence of the primitive Church.

### *Ancient Creeds.*

At this stage of our inquiry it will not be out of place to observe, that in the most ancient creeds there is no intimation whatever of any idea being entertained when they were framed, as to the posthumous exaltation of the Virgin, her assumption into heaven, the invocation of her name, reliance on her merits and patronage, or belief in her intercession. Many creeds are recorded in the early writers, in which the incarnation of the Son of God is an article invariably inserted, and in some cases largely dwelt upon; but the phrases employed refer to no dignity of his mother's nature, no mediatorial office assigned to her, no power granted to her of benefiting mankind, nor any adoration of her name. The three creeds now usually employed in the Church, afford conjointly a fair specimen of the language and sentiments of the rest; some of which mention the Virgin Mary by name, while others do not allude to her further than does St. Paul, “God sent forth his Son made of a woman<sup>4</sup>.” “He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary<sup>5</sup>.” “He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary<sup>6</sup>.” “God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the worlds, and Man of the substance of his mother, born in the world<sup>7</sup>.” Thus some of the

<sup>3</sup> Origen, vol. iv. part ii. p. 156, Paris, 1733.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iv. 4.    <sup>5</sup> Apostles' Creed.    <sup>6</sup> Nicene.    <sup>7</sup> Athanasian.

ancient creeds say, "who was incarnate and made man," without any reference to his mother; others, "born of a Virgin<sup>8</sup>;" others, "born of Mary;" others, "born of the Virgin Mary<sup>9</sup>;" not one referring to her, except as the mother of the Incarnate Word, not one alluding at all to her dignity, her authority, or her present state. In this respect they all essentially differ from the "creed of Pope Pius IV.," to the belief in the truth of which ministers of the Church of Rome are bound, as containing articles of faith, without which there is no salvation<sup>1</sup>. That Creed not only announces that the saints reigning with Christ are to be worshipped, but while it asserts generally that due honour and worship must be paid to other saints, it joins, in a marked manner, the images of "Christ and the Virgin Mary" together, in contradistinction to the others. Of such things as these there is no more a trace to be found in any of the ancient creeds, than in the Holy Scripture itself.

### *Evidence of Primitive Christian Writers.*

For a brief notice of the times, the circumstances, and the works of the Fathers, which are cited in the course of our present inquiry, down to the middle of the fourth century, the reader is referred to a former Tract (No. 6 and 7 of this Series), in which the evidence of primitive writers is examined as to the worship of saints and angels. Of those authors who flourished after Athanasius, similar short notices will be prefixed to their testimonies upon the subject under consideration.

### *The Apostolic Fathers<sup>2</sup>.*

Of the remains of those five writers who are usually

<sup>8</sup> Irenæus, lib. i. c. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian, De Præscr. c. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Catechism, ad Parachos, Lugduni, 1686, p. 521.

<sup>2</sup> Antwerp, 1698.

called Apostolic Fathers, we have no means of affixing the date to each with any confidence in its accuracy. No reasonable doubt, however, is entertained that they were all in existence long before the Council of Nice, A.D. 325.

1. In the Epistle of St. Barnabas, which gives directions on the subject of prayer, no mention is made of the Virgin Mary.

2. In the Shepherd of Hermas, while the same silence is observed with regard to the Virgin, the Son of God is declared to be the GATE, and THE ONLY WAY TO GOD<sup>3</sup>, in language which contrasts itself very strongly with the prayers of modern Rome, which address Mary as the "Gate of heaven," and implores her to be "our way to God."

3. Clement, bishop of Rome. The writings of this primitive father become perhaps the more interesting in our present inquiry, as containing the sentiments of one of the earliest bishops of that Church, whose present belief and practice we are now testing by the evidence of primitive times. And so far from a single word occurring which might lead us to suppose that this Clement was cognizant of any invocation of the Virgin, or any reliance on her intercession prevailing among Christians, his evidence against it is more than negative. For though he speaks of angels and of holy men of old who pleased God, such as Enoch, Abraham, David, Elijah, and Job; though he bids us think of St. Peter and St. Paul, looking to them with reverence and gratitude, in order that we may imitate their good examples; he never alludes to the Virgin Mary; and even when he speaks of our blessed Lord having descended from Abraham according to the flesh, he makes no mention of that daughter of Abraham of whom the Christ was born.

4. In St. Ignatius we find no trace of any invocation of the Virgin, or of any dependence on her merits.

<sup>3</sup> Sim. ix. sect. 12.

This early martyr speaks of the twofold nature of Christ again and again. Thus, he says, "there is one physician both of a corporeal and of a spiritual nature; begotten and not begotten; God in the flesh; true life in death; both from Mary and from God<sup>4</sup>." "Our physician is the only true God, ungenerated and unapproachable, the Lord of all things, the Father and Generator of the only-begotten Son. We have also for our physician, our Lord God Jesus Christ, who was before the world, the only-begotten Son and the Word, but also afterwards Man of the Virgin Mary, for the Word was made flesh<sup>5</sup>." "Son of God, and Son of Man according to the flesh of the seed of David."

Unhappily we are thus early in our inquiry compelled to advert to the unjustifiable expedient of quoting for evidence spurious passages, and urging them with all confidence, in support of a favourite doctrine. Alphonsus Liguori, canonized by the present Pope in 1839, thus quotes Ignatius, in defence of the present Roman doctrine concerning the Virgin's attributes and saving power:

"Before Bonaventura, St. Ignatius had pronounced that a sinner can be saved ONLY by having recourse to the blessed Virgin, whose INFINITE mercy obtains salvation for those who would be condemned by infinite justice. Some pretend that the text is not taken from Ignatius, but we know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to him<sup>6</sup>."

After what we have before said, it is scarcely necessary to add, that in no one of the works of St. Ignatius can any allusion to such a position be discovered; and though Liguori says, "We know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to Ignatius," yet not only has the work of that father on the life and character of Ignatius, but also every other part of his works, been carefully and repeatedly searched for any allusion

<sup>4</sup> Epist. to Ephes. p 13.

<sup>5</sup> P. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Dublin, 1843, p. 190.



to such a statement, but not the slightest trace can be discovered. In the course of our present investigation, we shall too often be reminded of the recklessness and eager anxiety with which the system of quoting spurious works as genuine, and of referring to works which cannot be discovered, has been pursued.

5. In St. Polycarp, usually ranked as the last of the Apostolic Fathers, we find no allusion to the merits or intercession of Mary.

In bringing to a close this brief reference to the Apostolic Fathers, the same question offers itself to us under different circumstances, but with great cogency under all. If the doctrine and practice of worshipping the Virgin as Roman Catholics now do, if the doctrine of her mediatorial office, if the practice of praying to her even for her intercession, if reliance on her power, and influence, and merits had been known and acted upon by the Apostles themselves, and those who were successors or disciples of the Apostles, would not some plain unequivocal indications of it appear in such writings as these, in which much is said of prayer, and repeated reference is made to the incarnation of the Son of God? Does it accord with common sense and ordinary experience that there should be in these writings a profound and total silence on the subject of invoking the Virgin Mary for her good offices, if invocation addressed to the Virgin had been known, approved, and practised in the primitive Church?

*Justin Martyr, A.D. 150.*

Justin Martyr refers to the Virgin Mary in her character as the mother of our Lord<sup>8</sup>; but we discover no trace of any notion of her power or influence, of any invocation addressed to her, of any thought of her merits to be pleaded in our behalf, or of any regard to her as a mediator and intercessor; we find no epithet

<sup>7</sup> Ed. Paris, 1742.

<sup>8</sup> Trypho, sect. 100, p. 195.

expressive of honour, dignity, or exaltation beyond what we, as members of the Church of England, habitually use ourselves. "He therefore calls himself the Son of Man, either because of his birth of a virgin, who was of the race of David and Jacob, and Isaac and Abraham; or because Abraham himself was the father of those persons enumerated, from whom Mary drew her origin." And a little below he adds—"For Eve being a virgin, and uncorrupt, having received the word from the serpent, brought forth transgression and death; but Mary, the Virgin, having received faith and joy (on the angel Gabriel announcing to her the glad tidings that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her), answered, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' And of her was He born of whom we have shown that so many Scriptures have been spoken; He by whom God destroys the serpent, and angels and men resembling [the serpent]; but works a rescue from death for such as repent of evil and believe in Him." In another place he says, "According to the command of God, Joseph, taking Him together with Mary, went into Egypt."

In the volume containing Justin's works are "Questions and Answers to the Orthodox," which, as it is agreed on all sides, are not his, but the productions of a later hand. The arguments appear strong, which assign them to a Syrian Christian as their author, who lived in the fifth century or even later. Among the doubts and difficulties and objections which are made and answered in these Questions, this inquiry is proposed, "How could Christ be free from blame, who so often set at nought his parents?" The answer is, "He did not set his mother at nought; He honoured her in deed, and would not hurt her by his words<sup>9</sup>." But to this the respondent adds, that Christ chiefly honoured Mary in that view of her maternal character, under which all who heard the

<sup>9</sup> Ques. 136, p. 500.

word of God and kept it were his brothers, and sisters, and mother; and that she who surpassed all women in virtue was therefore chosen to be the mother of the Saviour.

*Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus.*

In the same volume with the works of Justin Martyr, the Benedictines have published the remains of these three learned Christians of the second century; and in defence of some doctrines of the Roman Church, those editors appeal to the works of each of these authors separately.

Tatian, by birth an Assyrian, and pupil of Justin Martyr, led a life marked beyond others by severe austerity. One work of his, "An Address to the Greeks," remains to the present time, in which he exposes the follies and immoral tendencies of their mythology. In the course of his argument, mentioning by name many of the females whom the Greek poets had celebrated, he compares them with the modest, chaste, and retired habits of Christian virgins<sup>1</sup>, who, he says, as they are occupied with their distaff, speak of heavenly things, and of what they learn from God's oracles, far more admirably than Sappho could sing her immoral strains. The question forces itself on our mind, as we read such portions of his address as these, Could a Christian writer have here abstained from speaking of the Virgin Mary, if she had been the same object of his invocation, the same source of his hope, the same theme of his praise as she now is with her worshippers in the Roman communion? Could he have passed her by unnamed, without alluding to her honour on earth, or her exaltation to heaven, and her influence there?

In the two other authors, we find no reference made to the Virgin Mary<sup>2</sup>. Theophilus, indeed, speaks of

<sup>1</sup> C. 33, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. ii. c. 22.

“God the Word begotten from everlasting of the Father;” and it is remarkable that in his translation of the third chapter of Genesis, he applies the promise of bruising the serpent’s head, not to the woman, as the Roman version applies it, but to her seed.

*St. Irenæus, A.D. 180.*

Next to Justin, who sealed his faith by his blood, about A.D. 165, we must examine the evidence of St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons. Of his works a very small proportion is known to survive in the original Greek; and we must avail ourselves of the nervous, but inelegant Latin translation, corrupt and imperfect in many parts as it unfortunately is. One passage<sup>3</sup> in Irenæus, closely resembling a passage we have just quoted from Justin Martyr, is cited by Bellarmin and others, as justifying the invocation of the Virgin Mary; but it is entirely beside the mark. The passage is rendered word for word: “For as that one, (Eve,) by the discourse of an angel, was seduced to fly from God, running counter to his word, so also this one, (Mary,) by the discourse of an angel, received the glad tidings, that she should bear God. And as that one was seduced to fly from God, in like manner also this one was persuaded to obey God; so that of the virgin Eve the Virgin Mary might become the advocate; and as the human race was BOUND to death by a virgin, it MIGHT BE LOOSED by a virgin, a virgin’s disobedience<sup>4</sup> being disposed of in an equal scale by a virgin’s obedience.” Cardinal Bellarmin stops short at the word advocate, and exclaims, “What can be clearer?”

Now in whatever sense Irenæus may be supposed to have employed the Greek word here rendered in the Latin version *advocata*, it is difficult to see how the circumstance of Mary becoming the advocate of

<sup>3</sup> Lib. v. c. 19, p. 316.

<sup>4</sup> The closing sentence is imperfect.

Eve, who so many generations before Mary's birth had been removed to the other world, can bear upon the question, whether it is lawful for a Christian now dwelling on earth to invoke the Virgin Mary.

But in our own days another most startling sense is applied to the closing words of Irenæus in the same paragraph. The comment being founded on unquestionably an untenable<sup>5</sup> reading, to prove the unsoundness of the reading would have been enough, had not the interpretation now given to the passage supplied a palpable instance of the deplorable extent to which the doctrine of the Virgin's merits as affecting man's salvation is carried by our contemporaries. We shall scarcely find even in Bonaventura or the Bernardines a more entire sacrifice of Christian truth to the theory of the Virgin's exaltation and prerogatives. The writer to whom we refer having maintained that the words "Death by Eve, Life by Mary," are frequently found in the Fathers, and "imply that the Virgin had more than a mechanical share in the world's redemption," afterwards proceeds to say, "Now observe the very strong language of St. Irenæus: *Quemadmodum astrictum est morti genus humanum per Virginem, SALVATUR per Virginem, æquâ lance disposita virginalis inobedientia per virginalem obedientiam.* That is in common parlance, 'THE MERITS OF MARY WERE SO GREAT AS TO COUNTERBALANCE THE SIN OF EVE!'"

We need not dwell on so monstrous and shocking a perversion of the meaning of Irenæus as this would have been, even had the reading been *salvatur*, because beyond all doubt the proper reading is *solvatur*. Whether the passage be tried by the external evidence of printed editions from a date further back than three hundred years; or of the best manuscripts, or of ancient quotations; or by the internal evidence of what the sense requires, and of the sentiments and language of Irenæus in other parts of his work, the

<sup>5</sup> Dublin Review, June, 1844.

old reading *solvatur* must be restored. The idea present to the mind of Irenæus, and repeatedly embodied by him in words is, that the KNOT by which Eve's unfaithfulness<sup>6</sup> BOUND the human race was LOOSED by the Virgin's faithfulness in becoming the mother of the Saviour. The old and true reading here preserves the correlativeness of the terms of the passage; the new reading, first introduced by Grabe in 1702, at once destroys it.

How far Irenæus was from thus exalting Mary into a Saviour, whose merits counterbalanced Eve's sin in yielding to Satan, and involving mankind in her fall, is evident to any one who reads his remains. In referring to the mother of our Lord, he speaks of "Mary" or "the Virgin," or "Mary, who hitherto was a virgin," without any adjunct or term of reverence, never alluding either to her influence with God, or to any practice among Christians of invoking her. Of the Incarnation he thus speaks: "This Son of God is our Lord, being the Word of the Father and the Son of Man; since of Mary, who derived her origin from man, and was herself a human being, he had his generation according to man. Wherefore also the Lord Himself gave us a sign in the depth, and height above, which man asked not for, because he hoped not that a virgin could conceive, remaining a virgin, and bring forth a son; and that child is God with us."

Although the expressions of Irenæus as to Mary's unworthy and unjustifiable haste for our Lord to display his power at the marriage feast in Cana, are not so strong in condemnation of her as many which we shall hereafter find in various fathers of the early Church, yet it may be asked would any one holding the doctrines of modern Rome as to the Virgin's perfectness, have given utterance to such sentiments as these which we find in Irenæus<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>6</sup> See lib. iii. c. 22, p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> Lib. iii. c. 18, p. 206. 2.

“All these things were foreknown by the Father, but are accomplished by the Son, . . . . at the fit time. Wherefore when Mary hastened to the wonderful miracle of the wine, and wished before the time to partake of that cup<sup>8</sup>, the Lord repelling her untimely hurrying, said, ‘What have I to do with thee, woman? mine hour is not yet come,’ waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father.”

*St. Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 190<sup>9</sup>.*

On this father’s testimony, we have little to add to what has been already observed in our examination of his evidence on the invocation of saints and angels. He speaks of Mary, and of her virgin-state when she became a mother, and of the mystery of Christ’s birth; but he speaks of her without one word of honour. The language which we before quoted, as used by Clement, to convince the Greeks of their unsoundness in supposing that any beings in the unseen world ought to be worshipped by men, because that for their exalted purity they were permitted by Providence to be conversant about earthly places, and to minister to mortals, is altogether irreconcilable with the idea of his ever having invoked Mary, or sought by prayer her aid.

*Terullian, A.D. 190.*

Referring the reader to a former number<sup>1</sup> for Terullian’s evidence generally against the invocation of saints and angels, or any created being, we must here confine ourselves to his testimony as to the worship of

<sup>8</sup> The word is *Compendii poculo*—meaning the cup of wine made immediately by Christ, and not through the medium of the grape. Lib. iii. c. 2, p. 219: 2.

<sup>9</sup> Oxford, 1715.

<sup>1</sup> No. VII. of these Tracts.

the Virgin Mary. He tells us in one passage, that Christ was born of a virgin, who was also to be once married after his birth, that in Him the two titles of sanctity might be distinctly marked, by a mother who was both a virgin and also once married; but in no passage can we discover any thing approaching the modern doctrine. On the contrary, Tertullian's evidence is not merely negative on this precise point; for, like Chrysostom's and others, his sentiments with regard to the Virgin Mary are altogether conclusive on the subject under investigation. It is inconceivable that any man accustomed, as members of the Roman Church now are, to confide in her merits, to seek her protection and favour, to invoke her name in prayer, and to offer her religious praises, could have entertained such sentiments as we shall now quote, and which Tertullian repeats in other places with only some slight variation of language :

“But what reason is there for the answer which disowned his mother and his brethren? The brothers of the Lord had not believed on Him, as it is contained in the Gospel, which existed before Marcion's time. His mother also is not shown to have adhered to Him, whereas other Marys and Marthas were often in his company. Finally, their unbelief is made manifest by this:—While He was preaching the way of life, while He was preaching the kingdom of God, while He was engaged in curing sicknesses and evils, at a time when strangers were fixedly intent upon Him, then persons so nearly related to Him were absent. At last they come up, and stand outside the door, and do not enter; not thinking, forsooth, of what was going on there: nor do they wait, just as though they were bringing something more urgent than the business in which He was then chiefly occupied. Now, Apelles and Marcion, I ask you if, perchance, when you were playing at chess, or disputing about players or charioteers, you had been called away by such a message, would you not have



said, ‘ Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And while Christ was preaching and setting forth God, fulfilling the law and the prophets, dispersing the darkness of so many ages, did He, without reasonable cause, employ this saying, to strike at the unbelief of those who stood without, or to shake off the importunity of those who were calling Him away from his work <sup>2</sup>?’”

In another place <sup>3</sup>, commenting on the same transaction, Tertullian says, “ Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. Christ, with reason, felt indignant, that while strangers were bent intently on his discourse, persons so nearly related to Him should stand without; seeking, moreover, to call Him away from his solemn work <sup>4</sup>.”

*Origen, A.D. 230.*

In our examination of the testimony of Origen on the subject of invoking, by prayer, saints and angels, we quoted the following passage, which we are induced to repeat here, not only on account of its intrinsic value, but also because it suggests an unanswerable argument against our supposing that the doctrine and practice of the worship of the Virgin derives any countenance from Origen.

“ The one God, the God who is over all, is to be propitiated by us, and to be appeased by prayer—the God who is rendered favourable by piety and all virtue. But if Celsus is desirous to propitiate after the Supreme God, some others, also, let him bear in mind, that just as a body in motion is accompanied by the motion of its shadow, so also by rendering the Supreme God favourable, it follows that the person

<sup>2</sup> De Carne Christi, vii. p. 315.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom employs stronger language than Tertullian, in reflecting on the conduct of Mary and the Lord’s brothers on this occasion.

<sup>4</sup> Adv. Marc. iv. 19, p. 433.

has all his friends, angels, souls, spirits, favourable also; for they sympathise with those who are worthy of God's favour; and not only do they become kindly affected towards the worthy, but they also join with those in their work who desire to worship the Supreme God; and they propitiate him, and pray with us, and supplicate for us. We, therefore, boldly say, that together with men who, on principle, prefer the better part, and pray to God, ten thousands of holy powers join in prayer UNASKED"—[UNBIDDEN, UNCALLED UPON, UNINVOKED.]

What an opportunity had Origen here to state, that though Christians did not call upon angels, and the subordinate divinities of heathenism, yet that, together with other holy persons, objects of their prayers in the unseen world, they called upon the Virgin Mary, the mother of their Saviour, "The Queen of Heaven," "The Gate of Heaven," "The Way to Heaven," in whom "the Supreme God was well pleased," and who could "succour and save whom she would<sup>5</sup>!"

Instead of this we find Origen in one place referring to the Virgin Mary<sup>6</sup>, just as we should ourselves speak of her, as one not like other mothers, but as a pure virgin, and, therefore, not subject to the Levitical law concerning matrons<sup>6</sup>. In another he speaks of "the announcement to Zacharias of the birth of John, and to Mary, of the advent of our Saviour among men<sup>7</sup>," making no difference of dignity between the father of the Baptist, and the mother of our Lord. But not one word is found to intimate Origen's belief, or the belief of the Church at his time, in the influence and advocacy of Mary, or the practice of the Church, or of himself, in praying to her for her succour and intercession.

<sup>5</sup> Cont. Cels. b. viii. 64, vol. i. p. 789. See also b. viii. vol. i. p. 786; b. v. p. 579; b. viii. p. 751.

<sup>6</sup> In Levit. Hom. viii. vol. ii. p. 228.

<sup>7</sup> Comment on John, sec. 24, vol. iv. p. 32.

But the positive testimony of Origen is very strong against the present doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome. The critic and divine M. Huet, charges Origen with holding unsound tenets, "contrary to the doctrine of the Church of Rome at the present day and to the Council of Trent." The third error laid to his charge is that, whereas "the Church and that Council maintain that the Virgin Mary never had sin, Origen holds that she was not only liable to sin, but was actually guilty of it<sup>8</sup>;" and in proof of this charge Huet quotes Origen's comment of St. Luke, c. ii.

"What is that sword that pierced through the hearts, not only of others, but of Mary also? It is plainly written that at the time of the passion all the Apostles were offended, the Lord Himself saying, 'All you shall be offended this night.' So all were offended to such a degree, that Peter also, the chief of the Apostles, thrice denied Him. What! do we suppose that when the Apostles were offended, the mother of our Lord was free from feeling offence? If she did not feel offence in our Lord's suffering, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified by his grace and redeemed, surely Mary, too, was offended at that time. And this is what Simeon now prophesies, saying, And through thy own soul, thou who knowest that without a husband thou broughtest forth, who didst hear the voice of Gabriel, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' shall the sword of unbelief pierce; and thou shalt be struck by the sharp point of doubt, when thou shalt see Him whom thou heardest to be the Son of God, and whom thou knowest that thou broughtest forth without a husband, crucified and dying, and subject to human sufferings<sup>9</sup>."

In the same charge, and not without reason, Huet

<sup>8</sup> Vol. iv. p. 156, Appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Hom. in Luc. xvii. vol. iii. p. 952.

implicates Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, and others. The fact is, that a large portion of the ancient Fathers of the Church speak freely on the want of faith in the Virgin Mary, or the imperfection and weakness of her faith.

*Gregory Thaumaturgus, A.D. 245*<sup>1</sup>.

The name of this Gregory, a bishop of Cæsarea, in Pontus, was originally Theodorus; and his name Thaumaturgus, or the Wonder-Worker, was given him in consequence of the number of miracles which were ascribed to him. Much of what is doubtful and unsatisfactory hangs over his life, and over the writings now attributed to him. His miracles are such as to have induced most persons to regard them as merely fabulous exaggerations of some acts of benevolence and Christian charity. Among other supernatural works, he is said, by a prayer, to have removed a mountain, which prevented the building of a church; to have dried up a lake which had been the cause of some discord; and by planting his staff on the river Lycus (the staff immediately growing into a tree), to have prevented that river from ever after inundating the land, or extending its flood beyond that tree.

We have already referred to a catalogue of authors and their works, drawn up by Pope Gelasius and a Roman Council, at the close of the fifth century, which admits some works as genuine, and orthodox, and rejects others as apocryphal, or dangerous; and the approved authors are recorded in the Roman canon law as authoritative teachers. But in that catalogue no mention whatever is made either of this Gregory or his works. Still, since Bellarmin and other controversialists often appeal to him, it is not safe to omit all inquiry into his evidence.

<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1622.

He was a disciple of Origen on whom he wrote a panegyric, which Jerome reports to have been extant in his time; he also wrote a work on the Book of Ecclesiastes, also mentioned by Jerome, and which has come down to the present day. In these works, the genuineness of which is not doubted, not the slightest trace can be found of any reference to the Virgin, or any praises to her name.

But to these Vossius added some others, including three discourses delivered in honour of the Virgin, upon the Feast of the Annunciation, which either had never before been brought to light, or had never before been published as Gregory's, one having been previously circulated as a work of Athanasius. These writings are beyond question spurious. In the first place, neither does Jerome in his enumeration of the works of this Gregory, nor does any other ancient writer allude to them. Again, they profess to have been delivered on the Festival of the Annunciation, which is proved by satisfactory arguments not to have been observed before the seventh century. This is shown in the Appendix to the "*Romish Worship of the Virgin*," p. 370, and the proofs need not be repeated here. Many celebrated critics also have pronounced these homilies to be spurious, among whom are Cave and Dupin. Lumper also, at some length, proves them to be of a much later date than Gregory's age. Bellarmin himself rejects at once two of these new works ascribed by Vossius to this Gregory; and of these very homilies he says, "I entertain no certain opinion, for the ancients have made no mention of them, and yet cannot it be proved that they are spurious."

Here we must observe, with surprise and pain, that while Bellarmin<sup>2</sup>, in his zeal to maintain the antiquity of the Feast of the Annunciation, cites the homily (which Vossius here ascribes to Gregory) as

<sup>2</sup> Bellarmin, Prague, 1721, vol. ii, p. 515. Bellarmin, Cologne, 1617, vol. vii, p. 50.

a homily of St. Athanasius, delivered on that festival; yet in his work on ecclesiastical writers, he condemns the very same homily as a forgery, declaring the evidence against it to be irresistible. But Vossius, laying aside the character of a judge, and acting the part of a panegyrist, converts his editorial preface into a rhapsody, in which he implores the Virgin to make him an ample return out of the abundant treasure of her grace, in consideration of his having done so much for her in the way of encomiums and eulogies. We might well have added extracts from his preface to the instances which we have given in a former number, of the practical working of the system of the worship of the Virgin. He dedicates the edition to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus and the Virgin Mary jointly, and among his variously combined acts of prayer and praise, are the following :

“ My mind is astounded, my memory fails, my utterance languishes, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws, while I strive as a herald to celebrate thy praise, O most holy Virgin, mother of God, Mary ! and hold before my mind the mirror of thy heroic virtues.

“ Here I will make an end; and I pray and beseech thee, O Gregory, together with the most glorious and most holy mother of God, Mary the Virgin, that ye will at all times undertake the patronage of me, that ye will join your prayers with mine, and never cease to intercede for me with the most merciful God, and that THROUGH YOU, after this frail, sad, and short life ended, I may be deemed worthy to reach the life truly blessed and eternal.

“ Hail, Mother, the Heaven, the Virgin, the Throne, and of our Church the honour, and glory, and strength ! Hail thou, the comfort and ready help of those in danger, who have recourse to thee ! Hail, refuge of sinners, help of all the good and afflicted, the fountain of grace and OF ALL COMFORT. Hail, best mediatrix between God and man ! Hail, sure

and unfailling protection of us all ! Hail, ONLY relief of the troubles and disturbances of this life ! Hail, ONLY hope of the desponding, succour of the oppressed, and present help of those who fly to thee ! Hail, gate and key of heaven's kingdom, the ladder and the way upwards of all the elect ! To thee we cry ; remember us, O most holy Mother and Virgin ; remember, I say, and IN RETURN FOR THESE ENCOMIUMS AND EULOGIES GIVE US BACK great gifts, out of the riches of thy so abundant graces."

It is no longer matter of wonder that Vossius should be anxious to make so early a writer as Gregory Thaumaturgus the author of homilies in honour of the Virgin, when we thus find him praying for great gifts expressly in return for the abundance of his praises of her ; but it is matter of wonder that such homilies should be now appealed to, as containing Gregory's testimony, though they had never been published or enumerated among his works, or referred to as his, or even heard of, for at least thirteen hundred years !

### *Methodius*<sup>3</sup>.

It is not less matter of wonder to find a work formerly attributed to Methodius, a bishop of Tyre, in the third century, still quoted as genuine, though the best critics, some of them Roman Catholic editors, have long ago pronounced the homily now cited as evidence of the early invocation of the Virgin, to be the production of a much later age. It is indeed surprising to see with what eagerness and pertinacity the advocates of the worship of the Virgin enlist in their service every work which has ever had the name of an ancient writer attached to it—not only treatises of disputed and doubtful genuineness, but also works,

<sup>3</sup> Methodius, Paris, 1644.

which for centuries have been denounced by the most enlightened writers even of their own Church as decidedly spurious. We are reminded at every step of the confession of the Bourdeaux editor of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, that overpowered by the evidence against the record contained in it of the Virgin's Assumption, he would have expunged it from his edition, were it not from his knowledge that nothing certain as to the Assumption of the Virgin could be substituted in its stead.

With regard to the homily of Methodius, now quoted as genuine, we need only remark that the Benedictine editor of Jerome <sup>4</sup> says, once for all, that the *Symposium* is the only entire work of Methodius extant; that Baronius <sup>5</sup> says expressly, "I do not hesitate to say, that no Greek or Latin writer has left a sermon delivered on the Feast of the Purification before the fifteenth year of Justinian, on which feast this homily, attributed to Methodius, purports to have been delivered;" and that Lumper <sup>6</sup> shows beyond question that this homily is of a much later age than Methodius. It is said that the style of this sermon closely resembles the style of the *Symposium*; but we all know that in writings, no less than in paintings, resemblance is often a most fallacious criterion, and never must be allowed to counterbalance clear and decided evidence against the genuineness of a work. Not only, however, does the argument from the Feast of the Purification exclude this homily from the works of Methodius of Tyre, but the theological language also of the homily itself proves it to belong to a period much later; for the writer evidently employs expressions to guard against the Arian heresy, and seems to make extracts from the Nicene Creed. Even were the work genuine, instead of being pal-

<sup>4</sup> Jerom. vol. ii. p. 910.

<sup>5</sup> Baronius, Paris, 1607, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Lumper, Part xiii. p. 474.



pably spurious, its oratorical figures afford almost as strong a demonstration of his having believed that the city of Jerusalem could hear his salutation, as that the Virgin could listen to his prayers; for he addresses the same "Hail" to the Holy City, as he does to Mary and Simeon, calling it "The earthly Heaven."

*St. Cyprian, A.D. 258<sup>7</sup>.*

We have already seen how powerfully and affectingly this celebrated father has written on the subject of prayer; and had he ever addressed himself to the Virgin, invoking her succour or imploring her intercession, his line of argument in many of his productions would have led naturally to an expression of his sentiments in that respect. No trace, however, of such belief or practice can be discovered in all his various works; nor can we find one word expressive of reverence towards her, or referring to her merits, or her influence with God; nor is her name alluded to by his correspondent Firmilian, bishop of Cappadocia.

*Lactantius, A.D. 280—317.*

We have seen also, in a former number, how decidedly the testimony of Lactantius bears against the doctrine of the adoration of any other being than God, and of the intercession of any other mediator than Christ. On our present subject, the following is among the few passages to which we need make any reference:—

"Christ was, therefore, both God and man; appointed as mediator between God and man; whence the Greeks call Him *Μεσίτην* (Mediator), that he might bring man to God, that is, to immortality; because

<sup>7</sup> Paris, 1726.

had He been only God, He could not have given a pattern to man; if He had been only man, He could not have compelled man to justice, had not a power and authority greater than man's been added."

Lactantius speaks of a "Holy Virgin" chosen for the office which she sustained, but not one word looking to adoration. He dwells on the incarnation of the Son of God; and had he or his fellow-believers paid religious honour to Mary, it is incredible that he would have avoided all allusion to her advocacy and power.

This brings us beyond the close of the third century.

*Eusebius, A.D. 314.*

The testimony of Eusebius on any subject connected with primitive faith and practice has been always appealed to as an authority not to be lightly gainsaid. We have already seen how far removed he is from giving any countenance to the invocation of saints and angels; and in his works, voluminous and diversified as they are in point of subject, we find no single passage to justify the belief that the primitive Church supplicated the Virgin Mary, either to impart to the supplicants any favour, or to pray for them.

Eusebius speaks of the Virgin Mary, but is altogether silent as to any religious honour of any kind being offered to her, and that in passages where he could not have omitted all reference to it, had it at all really existed.

In the oration of the Emperor Constantine, as it is recorded by Eusebius<sup>8</sup>, direct mention is made of "the chaste Virginité," and of "the maid who was the mother of God, and yet remained a virgin." But the object present to the author's mind was so exclu-

<sup>8</sup> Aug. Taurin. (Triers), 1746, vol. i. p. 624.

sively God manifest in the flesh, that he does not throughout even mention the name of Mary, much less does he allude to any religious honour due or paid to her.

*Apostolical Canons and Constitutions.*

These documents, though confessedly not of the apostolic age, have been always regarded as interesting monuments of the primitive Church; and probably we shall not err in fixing their date at a period not earlier than the beginning of the fourth century. In these we find rules for the conduct of public worship, and forms of prayer for private use; forms also of creeds and confessions; but not one single allusion appears in them throughout to any religious address to the Virgin, or any reference to her power, influence, merits, or intercession. Occasions most opportune for the introduction of such doctrine and practice are repeatedly occurring. Again and again is prayer directed to be made to the one true God, exclusively of any other object of worship, and exclusively too through the mediation and intercession of the one only Saviour.

The Apostolical Constitutions, in which there is reference made to the mother of our Lord, can scarcely be read by any one without leaving a clear and strong impression on the mind, that no religious worship was paid to the Virgin Mary when they were written; and certainly not more of honour than is now cheerfully paid to her by members of the Church of England. If, for example, we take the prayer prescribed to be used on the appointment of a deaconess, the inference from it must be, that others, with whom the Spirit of the Lord had dwelt, were held in equal honour with Mary. "O eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of male and female, who didst fill with thy Spirit Miriam, and Hannah, and Huldah, and didst not disdain that thy Son should be born of a

woman, &c.<sup>9</sup>” In another passage the Virgin is spoken of just as other women who had the gift of prophecy; and of her equally and jointly with the others, it is said that they were not elated by the gift. “But even have women prophesied in ancient times, Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses; after her, Deborah; and afterwards, Huldah and Judith; and the mother of the Lord also prophesied, and Elizabeth, her kinswoman, and Anna; and in our days the daughters of Philip; yet they were not lifted up against the men, but observed their own measure. Therefore, among you, should any man or woman have such a grace, let them be humble, that God may take pleasure in them<sup>1</sup>.”

In the Apostolical Canons we find no allusion to the Virgin Mary. The last clause of all contains the benediction; and gives us an example of a primitive prayer offered to God alone, through Christ alone, without any reference to the intercession and advocacy, or merits and glory of his mother. “Now may God, the only unproduced Being, the Creator of all things, unite you all by peace in the Holy Ghost, make you perfect unto every good work, not to be turned aside, unblameable, not deserving reproof; and may He deem you worthy of eternal life with us, by the mediation of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, with whom be glory to Him, the Sovereign God and Father in the Holy Ghost the Comforter, now and ever, world without end. Amen.”

*St. Athanasius, A.D. 350.*

We have already seen what strong and decisive testimony is borne by this renowned defender of the Christian faith against any invocation of saints and angels. In what broad contrast does his un-

<sup>9</sup> Book viii. c. 20.

<sup>1</sup> Book viii. c. 2.

qualified and unlimited declaration, that no Christian could ask a blessing from God AND ANY CREATED BEING, stand with a prayer, said to have been approved by Pope Pius VI.: "Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, I offer you my heart and my soul. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, assist me in my last agony. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, may my soul expire in peace with you!" Such things are now in the Church of Rome, but in the primitive and Catholic Church they were not so.

St. Athanasius, ever bent on establishing the perfect divinity and humanity of Christ, thus speaks: "The general scope of Holy Scripture is to make a general announcement concerning the Saviour, that He was always God, and is a Son, being the Word, and the brightness and wisdom of the Father; and that He afterwards became man for us, taking flesh of the Virgin Mary, who bare God."

On a careful examination of the works of St. Athanasius, not one single passage can be discovered indicative of any worship of the Virgin, or any belief in her power and intercession, or any invocation of her, even for her prayers.

Before we leave the testimony of Athanasius, we have a duty to perform which the cause of truth compels us not to neglect. We are anxious in these treatises to avoid whatever might be so construed as to savour of a personal charge; but we must here lay open before the world an instance of those many unworthy expedients by which the worship of the Virgin Mary is attempted to be upheld in our own country, in our own times, and by persons whose authority seems to have assumed a high place in the Roman Church.

A homily, formerly ascribed to St. Athanasius, but which has been for centuries rejected as spurious and apocryphal, continues to be quoted, even at the present day, as his genuine testimony, without the slightest

intimation of any doubt as to its author. Bellarmin so appealed to it in his day; and had he been the only writer, or the last writer, who had so cited it, we might merely have referred to the judgment of the Benedictine editors, who have, since Bellarmin's time, classed this homily among those spurious works which had been without reason attributed to Athanasius<sup>2</sup>: Or rather we might have referred the whole matter to Bellarmin himself; for it is no less true than extraordinary, that whereas in his anxiety to enlist every ancient writer in the cause of the invocation of saints and the worship of the Virgin, Bellarmin has cited this homily in his *Church Triumphant*, as containing the words of Athanasius, without alluding to its spuriousness, or even to any doubt attached to it: yet in his review of Ecclesiastical writers<sup>3</sup>, when pronouncing judgment on the different works assigned to Athanasius, he himself condemns this same homily as a palpable forgery, declaring the evidence against it to be irresistible. But in our own times, Dr. Wiseman, Roman bishop of Melipotamus, thus introduces and comments upon a passage, or rather different sentences made into one passage, drawn from the same homily<sup>4</sup>:

“St. Athanasius, the most zealous and strenuous supporter that the Church ever possessed of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and consequently of his infinite superiority over all the saints, thus enthusiastically addresses his ever-blessed mother: ‘Hear now, O daughter of David, incline thine ear to our prayers; we raise our cry to thee. Remember us, O most holy Virgin, and for the feeble eulogiums we give thee, grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces, thou that art full of grace. Hail! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Queen, and Mother of God, intercede for us.’ Mark well these words, ‘grant us

<sup>2</sup> Vol. ii. p. 390. 401.

<sup>3</sup> Bellarmin, de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis, Cologne, 1617, vol. vii. p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 108. London: Booker, 1836.

great gifts from the treasures of thy graces,' as if he hoped directly to receive them from her. Do Catholics use stronger words than these; or did Athanasius think or speak with us or with Protestants<sup>5</sup>?"

To these questions the direct answer is, that neither these words, nor the homily from which they are extracted, ever came from the pen of Athanasius; and moreover, that the proofs of the spuriousness of the homily are drawn out at large by the Benedictine editors, in the very edition and the identical volume of the works of Athanasius, to which Dr. Wiseman refers for his authority when he quotes the passage as genuine.

The above quotation (made up of different sentences, selected from different clauses, and put together so as to make one paragraph) is found in a homily called "On the Annunciation of the Mother of God." Two centuries and a half ago, and repeatedly since, (how long before we know not,) it has been condemned as totally and indisputably spurious; and has been excluded from the works of Athanasius as a wretched forgery, not by members only of the Reformed Church, but by most zealous adherents to the Church of Rome.

The Benedictine editors, who published the remains of Athanasius in 1698, declared this homily to be a forgery, assigning their own reasons for their decisions, and fortifying their own verdict by quoting at length the letter written upon the subject more than a century before by the celebrated Baronius to our countryman Stapleton. Both these documents are very interesting, and compel us at every turn to renew our astonishment that such a homily should be so quoted in the present day without any allusion to its spurious character.

The principal arguments urged by the Benedictines, and by Baronius before them, will be found in "The Romish Worship of the Virgin," p. 168; we can only make two or three extracts.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Wiseman's note refers us to "Serm. in Annunc. t. ii. p. 401."

The Benedictine editors thus begin their preface:—  
 “That this discourse is spurious, THERE IS NO LEARNED MAN WHO DOES NOT NOW ADJUDGE. The style proves itself, more clear than the sun, to be different from the style of Athanasius. Besides this, very many trifles show themselves here, unworthy of any sensible man, not to say of Athanasius; and a multitude of expressions unknown to Athanasius, so that it savours of lower Greek. . . .” After stating facts which entirely exclude the homily from the age of Athanasius, they add, “But we would here subjoin the dissertation of Baronius on the subject sent to us by our brethren from Rome.”

That dissertation is contained in a letter, dated Rome, Nov. 1592, to Stapleton, in consequence of some animadversions and remonstrances of his, conveyed through Cardinal Allen, against Baronius, for having deprived the Church of such a testimony. Baronius says, the little he had before written was quite enough to show that the homily was spurious, and he is sure that all persons of LEARNING, WHO WERE DESIROUS OF THE TRUTH, would freely agree with him. He adds, moreover, that many had expressed their agreement with him; congratulating him on having separated legitimate from spurious children. He conceives that the homily could not have been written till after the heresy of the Monothelites had been spread abroad; and this would fix its date subsequently to the commencement of the SEVENTH century, 300 years after Athanasius had attended the Council of Nice.

Among the last words of Baronius in this letter, we read a sentiment worthy of a sincere Christian and an honest and enlightened critic, the neglect of which leads to such proceedings as we are now lamenting; and the uniform adoption of which, on all sides, would bring controversy within narrower limits, and convert it from angry warfare into a friendly comparison of opinions.

“I do not consider that these sentiments concerning



Athanasius are affirmed with any injury to the Church: the Church suffers no loss on this account; who, being the pillar and ground of the truth, very far shrinks from seeking, like Æsop's jackdaw, helps and ornaments which are not her own; the bare truth shines more beautiful in its own naked simplicity."

And yet, notwithstanding this utter repudiation of the whole homily as a work falsely attributed to Athanasius; after its unqualified condemnation by Cardinal Bellarmin; after the Benedictine editors, in the very volume to which the reference is made, have declared that there was no learned man who did not adjudge it to be spurious, the gross forgery being self-condemned by evidence clearer than the sun; after Baronius, the great Roman authority, has assured us that ALL LEARNED MEN DESIROUS OF THE TRUTH would agree with him in rejecting it as spurious—after all this, it is quoted at the present day in evidence as the genuine work of St. Athanasius, the quotation being closed by this triumphant question, "Did Athanasius think and speak with us, or with Protestants?"

THE END.

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XIII.

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ON THE

WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
AGAINST IT.—*Continued.*



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- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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*On the Worship of the Virgin Mary.—Evidence of the Primitive Church against it.—From the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, to the end of the fourth century.*

*St. Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 340<sup>1</sup>.*

THE link in the chain of primitive writers which connects the testimonies of those who flourished before or at the time of the Nicene Council, with those who followed it, is Cyril, archbishop of Jerusalem. This celebrated and revered patriarch was probably born about ten years before that Council, and was ordained Deacon by Macarius, and Priest by Maximus, who were his immediate predecessors in the episcopate of Jerusalem, and both of whom are thought to have attended at Nice.

The principal work of Cyril, which has also been generally ranked among the most interesting remains of antiquity, consists of eighteen catechetical lectures delivered to candidates for baptism through the weeks before Easter, and five addressed after that festival to those who had been then admitted into the Church. These lectures take so wide and so general a view of all the doctrines of Christianity, that we can scarcely

<sup>1</sup> Oxford, 1703. Paris, 1728. Venice, 1763.

find a single point of theology altogether omitted. Cyril professes to instruct the catechumens in every branch of divine knowledge; and if prayers and supplications to the Virgin had then found a place among the devotions of the faithful, we cannot conceive that no mention whatever would have been made of such a duty or practice, nor any expression have fallen from him which could be supposed to allude to it. Such, however, is the fact; and that too, not only when his subject might appear to lead his thoughts into another channel, but when his line of argument would naturally suggest a reference to the religious honours paid to the Virgin. Rather we would say, the total omission of her name affords in various instances conclusive evidence, that the belief and practice of the Roman Church in the present day had no place in the Christian Church in the days of Cyril.

Let us take as an example the present confession and the present prayers in the Romish mass, both before and after the consecration of the host, and compare them with the record given of corresponding addresses in the time of Cyril. The confession begins thus: "I confess to God Almighty, to the blessed Mary ever Virgin, to the blessed Michael the Archangel, to the blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul," &c. Again, in the prayer before consecration we now find these sentiments—"Communicating with, and venerating the memory of, in the first place, the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ; and likewise of the blessed Apostles and Martyrs," &c. And in the prayer after consecration, this supplication is offered—"Deliver us, O Lord, we beseech thee, from all evils, present, past, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with thy blessed Apostles," &c.

But Cyril, describing the order in the celebration of the holy Eucharist observed in his day, though he tells us that they made mention of archangels, Apostles,

and martyrs, yet makes no allusion whatever to the Virgin Mary<sup>2</sup>:

“After this, (after the priest has said, ‘Let us give thanks to the Lord,’ and the people have responded, ‘It is meet and right,’) we make mention of the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the stars, and all the creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible, angels, archangels, &c., virtually employing the expression of David, ‘Magnify the Lord with me.’ Then we make mention also of those who have fallen asleep before us, first patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, *that by their prayers and intercessions God would receive our supplications*.”

If the Church of Christ taught then as the Church of Rome now teaches, that the Virgin Mary was “exalted, above the choir of angels, unto the kingdom of heaven, to the ethereal chamber in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne,” could Cyril of Jerusalem, when detailing with such minuteness the various particulars of the service which he daily witnessed, have omitted all mention of her name?

In this interesting compendium of Christian doctrine, Cyril dwells with much fulness of argument and illustration on the divine generation of Christ by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. With evident anxiety, he exposes the baneful heresy of those who held that our Lord was not born of a Virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary. In the course of his argument, proving Christ to be “God of the substance of his Father begotten before the worlds, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world,” many occasions offer themselves, not only admitting but calling for a statement of the doctrine of the Church, had the Church of Christ then held the present doctrine of the Church of Rome; and yet not

<sup>2</sup> Cat. Myst. v. 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> It has been maintained that the words in italics are an interpolation of a much later age. If this be so, our argument only becomes stronger.



one word occurs throughout as to her nature, or character, or as to her advocacy with God, or any invocation of her for her intercession or patronage. Cyril speaks of her as the "pure and holy Virgin," he speaks of Christ as "God born of the Virgin." He applies to her as ante-Nicene Fathers did, the word *theotocos*, "she who gave birth to him who was God." But we find no allusion to her birth, or her death, or her state after death. Not a syllable occurs which would lead us to suppose that the Christian Catechist of Jerusalem, in the middle of the fourth century, thought of the Virgin Mary, or acted towards her otherwise than true members of the Church of England now think and act. In all his arguments and statements he exalts God alone, and speaks of the blessed Mary only as we speak of her, as a pure and holy virgin, the instrument in God's providence of effecting the miraculous birth of Him who made all things. The evidence of Cyril is irrefutable against the prevalence of any religious worship offered to her in his day. The following passage we are induced to quote, because it expresses simply but powerfully a principle of prime importance to us all:

"The Father, through the Son, with the Holy Ghost, dispenses every grace. The gifts of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are not different each from the other. For one is the salvation, one the power, one the faith. One God, the Father; one Lord, his only begotten Son; one the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. And to know this is all we need. But do not busy yourself about his nature and substance; for had it been written, we would have told you of it. On what is not written let us not venture. It is abundantly sufficient for us to know for our salvation, that there is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>4</sup> See Cat. xvi. 12.

*St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, A.D. 350<sup>5</sup>.*

While Cyril, archbishop of Jerusalem, enables us to infer that in the east the Church of Christ was in his time free from the worship of the Virgin Mary, his contemporary, Hilary, establishes the same fact as to the west. Hilary is said to have been born at Poitiers, of which city he became bishop about the year 350, or 355. Having presided over that see with chequered fortune, but with untarnished character, for about twelve years, proving himself to be one of the brightest ornaments of the Gallican Church, he was called from his persecutions and his honours here to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The chief works of Hilary now extant, are his Commentaries on the Psalms, and on the Gospel of St. Matthew, and his book on the Holy Trinity.

In his interpretation of the Psalms, his general principle of representing the Psalmist as speaking in the person of the Saviour, or of his faithful disciples, and giving to each Psalm a Christian application, leads him to speak continually of the Saviour's incarnation; and thus an occasion would have frequently offered itself for Hilary to express his sentiments as to the station and nature of the Virgin Mary, had any such views as Roman Catholics now entertain been familiar to his mind. On the contrary, he never refers to any especial honour paid to her by himself or his fellow Christians. She is not alluded to as exercising any patronage, or having any power or influence in heaven or on earth, or as having been already received into glory.

Hilary, together with the great body of the earliest Christian writers, is clear in the statement of his belief, that the angels are messengers between heaven and earth, bearing the prayers of the faithful to God's

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Paris, 1693. Verona, 1730.

throne, and conveying blessings down to those who love Him. He speaks with honour and gratitude of the Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, and Patriarchs, as objects of our pious contemplation; though he explicitly warns us, that our help can come from God only, and that the Saviour Himself is the only ground of our hope. But of the Virgin Mary (except in one passage, in which he tells us that even she herself, though the mother of our Lord, must yet undergo the general judgment,) he speaks only as Mary, or the Virgin; and that, not with any reference to her exalted station and character, nor (excepting in as much as she was a pure virgin) to any honour due to her; but solely with reference to her having been the mother of Christ. Indeed, how very far he was from entertaining those sentiments towards her which are cherished by the Church of Rome, we have a striking evidence (among many others) in his manner of adverting, on two occasions, to the announcement of our Saviour's name by the angel to Joseph. "Now, our word SAVIOUR is, in the Hebrew, JESUS. And this the angel confirms, when speaking of Mary to Joseph: 'She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins<sup>6</sup>.'" Repeating this same sentiment in another Psalm, Hilary employs the same words, except that he omits all mention of the Virgin.

In his comment<sup>7</sup> on St. Matthew, this father animadverts on the misrepresentations of irreligious men, who took occasion from the words of Scripture to form an unworthy estimate of the Virgin's character; and he maintains that she had no children by Joseph after our Saviour's birth, a point which we, with his pious contemporary Basil, whose testimony we must soon examine, may well leave as Scripture has left it.

The passage, however, to which we have already adverted, and in which he speaks of the necessity

<sup>6</sup> Ps. lxxvi. ver. p. 210, and Ps. li. p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. i. p. 662.

under which the Virgin Mary, though the mother of our Lord, lay, not less than others, of undergoing the final judgment, requires the especial consideration of all who would defend the present Roman doctrine by the evidence of the writers of the primitive Church. In laying this passage side by side with the sentiments elsewhere expressed by Hilary, as to the persons who will be judged, we express no opinion as to the soundness of his doctrine, or the accuracy of his quotations, or on his interpretation of Scripture. If his views approve themselves as correct, that will add nothing to the strength of our argument; if otherwise, that will not detract at all from its force; the simple question being, What is Hilary's evidence on the worship and invocation of the Virgin Mary? We find that he never speaks of her as an object of religious reverence; and we now ask, Had Hilary entertained towards her such sentiments as we find at this day expressed in the authorized services of the Roman Church, could he have written such passages as the following?—"He who believeth in me is not judged, but passeth from death unto life; but he who believeth not is already judged.' Since then the saint is not to be judged, who is to pass from death unto life, and the unbeliever is already adjudged to punishment; it is understood that judgment is left for those who, according to the nature of their deeds between sins and faith, are to be judged<sup>8</sup>."

"The Prophet remembered that it was a hard thing and most perilous, for human nature to desire God's judgment; for since no man living is clean in his sight, how can his judgment be desirable? Since we must render an account of every idle word, shall we desire the judgment day, in which we must undergo that incessant fire, and those severe punishments of a soul to be cleansed from sin? A sword shall pass through the soul of the blessed Mary, that the

<sup>8</sup> Ps. lvii. p. 143.

thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. If that Virgin who conceived God is to come into the severity of judgment, who will dare to be judged by God<sup>o</sup>?"

Some passages ascribed to Hilary are constantly appealed to in vindication of the worship of the Virgin, in which the author contrasts the evil brought into the world by Eve with the blessing of which the Virgin Mary was the channel. But how unsound is that argument, is clearly evinced by the following, among other passages, in which he does not allude to the Virgin at all, though he is contrasting the original source of sin and misery derived from a woman, with the restoration of fallen man by Christ made known by a kind of retribution first to women.

“But in as much as some poor women (*mulierculæ*) see our Lord first, salute Him, fall down at his knees, are commanded to bear the tidings to the Apostle, the order of the original curse is reversed; so that as death came by that sex, so to it the glory, and sight, and fruit, and tidings of the resurrection should first be made<sup>1</sup>.”

It would be an easy and a pleasing task, did not our present object preclude us from entering upon it, to quote passages truly interesting and edifying to Christians, which would put in a clear and strong light the spiritual character of the religion of Hilary. At one time he exposes, in awakening language, the dangers which beset us on every side. He describes the perils to which every department of nature gives birth, and against which the Christian must be ever on his guard: the very gems of unknown seas, and gold dug from the bowels of the earth, tempting us to covetousness; the troubles of life, the unholy desires of our fellow-creatures, the example and influence of those in high places soliciting us to sin, with a seductiveness too powerful for our frail nature to withstand. Then he bids us look to God, Almighty and

Omnipresent, assuring us that He will never forsake the man who trusts in Him, but will give him strength against every enemy to his salvation, and bring him safe to Himself at last. At another time he invites us to look to the angels and prophets, who are employed by their heavenly Master in forwarding our salvation by their ministry, admonishing us, in contemplation of their offices of obedience and love, to lift our hearts heavenward; but ever looking beyond them to Him alone, from whom every good and perfect gift comes down on sinful and redeemed man<sup>2</sup>.

To confess God as our help<sup>3</sup>, and to know that God for our sakes became man, St. Hilary declares to be a true confession, a never-failing hope. His description of the Christian's day, as it was passed by him and his fellow-disciples, must close our present reference to his highly valuable remains:

The day is open'd with prayers to God;  
The day is closed with hymns to God<sup>4</sup>.

*Macarius, A.D. 350.*

Macarius, of Egypt, flourished about the middle of the fourth century. Fifty of his discourses have come down to our day. In these he speaks much of the virgin pureness with which the soul and body of a Christian must be dedicated to God; but though there was ample room, and frequent opportunities might have offered themselves for referring to the Virgin Mary (which more recent writers, in their anxiety to exalt her, seldom neglect), yet he never refers to her once, except as the mother of whom Christ took his human nature; telling us that the body which Christ took of Mary he lifted upon the cross<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxx. p. 379.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. cxxi. and cxxii. p. 444.

<sup>5</sup> Paris, 1622. Hom. xi. p. 61.

He never calls the Virgin Mary the "Spouse of God;" but he represents the human soul created in the image of God, and after the fall purified by the Holy Spirit, and prepared for the heavenly visitor, as that spouse<sup>6</sup>.

This author speaks beautifully of prayer and praise, but God is the only object of them. In him we look in vain for a distinction of supreme worship for God, and next to that a worship for the Virgin. And especially in his 20th Homily, his sentiments are so utterly inconsistent with the modern doctrine of a Christian's looking to the Virgin for his remedy, the enlightening and guiding of his mind, his salvation from sin, and safety in death; and they are in themselves so full of the truths of the Gospel, in its primitive simplicity, bidding us to approach God alone in Christ, and to place our hope and trust in no other guide, physician, restorer, advocate, or patron, that no one, we are persuaded, can read them without satisfaction and benefit. In the works of Macarius, there is no suggestion of another Giver to whom we should look than God; no Virgin to whom or through whom we should apply for Divine mercies; no Mediator, except our Lord only; with him, God in Christ is all in all.

*St. Epiphanius, A.D. 370<sup>7</sup>.*

Epiphanius was bishop of Salamis, in the island of Cyprus, a few years after the middle of the fourth century. Among his genuine productions, the most important is his work on the heresies which had then already risen to distract the peace of the Church.

In ascertaining his testimony on the invocation of the Virgin Mary, our attention will of necessity be chiefly directed to his discussion of the heresies relative to herself; indeed, few passages besides call for any notice. The panegyric on "The Mother of

<sup>6</sup> Hom. xlvi. p. 233.

<sup>7</sup> Paris, 1622.

God," bound up with his works, is confessedly of a much later date<sup>8</sup>.

With many others, Epiphanius regarded those Christians as heretical who held that the Virgin lived with Joseph as his wife, after she had given birth to our Lord; and he always speaks of her with reverence, because of the mystery of the incarnation, which she was the chosen human instrument of effecting. Throughout, his anxiety seems to be to give her the honour due to her office and character; he speaks with indignation of those who could entertain disparaging views of her unsullied purity and holiness; and he had no doubt of her future perfect bliss, both body and soul, in the eternal kingdom of her Son. But of her "immaculate conception," "her assumption, body and soul, into heaven," her "exaltation to glory above the highest angels," her "omnipotent intercession with the Almighty," the Church's "prayers to God for the blessings of her mediation," of her being the channel "through which every blessing must flow that comes from heaven to man," of the faithful "suppliantly invoking her, and flying to her prayers, help, and assistance;" of all these points, Epiphanius seems to have known nothing. On the contrary, his testimony is conclusive against the existence of any such doctrines prevailing in the Church as a body, or among Christians individually, in his time.

The following is an extract from his arguments against Marcion<sup>9</sup>, in which Epiphanius thus expresses his assurance of the Virgin Mary's freedom from actual sin, and of her final salvation:—

"'Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' He accuses not all flesh; for how could that flesh be accused which never committed any of the above-mentioned acts? But I will prove the point by other arguments, 'Who, he says, shall lay any

<sup>8</sup> See Fabricius, vol. viii. p. 275, and Ondin, vol. ii. p. 318.

<sup>9</sup> P. 352.



thing to the charge of God's elect? How will the holy Mary, with her flesh, not inherit the kingdom of God, who was never guilty of fornication, or uncleanness, or adultery, or any of those irremediable works of the flesh?"

In his dissertations on those heresies, which related to the nature, character, and office of the Virgin, he confesses that he had great difficulty in ascertaining the precise views of misbelievers; and that some opinions reported to him were so monstrous in absurdity and impiety, that he could scarcely bring himself to believe what he had read. He then mentions three distinct opinions or practices, which he calls heresies:

First, of those who denied the perfect incarnation of Christ; some of whom maintained that he brought his body down with Him from heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, of those who held that after Christ's birth, Mary lived with Joseph as his wife.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, of those who, on certain days, religiously offered cakes to her and worshipped her.<sup>3</sup>

In his dissertations on these opinions and practices, he quotes in full the letter<sup>4</sup> which he had written to his fathers, brothers, and children in Christ, who had been troubled by these doctrines. With regard to the Virgin, he indignantly asks, how could any one dare to speak disparagingly of her, who was selected out of so many thousands to be the mother of our Lord? and while he urges that those who honour God will honour his saints, he declares that as to her death and burial he will affirm nothing<sup>5</sup>, because Scripture is so silent on the point, as not even to tell whether St. John took her with him in his journeys to those countries through which he preached the Gospel.

On the first heresy, Epiphanius observes, "The body of the Saviour, born of Mary according to the Scripture, was a human and a true body. It was

<sup>1</sup> P. 995.<sup>2</sup> P. 1033.<sup>3</sup> P. 1057.<sup>4</sup> P. 1034.<sup>5</sup> P. 1043.

a true body, since it was the same with our own; for Mary is our sister; since we all came from Adam<sup>6</sup>." He afterwards proceeds thus, "Just as the perverse views of some heretics denying the Godhead of the Saviour, and severing Him from the Father, drove others to the opposite error, and provoked them to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, were one and the same person; so the unworthy doctrines reflecting on the Virgin, drove some to the opposite extreme, and provoked them to pay her divine worship; making her a deity, offering cakes in her name, and striving to honour her beyond due measure."

Having then referred to former instances of the tendency of mankind to superstition ever restless, and fond of novelty (such as was the worship paid to the daughters both of Pharaoh and Jephtha), he immediately adds these truly striking expressions: "Whether the holy Virgin be dead and buried, in that case her death is in honour, her end in purity, and her crown in virginhood; or whether she was slain (as it is written, a sword shall pierce through her soul also,) her glory is among martyrs, and the holy body of her, by whom light rose on the world, is in the midst of blessings; or whether she remained (for it is not impossible for God to do whatsoever he wishes, **FOR HER END IS NOT KNOWN**), we must not honour the saints beyond due measure, but honour their Lord. Let, then, the error of those deceived people cease. For neither is Mary a deity, nor deriving her body from heaven, but from the intercourse of a man and a woman; determined, as Isaac's was, by promise. And let no one make offerings to her name, for he destroys his own soul; nor, on the other hand, let him be so intoxicated as to insult the holy Virgin."

In all these dissertations, Epiphanius alludes to no

especial honour due to the Virgin above other saints ; but as he began his letter to the Arabian Christians, by charging men to bring no calumnies against the Virgin (for if they honoured God they would honour his saints), so he ends the letter with these sentiments :

“ The saints are in honour ; their rest is in glory ; their departure hence is in perfectness ; their lot is blessedness ; their society is with the angels in holy mansions ; their dwelling is in heaven ; their conversation is in divine writings ; their glory is in honour beyond calculation and continuous ; their rewards are in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom, and with whom, be glory to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, for ever <sup>7</sup>. ”

His dissertation on the Collyridian heresy (so called from *the small cakes* offered to the Virgin) he prefaces by stating that opposite extremes are both bad, and the mischief is equal in both these errors ; on the one hand, of those who make light of the holy Virgin, and on the other, of those who extol her beyond due measure. He then tells us, that this heresy took its rise entirely from women, who were in the habit of forming a quadrangular seat, spreading a napkin, putting bread upon it, and offering it to Mary's name ; and he prays God to enable him to cut up this heresy by the roots.

He begins by showing, that through the Old Testament we never find women exercising the priestly office ; and under the New, if women were to be allowed to exercise it, or be engaged in any of the canonical ordinances of the Church, it would rather have become Mary herself, the mother of our Lord, to discharge that office. But that was not allowed ; nor was even baptism committed to her. Having, then, described the tendency of men's minds,

at the suggestion of the devil, to pay mortals divine honours, departing from their allegiance to the one only God, and worshipping dead men, and their lifeless images, Epiphanius thus anticipates and answers the objections of those, who favoured these errors:

“Nay, but the body of Mary is holy! Yes, but not a deity. Nay, but the Virgin is a virgin and honoured! Yes, yet not given for us to worship, but herself worshipping Him who was born of her in the flesh. Thus the Gospel confirms us, saying, in the words of our Lord, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ lest any should think that the holy Virgin was a BEING OF SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE, He calls her ‘woman,’ as if He prophesied on account of those divisions and heresies which were to take place on earth,—in order that no ONE BY ADMIRING THE HOLY VIRGIN IN EXCESS, might fall into this folly of heresy. The whole story is full of absurdity. For what Scripture speaks of it? Which of the Prophets ever suffered a man to be worshipped, not to say a woman? She is a chosen vessel, but she is a woman, and not at all changed in nature; though as to her mind and sense she is held in honour; as the bodies of the saints, or whatever else in point of honour I might mention as more excellent; as Elijah, a virgin from his birth, and continuing so throughout, and being taken up did not see death; as John, who lay upon the bosom of our Lord, whom Jesus loved; as the holy Thecla; and as Mary honoured above her because of the dispensation of which she was deemed worthy. But neither is Elijah, though among the living, an object of worship; nor is John an object of worship, though by his own prayer, or rather, by God’s grace, he made his death wonderful; nor is Thecla, nor any one of the saints, an object of worship. For the old error shall not lord it over us, that we should leave the living One, and worship things made by Him. For they served, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator. For if He willeth

not that the angels be worshipped, HOW MUCH MORE IS HE UNWILLING THAT WORSHIP SHOULD BE PAID TO HER WHO WAS BORN OF ANNA, and was given to Anna from Joachim, given to the father and mother by promise, but, nevertheless, not born differently from the nature of man."

Had Epiphanius been accustomed to celebrate the Virgin Mary, as the authorized services of the Church of Rome celebrate her now, as immaculate in her mother's conception of her, glorifying her as exalted above the choir of angels, as queen of angels, and queen of all saints, could he have written such a sentence as this, in which he argues, that God, who would not suffer the angels to be worshipped, would much less have allowed a Virgin to be worshipped, who was a mortal like ourselves, "and not born out of the ordinary course of nature."

Epiphanius afterwards proceeds thus:—

"God the Word, as a Creator, having authority over it, formed Himself from the Virgin, as from the earth, having clothed Himself with flesh from the holy Virgin; but nevertheless not a virgin to be worshipped, nor that He might make her a deity; not that we might offer in her name; not that after so many generations women should become priestesses. God willed not this to take place in Salome, nor in Mary herself. He suffered her not to administer baptism, nor to bless the disciples; He did not commission her to rule on earth: but only appointed this—that she should be a holy thing, and be deemed worthy of his kingdom. Whence then is the coiling serpent? Whence are his crooked counsels renewed? Let Mary be in honour; but let the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be worshipped. Let no one worship Mary. The mystery [that sacred thing, religious worship] is assigned—I do not say to no woman; but not even to any man—it is assigned to God. Neither do angels receive that ascription of glory. Let these errors, written in the hearts of the

deceived, be wiped away. Let the evil, generated at the tree, be obliterated from our sight. . . . Let no one eat of the error which has arisen by means of holy Mary; for though the tree be beautiful, yet it is not given for food; and though Mary be most beautiful, and holy, and honoured, yet she is not intended to be worshipped. Let Eve, our mother, be honoured, as having been formed by God; but let her not be listened to, lest she persuade her children to eat of the tree and transgress the commandment. And how many more things might be said? for these silly women offer to her the cake, or they take upon themselves to offer it in her behalf. The whole thing is foolish and strange, and is a device and deceit of the devil. But not to extend my discourse further, what I have already said will suffice—Let Mary be in honour: let the Lord be worshipped<sup>8</sup>.”

Few probably will conceive it possible that any primitive writer, maintaining the present doctrines of the Church of Rome, or knowing those to be the doctrines held and acted upon by his contemporaries through the Christian world, could have written the sentiments here quoted. It is not the case of merely negative testimony; it is not only the absence of any intimation as to the writer's belief in the lawfulness and duty of seeking the Virgin's protection by invoking her aid, or as to his knowledge of such invocation being practised around him. It is the case of a Christian Bishop reprobating a practice which had then lately sprung up in some distant portion of Christendom, of WORSHIPPING the Virgin—and who does this without making any exception of invoking her aid, or of asking her to intercede. He does not remonstrate with those innovators for departing from any established mode of addressing her; or for not being content with that worship of her, which they

<sup>8</sup> P. 1064.

found already prevalent: and yet this is surely what he would have done, had any mode of worshipping her then been prevalent in the Christian Church. He speaks peremptorily, and universally without exception, or reserve; and he repeats the same naked command again and again—"Let no one WORSHIP Mary."

It has been said by writers of the Church of Rome that Epiphanius does not reprove his misguided contemporaries for offering prayers to the Virgin; but for offering her cakes as a sort of sacrifice; and consequently that his reproof does not reach the point at issue, unless the Roman Church offers the sacrifice of the Mass in honour of her. But this is no answer. It is impossible to conceive that had Epiphanius been aware that prayers were offered to the Virgin, and the mercy of God sought through her intercession in the Christian Churches, he would in so unqualified a manner have denounced all worship of the Virgin. He says not, "Do not offer sacrifice to Mary," but "Let no man worship Mary." The offering of a sacrifice was among the heathen, and under the law of Moses one part of religious worship; but so was the offering of prayer and praise equally a part; and Epiphanius taking occasion from the one part more immediately brought under his notice, condemns alike all worship of Mary without any limitation or exception. This is in itself evident; but the case becomes still more clear, and the argument is strongly confirmed by a brief reflection on the original Greek words used by Epiphanius.

The verbs employed by him in these passages, "Let no one worship Mary," "Let the Lord be worshipped<sup>1</sup>," are precisely the same which St. John employs in the Revelation, when referring to a worship in which sacrifice could have no part, "I

<sup>1</sup> Τὴν Μαριάμ μηδεὶς προσκυνεῖτω. Ὁ Κύριος προσκυνεῖσθω.

fell down to worship before the feet of the angel. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not; worship God<sup>2</sup>." It is moreover a fact worthy of notice, that while Epiphanius himself, in his own genuine works, says, "Let no one worship Mary," and "The angels do not receive this honour," the writer of the spurious work ascribed to him, which we have already mentioned, uses the selfsame Greek word when he represents the angels as WORSHIPPING the Virgin. We may also observe, that in the spurious work to which we must hereafter refer, ascribed to Ephraim Syrus, and quoted in the present day as his in justification of the Roman errors, the same word is used to the very letter, when the writer addresses the Virgin in the language of adoration, "We bless thee, O Bride of God, and with fear we WORSHIP thee<sup>3</sup>." The fact is, had Epiphanius sought for the most general and comprehensive word for the express purpose of excluding the Virgin Mary from any kind of religious worship whatever—the falling down before her, praying to her, invoking her succour, singing hymns to her honour—he could probably not have selected any word more comprehensive than the word he has employed.

But Epiphanius says, "Let Mary be had in honour." To which every true son of the Church of England will respond, Amen. We discard as fully as Epiphanius could do, all unworthy and disparaging sentiments towards the holy Virgin-Mother of our Lord. But in disowning those who speak irreverently of her, we are careful (as Epiphanius enjoins us to be) not to be driven to the opposite extreme, nor to honour her above the measure due to her. We honour her memory, and we honour all the holy saints of God. Epiphanius bids us honour Mary; but so he bids us, using the same word, honour Eve,

<sup>2</sup> Ἐπεσον προσκυνῆσαι. Τῷ Θεῷ προσκύνησον.

<sup>3</sup> Προσκυνοῦμεν.



the mother of us all. We honour the Virgin, but we cannot worship her.

It is too obvious to require more than a few words, and yet it may be safe to observe, that Epiphanius must have entertained on various points besides the invocation of Mary, notions very different from those which are professed by members of the Church of Rome now, and countenanced by the Roman Ritual.

Epiphanius could not have held the immaculate conception of the Virgin in her mother's womb (to celebrate which the Roman Church has instituted a festival), or he could not have asserted, as he has asserted again and again, that "her birth was in the ordinary course of nature"—"not in any way different from other mortals."

Epiphanius could have known nothing of the ASSUMPTION of the Virgin, now celebrated as the chief and crown of the festivals in the Church of Rome; or he would not have told us that since Scripture was silent on the subject of her death, he would not express his opinion whether she died the common death of men, or suffered martyrdom, or was allowed to remain alive on earth<sup>4</sup>.

Of her merits as influencing our spiritual condition; of her intercession; of her present interest (as our advocate) with God; of any prayers, even for aid by her prayers, being offered by the Church, or by the faithful in private—of all this Epiphanius says not a word. From first to last his evidence is all pointedly and irrefutably against the invocation of the Virgin Mary. Epiphanius testifies that the present worship of the blessed Virgin in the Church of Rome had neither place nor name among primitive Christian worshippers.

<sup>4</sup> P. 1043.

*Basil; Gregory of Nazianzum; Ephraim, the Syrian; Gregory of Nyssa.*

Our attention is next called to the testimony of four contemporaries, who, although perhaps not personally known each to the other three, yet were united together some indeed, by the ties of blood or of friendship, and all by the bond of faith, hope, and charity. Basil was the brother of Gregory of Nyssa, the companion and friend of Gregory of Nazianzum, and the spiritual father in Christ, by the imposition of whose hands Ephraim the Syrian is said to have received the holy order of Deacon. The testimony of each of these must be examined separately; and though we cannot regard them all as of equal magnitude and brightness, yet will each star of this constellation be found to throw much light on our path, while the combined light of them all united seems to bring the object of our inquiry clearly and distinctly before our mind, and to leave no room at all for doubt (so far as our present investigation is concerned) with regard to the state of religious worship at the close of the fourth century.

*St. Basil, A.D. 370*<sup>5</sup>.

This Christian father and bishop, who acquired the name of the Great, in distinction from the multitude of bishops and pastors of the same name who succeeded him, is often appealed to under the honoured title of the Great Teacher of Truth. He was born at Cæsarea, probably about A.D. 328, and was there ordained deacon and priest: but in consequence of an unhappy misunderstanding between him and the bishop of that city, he withdrew, at the age of thirty, into the deserts of Pontus, where he passed his time chiefly in religious solitude, which however

<sup>5</sup> Paris, 1721 and 1839.

was relieved by the friendly converse of Gregory of Nazianzum. Happily, Basil was reconciled to the Bishop of Cæsarea, on whose death, about A.D. 370, he succeeded to that see. There he was permitted to feed the flock of Christ for about nine or ten years, and then he died in peace.

Although the negative evidence of Basil against the existence in the Christian Church, at his time, of any thing approaching the religious worship of the Virgin, is interwoven with all his remains, yet not more than two or three passages call for any especial examination. Basil, with all true and sound believers, held (to use the words of the Church of England) that "the Son, the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance;" that He "was born of a pure virgin." And thus, in his comments on the record of the Creation<sup>6</sup>, refuting those who urged the impossibility of a virgin being a mother, he affirms that the Creator had provided, by the operations of nature, unnumbered preparatory acts for the reception of the mystery of the Incarnation. The accuracy of Basil, on subjects of natural history, does not affect our inquiry. In that passage, he maintains that, in the economy of Grace, the Son of God was born of Mary, a virgin; but of her he says no more.

But the evidence of Basil is far from being merely negative. Different passages bear testimony to the fact, that he did not entertain towards the Virgin any such sentiments as are now professed by the Church of Rome; that he offered her no worship (let it be called *dulia* or *hyperdulia*); that<sup>7</sup> he regarded her as

<sup>6</sup> Hex. Hom. viii. s. 6. Ed. 1721, vol. i. p. 76. Ed. 1839, p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> We shall find many of the ancient Fathers putting forth similar sentiments with regard to the Virgin, which, as they appear to have no foundation in Scripture, we may well leave as we find them. The citation of them in evidence of a primitive writer's sentiments implies no approval or admission of them as our own.

one whose faith was tried and was shaken, and who needed the renewal of the Holy Ghost, after her trust in God's providence had for a while been interrupted; in a word, that he neither looked to her as an intercessor and mediator, nor believed in her Assumption; nor placed any hope in her good offices in heaven, to be secured on the part of mankind, by prayer addressed either to herself or to God.

Optimus, a bishop, had laid before Basil some of his difficulties in the interpretation of Scripture. Among other matters, he requested his assistance towards the right understanding of the address made by Simeon to Mary, on Christ's presentation in the Temple. Basil, complying with his request, recommends him to interpret the words "And he shall be for a sign that shall be spoken against," as prophetic of those lamentable disputes which had arisen concerning Christ's incarnation; "some maintaining that he had an earthly body, others that it was a heavenly body; some that it pre-existed from all eternity, others that it had its origin from Mary." And then, in explanation of the expression, "A sword shall pass through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed," he thus proceeds:—

"The sword is the word that trieth, that judgeth the thoughts, and separateth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow<sup>8</sup>. As therefore every soul was subject to some doubt at the time of the Passion (according to the voice of the Lord, 'All shall be offended because of me,') Simeon prophesied concerning Mary also herself, that standing by the cross and seeing what was being done, and hearing those words, notwithstanding the testimony of Gabriel, notwithstanding the ineffable knowledge of the Divine conception, notwithstanding the great display of miracles; yet after all, saith he, there shall arise a certain wavering even in thy own soul. For

<sup>8</sup> Vol. iii. Epist. 260, p. 400. Ed. 1839, vol. iii. p. 579.

it behoved the Lord to taste death for every man, and by making a propitiation for the world, to save all men by his blood; consequently even thee also thyself, who hast been instructed from above in the things of the Lord, some doubt shall affect. This is the sword."

Basil then proceeds to explain the remaining clause in Simeon's address, thus—"That the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed." He intimates, that after the offence taken at the cross of Christ, both by the disciples and Mary, some remedy should speedily come from the Lord, confirming their hearts in their faith on Him. Thus we know that Peter, after having been offended, held the faith of Christ more steadfastly. The weakness and frailty of human nature were proved, in order that the power of God might be shown."

It is impossible to believe that one who entertained these sentiments could, at the same time, have held the doctrines concerning the Virgin Mary which the Church of Rome teaches her members to hold. We do not wonder at the expression used by the Benedictine Editor, both in a marginal note and in the index, "This of Basil is not quite a fair opinion concerning the holy mother of God." "Basil, not very decorously (*minus belle*), thinks that Mary herself wavered at the time of the Passion." Whence Basil derived his view, or how far his is the true interpretation of the passage, has nothing to do with the object of our present inquiry. Basil is here proved to have held sentiments altogether incompatible with the present belief and practice of the Roman Church concerning the Virgin Mary.

Like the works of almost every ancient writer, the volumes which contain the genuine productions of Basil, remind us of the recklessness with which the errors of subsequent ages were ascribed to the primitive teachers of our holy faith.

But when we bear in mind that not less than forty,

probably more, of the same name with Basil, though of very inferior note, followed him, we can scarcely wonder at so many spurious works being ascribed to him. By such forgeries the authority of these early Fathers has been too long forced to countenance the errors which crept into the faith and worship of the Church, long after those holy men had fallen asleep in Christ; errors as much opposed to their genuine sentiments, as they are to the doctrine of the Church of England now. By no labours, perhaps, can the learning and ability of the lovers of truth, and the faithful sons of the Church of Christ, promote the cause of primitive worship more effectually than by clearing the field of Christian antiquity of those noxious weeds, which the enemy of truth has from age to age sown so artfully, choking in many cases the genuine and good seed, in others mingling some subtle poison with the wholesome fruits of Gospel truth. Much has been already done; but we shall be more and more convinced, as our inquiry proceeds, that much more yet remains to be done.

Before we leave this venerable teacher in Christ's school, it may be well for us to recall some few of Basil's genuine sentiments on the efficacy and comfort of prayer, the duty and blessing of habitually studying the holy Scriptures, and the consolations administered by real Christianity to those who are in sorrow and affliction. Several passages bear, though indirectly yet convincingly, on the immediate subject of our inquiry; the absence throughout of all allusion to the Virgin Mary (whose protection at the awful hour of death and from the face of their enemy, the Roman Church now bids her children to supplicate) being most striking and satisfactory.

It is refreshing to hear this holy man in his retirement speaking, like a voice from the wilderness, of the inestimable value of holy Scripture as the guide of our life, supplying us with rules of conduct, and proposing the bright example of good men, as living

models for a child of God to imitate. No less delightful is it to hear him speak of prayer. "Prayer," he says, "should ever attend our study of holy Scripture: our mind is more vigorous then, more renovated with the strength of youth, and is under a stronger influence of the love of God." The best prayer he considers to be that which brings the idea of God more vividly before the mind; to have God ever present in our thoughts and hearts, realizes the indwelling of God in us. "Thus we become a temple of God, when the tenor of our thoughts, and our remembrance of Him are not cut asunder by earthly cares, nor the mind disturbed by passions unawares assailing us. Flying from all these, the man who loves God withdraws himself to God, banishing all evil desires which would tempt him to what is unholy, and persevering in those pursuits which lead to excellence<sup>9</sup>."

His letter of condolence to Nectarius<sup>10</sup> on the death of that friend's only son is most beautiful in itself, and opens to us Basil's views as to the fountain and living spring of all consolation to a Christian. Having expressed his own deep affliction, caused by the melancholy loss sustained by his friend, he recalls Nectarius to a consideration of the tenure of human life, and the many instances which they had known of similar calamities. He then adds—

"Above all, it is God's command, that because of the hope of the resurrection we sorrow not for those that have fallen asleep. Moreover with the great Judge of our struggles crowns of great glory are reserved as the rewards of great patience. Wherefore I call on you, as a generous combatant, not to sink beneath the weight of your sorrows, nor suffer your soul to be swallowed up by it: persuaded of

<sup>9</sup> Epist. ii. vol. iii. pp. 72, 73. Ed. 1839, vol. iii. p. 99.

<sup>10</sup> Epist. v. p. 77. Ed. 1839, p. 108.

this, that though the reasons of God's dispensations are hidden from us, yet whatever is apportioned to us by Him, who is wise and who loveth us, should be borne, however painful it may be. For He knows how to assign what is for the real good of each; and why He appoints to different persons unequal periods of life. Though not comprehended by man, there is a cause why some are taken away sooner hence, and others are left to linger on in this life of pain. So that in all things we should adore his loving-kindness, and without repining remember the famous exclamation which the great combatant Job uttered, when he saw his ten children round one table in one moment destroyed. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it pleased the Lord, so it was!' Let us make that admirable sentiment our own. By the just Judge an equal reward is reserved for those who acquit themselves equally. We have not been deprived of our boy; we have only returned him to HIM who lent him. His life is not extinct, but is changed for the better. The earth does not cover our beloved one, but heaven hath received him. Let us only wait a little while, and we shall again be with him whose loss we feel. The time of our separation will not be long. In this life we are all hastening on the road to the same inn; in which one is already lodged, another is coming in after him, a third hastening: one end will receive us all. He has finished his journey first; but we are all on the same journey; and the same inn awaits us all. Only may we resemble him in purity, that we may obtain the same rest with the children of Christ."

At the close of the next letter, which is also consolatory, St. Basil says,—

"In these cases, argument is not enough for consolation. We have need also of prayer. I pray the Lord Himself that HE, touching your heart by his ineffable power, will by good thoughts enkindle



light in your soul, that you may have the well-spring of comfort in your own home<sup>1</sup>.”

*St. Gregory of Nazianzum, A.D. 380*<sup>2</sup>.

Gregory, called “Theologus,” from his profound erudition in divine knowledge, and “of Nazianzum,” from a city in Cappadocia, was the friend of Basil, and tutor of Jerome<sup>3</sup>. He was trained, we are told, in the most celebrated schools of rhetoric, at Athens and Alexandria as well as in other cities. For some years he superintended the Church of Nazianzum as the coadjutor or suffragan of his father, who was at that time by age and infirmities disabled from discharging the episcopal functions. He was afterwards called to preside over the metropolitan Church of Constantinople, from which he retired by a voluntary resignation of that see; and having passed the ten remaining years of his life in retirement, he died about the year 391, at the age of probably not less than ninety years.

This Gregory is referred to by the Roman Catholic historian of the Council of Trent<sup>4</sup>, as one of those who “by addressing saints in public harangues laid the foundation of the modern practice of praying to them, though such addresses ought to be regarded as figures of rhetoric rather than religious invocations.” Gregory’s works contain many panegyrics delivered on the anniversaries, or at the tombs of celebrated Christians (some of them his contemporaries), at the close of which he apostrophizes the martyr, apologizing for his own defects, begging him to accept his exertions however unworthy of the merits he has been celebrating, and to look favourably on the com-

<sup>1</sup> P. 79. Ed. 1839, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, vol. i. 1778; vol. ii. 1840.    <sup>3</sup> See Fabricius, vol. ix. p. 383.

<sup>4</sup> Histoire du Concile de Trent, 1751.

pany assembled in honour of him. But in the same harangues we find him apostrophizing things which never had ears to hear, or a mind to understand—It is difficult to believe how any one seeking, not what by ingenuity might be forced to countenance a system, but what is in reality evidence of the faith and practice of the first Christians, could acquiesce with satisfaction in such apostrophes.

If weighed in the balance of truth, these apostrophes carry with them no greater proof that the Christian orator invoked the saint in an act of religious worship, than the words of Tacitus, in apostrophizing Agricola, bear that he sought the aid of his departed friend. There, is, however, this important difference, that Gregory entertained no doubts as to the immortality of the soul; whereas the words of the Roman historian imply that with him the existence of a future state was still an unsettled question. In more recent instances, also, we find misgivings and doubts as to the power of the departed to hear their surviving friends when addressing them. Such for example is the apostrophe made by Frederic II., King of Prussia, in his panegyric of Prince Henry. And after doubts of this sort once expressed, few probably would see any proof of the belief or practice of the heathen biographer or the modern king, were they to make many other similar apostrophes without the expression of such doubt.

But precisely the same expression of uncertainty and doubt and misgiving occurs (and that not once only) in these addresses of Gregory of Nazianzum. It may put the illustration in a clearer light, if we lay the instances we have mentioned side by side with Gregory's. There is a remarkable correspondence in many of the circumstances of the three cases: Tacitus addresses his wife's father as a beloved parent; Frederic addresses his nephew; Gregory addresses his own sister—

TACITUS.

Agricola! If there be a place for the spirits of the pious, if, as philosophers think, great souls perish not with their bodies, rest thou in peace: and CALL THOU us thy family, from weak repinings and feminine wailings to a contemplation of thy virtues, which it is not lawful for us to mourn or wail for; rather let us adorn thee with our admiration, with temporal honours, and if nature so permit, by resembling thee.

FREDERIC.

Prince! You who knew how dear you were to me—how precious was your person to me: if the voice of the living can make itself heard by the dead, listen to a voice which was not unknown to you. SUFFER this frail monument, the only one, alas! that I can erect to your memory to be raised to you<sup>5</sup>.

GREGORY.

Mayest thou enjoy all these, of which when on earth thou receivedst a few droppings from thy genuine disposition towards them. But if thou canst take any interest in our affairs, and this boon is granted by God to pious souls, to have a sense of such things, receive our address instead of many funeral obsequies, and in preference to many<sup>6</sup>.

The whole of this passage of Gregory's address deserves a place here. It is full of Christian faith and love. It is observable that in his reference to the joys of heaven which he believed that his sister already possessed, though he mentions the glory of angels and of other beings and of God, yet there is no allusion to the Virgin Mary.

“Better, I well know, and far more to be prized, are the things thou hast now, than what are seen here; the sound of those who keep holyday, the choir of angels, the vision both of other beings, and also of the Trinity most high; the more pure and perfect illumination of glory no longer withdrawing itself from a mind in bondage, and dissipated by the passions, but entirely contemplated, and held by the whole mind, and shining upon our souls with the full light of the Godhead—all these mayest thou enjoy, of which, &c.”

Another striking instance of the same doubt and uncertainty, not as to the happiness of true Christians in another world, but as to their power to hear the addresses made to them by any here below, occurs in Gregory's first invective against Julian<sup>7</sup>. Having

<sup>5</sup> For both these references, see Taciti Op. Brotier, vol. iv. p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> Greg. Naz. vol. i. p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. i. p. 78.

called all upon earth to hear him, he adds, "Hear, O heaven, and give hear, O earth. And do thou hear, O soul of the great Constantius, IF THERE BE ANY PERCEPTION, and all ye souls of the kings before him who loved Christ:" the note in the Benedictine edition thus interpreting and illustrating these words of Gregory:—"If the dead are sensible of any thing. Thus Isocrates, in the same words but somewhat more fully: 'If there is any perception of what is going on here.'"

After the expression of these doubts, we do not see how any sound argument can be based upon such addresses to the souls of the departed made by Gregory. But, to confine ourselves more particularly to the immediate subject of our inquiry, we do not find any evidence borne by Gregory to the invocation of the Virgin; on the contrary, in his genuine works, he is a clear and strong witness against it.

Here, however, a painful duty is forced on any one who is resolved to make a sacrifice of any thing rather than of the truth:—Gregory of Nazianzum is in the present day confidently cited as one who himself prayed directly and unequivocally to the Virgin Mary. The appeal is thus made to his authority by Dr. N. Wiseman, Roman Catholic Bishop of Melipotamus<sup>8</sup>:—

"But I must not omit another passage of the same Father, neither will I venture to abridge it. It is the conclusion of his dramatic composition entitled, 'Christ Suffering.' Whatever may be put to the account of poetical feeling and expression, enough will remain to satisfy us of his belief. But after all, there is poetry in all sincere prayer; every office of Catholic devotion, public or private, is essentially poetical: and if it was lawful for St. Gregory to address the blessed Virgin as follows under any circumstances, it cannot be idolatrous in us. 'Moreover kindly ad-

<sup>8</sup> Remarks on a Letter from the Rev. W. Palmer, by N. Wiseman, D.D., Bishop of Melipotamus. London, 1841, p. 28.

mit thy Mother, O Word, as an intercessor, and those to whom thou hast granted the grace to loose. August, venerable, all-blessed Virgin! Thou inhabitest the heavenly mansions of the blessed, freed from the incumbrance of mortality, clad in the garment of incorruption, known ever-immortal as a Deity. Be kind from above to my addresses. Yea, yea, most glorious maiden, receive my words; for this distinction belongs to thee alone of mortals, as the mother of the Word, although beyond comprehension! On which relying, I address thee, and to adorn thee bear a garland woven from the purest meads, O Lady; for that many favours thou vouchsafing hast ever freed me from various calamities of enemies visible, but more invisible. When I shall reach the end of my life, as I have entreated, may I ever have thee as protector of the riches of my entire life; and as a most acceptable intercessor with thy Son, together with his well-pleasing servants. Allow me not to be delivered up to torments, and to be the sport of the cruel despoiler of men. Stand by me and save me from the fire and darkness, by the faith which justifieth, and by thy favour; for in thee was seen the grace of God to us. Therefore, I weave for thee a grateful hymn, Virgin Mother, fair and supreme above all other virgins, sublime above all heavenly orders of beings! Mistress! Queen of all things! Delight of our race! be thou ever kind to it, and to me in every place salvation.

“Here,” observes Dr. Wiseman, “is the blessed Virgin directly prayed to, considered a protector, a defender against enemies. In short, in this one address, St. Gregory sums up all that is contained in the passage considered by Mr. Palmer so objectionable in the mouths of modern Catholics.”

To this alleged testimony of the great Theologian, only one answer can be given; but of the certainty of that answer we can entertain no question. Gregory of Nazianzum never wrote one of those words. The

tragedy after the manner of Euripides was not written by Gregory, nor in his age. The greatest difficulty in the case is, how to account for such a citation being made in the present day, without any allusion to the authorities, by which the work is pronounced not to be Gregory's. Had members of the reformed Church alone, or recently, rejected that work, (however strong and sound their reasons might have seemed to us,) we should not have been surprised at our Roman Catholic contemporaries still quoting this tragedy as Gregory's; but here we need cite no other evidence than the united testimonies of a large body of the best Roman Catholic critics<sup>9</sup>, to prove that the work is unquestionably spurious; or rather we need only refer to the Roman Catholic editor, M. Caillau, Paris, 1840, who establishes its spuriousness beyond controversy.

Another passage has been frequently quoted, in proof that Gregory of Nazianzum recognized prayer to the Virgin as an ordinary practice, a century before his time. The passage occurs in an oration, said to have been delivered by this Gregory in praise of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. The testimony has been highly valued; and with the view of retaining it among Gregory's works, great pains have been taken to reconcile the confusion and inconsistencies which abound throughout the work in which it is found. Indeed, the Benedictine editors confess "that no where in the fourth century is the protection and assistance of the blessed Virgin so clearly and so explicitly commended as in this oration<sup>1</sup>." To state the reasons which

<sup>9</sup> In pronouncing that the passage now quoted as genuine by Dr. Wiseman, is falsely assigned to Gregory, these agree with one voice: Tillemont, Dupin, Baillet Jugement des Savants, Baronius, Rivet, Vossius, Bellarmin, Labbe, Ceillier. Fabricius has been lately quoted as acknowledging the genuineness of the work; but incorrectly. He only rejects the notion, of its having been written by Apollinaris: and in the same page he tells us, that Lipsius and Vossius doubted, and that Triller and Valcken undertook to demonstrate that it was spurious. See Greg. Theolog. Paris, 1840. Edit. M. Caillau, Priest. See also Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 375.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 437.

compel us to regard the oration as altogether spurious, and the work of a writer far inferior to Gregory of Nazianzum in ecclesiastical knowledge, we trust will not be thought uninteresting or out of place.

But if, for argument's sake, the oration were admitted as genuine, its evidence amounts to very little; and could not counterbalance the weight of evidence to be put in the other scale. Still, whoever was the author, the story detailed is this: A young lady of great beauty was in imminent danger, in consequence of the violent emotions which her charms had excited in Cyprian, who, to bring her into his toils, and secure her to himself, had recourse to the arts of magic, in which he was versed, and to the assistance of one of those evil spirits whom magicians bribed by acts of homage. "Justina, (to use the speaker's own words,) DISCARDING ALL OTHERS, FLIES FOR REFUGE TO GOD, who had protected Susanna and Thecla, and she takes her own bridegroom for her champion against hateful lusts. And who was this? Christ, who rebukes the winds, and supports the sinking, and consigns a legion of devils to the deep, and rescues from the den the just man exposed as food for lions, and by the outstretching of his arms conquers the wild beasts, and rescues the fugitive prophet swallowed up by the whale, even in its belly preserving his faith, and saves the Assyrian youths in the fire, quenching the flame by his angel, and adding a fourth to the three. Meditating on these and more instances than these, (*and beseeching the Virgin Mary to assist a virgin in peril,*) she throws before her the charm of fasting and mortification, at the same time marring her beauty as treacherous, that she might withdraw the fuel of the flame, and expend the heat of passion, and also making God propitious by her faith and her humility; for God is served by nothing so much as by affliction; and loving-kindness is given in return for tears."

Now, if this statement really came from Gregory

of Nazianzum, to what does it amount? It shows that he reported without a word of approbation or dissatisfaction, the circumstance of a female being in peril having, a century before his time, called upon the Virgin to protect her from the wanton attacks of one who was then a child of Satan, exercising for her ruin his arts as a magician, but whom she converted to Christianity, and who afterwards became Bishop of Carthage, and a martyred saint. The sentence is parenthetical, and no reference is made to the Virgin in what precedes or follows it; on the contrary, the orator expressly states, that Justina, forsaking all other, betook herself only to God. Still were the oration genuine, this parenthesis must be allowed to carry that degree of evidence as to the general practice of the preceding century, which each inquirer after truth may consider it to bear. The arguments, however, against its being admitted as the genuine production of Gregory the Theologian, seem to us conclusive and unanswerable.

In examining this homily with the view of forming a correct judgment as to its genuineness, (its historical accuracy or authenticity is not attempted to be established by any one,) we must throughout have present to our mind the character of the author to whom it is ascribed. Gregory was one of the most learned bishops of the Church; one who, by his extraordinary knowledge of divine things, obtained the surname of the Theologian. He had studied in other famous seats of learning, and especially at Alexandria and Athens; and at both those places, if any where in the world, at that time, the biography of St. Cyprian of Carthage would be a subject of interest, and would be familiarly known and imparted. Could Gregory then be the author of a homily filled with so many gross mistakes and inconsistencies, and so inexplicable a confusion of facts and persons? The alternative is of no slight importance; and the question deserves a patient and full examination. If the genuineness of the oration be maintained, then this



great teacher and theologian is convicted of such gross mistakes as are not only inconsistent with the range of his learning and knowledge, but would disgrace any ordinary person, who had the opportunities with which he was favoured; and if the glaring inconsistencies and ignorance pervading the homily compel us to pronounce against its genuineness, then this testimony to the early prevalence of invocations to the Virgin Mary (which, slight as it is, is acknowledged to be the clearest and most explicit which the fourth century can produce,) must be given up as a thing of nought.

1st. Then, nothing is known as to the time, or place, or occasion of the delivery of this oration. The notice of Nicetas, in the Paris edition of 1611, states that it was spoken to the people of Nazianzum, the day after the festival of St. Cyprian, on the orator's return from the warm baths, at the foot of the precipitous mountain near the town, which he frequented, partly for the comfort of retirement, and partly for the cure of an infirmity under which he laboured. But this idea is rejected by the Roman Catholic editors in the Paris edition of 1778, because the orator addresses his audience as persons with whom he had been only a short time acquainted; and they maintain that the oration must have been delivered at Constantinople, A.D. 379.

2ndly. The Cyprian, in praise of whom the orator, whoever he was, delivered this panegyric, and of whose licentiousness and vice, and magical arts, and violence towards Justina he was speaking, was Saint Cyprian, the renowned Bishop of Carthage; whereas all the editors and critics with one voice pronounce such a stigma upon HIS character to be a calumny which must not, for a moment, be attached to that holy man's name. Thus it is that Dr. Wiseman speaks of "the machinations of the magician Cyprian," without making any allusion to the Saint of Carthage, whose memory we hold in reverence. But, whoever was the orator, that the subject of his panegyric was St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, admits of no

doubt, and ought not thus to be disguised. The words of the orator, variously, and again and again repeated, fix the identity of the individual beyond question. Thus in one passage he says, "This Cyprian, my friends, (that those of you who know it may be more pleased with the remembrance, and those who know it not, may learn the fairest of all our histories, and the common glory of Christians,) is that man, the great name formerly of the Carthaginians, but now of the whole world." "He not only presided over the Church of the Carthaginians, or of Africa, (from him and on account of him celebrated to the present day,) but also the whole west, and almost the very east, and the south, and the north, wherever fame reached. Thus Cyprian became ours."

Baronius<sup>2</sup>, the great Roman Catholic authority, affirms that all this was a mistake in the orator; that the anecdote must have related to another Cyprian; and that as for St. Cyprian of Carthage, the story charging him with having used magical arts is AN EXPLODED FABLE.

Can we conceive Gregory the Theologian, the most learned man of his time, who had himself studied in Alexandria and Athens, to have fallen into such gross errors, and to have been the propagator of such a fable, when we know that the history of St. Cyprian's martyrdom (which we have at the present day) written by Pontius, his own deacon, was then spread through Christendom?

3rdly. The orator, in a manner<sup>3</sup>, totally at variance with what Gregory's works inform us of his own sentiments, states, that "the very ashes of Cyprian, if used in faith, dislodged devils, expelled diseases, foretold things to come; as they know who have made the trial, and have delivered the account down to us, and will deliver it for times to come!"

<sup>2</sup> Baronius, Martyr. 26 Sept. p. 376, Paris, 1607; and Annal. Eccles. vol. ii. p. 564. Anno Christi 250.

<sup>3</sup> P. 449.

4thly. The orator <sup>4</sup> relates that the body of Cyprian, having been hidden by a pious woman, was for a long time concealed, and was brought to light by a revelation made to another woman: whereas the Acts of the Proconsulate state, that the body of Cyprian of Carthage, after he was beheaded, was carried at night by torchlight to the burying-place of Macrobius on the Massalian way, near the fishponds, with many prayers and exultations <sup>5</sup>.

5thly. The orator asserts that the persecution by which the Cyprian of whom he speaks was first banished and then beheaded, took place under Decius, who was bent on destroying so eminent a Christian; whereas, Cyprian of Carthage, though banished in the Decian persecution, yet returned from exile, and after some years of labour in his episcopal office, suffered martyrdom about A.D. 259, at the close of Valerian's reign. There is much difficulty in fixing these dates with minute exactness; but allowing for all the varieties of reckoning, the inconsistencies and anachronisms in this oration remain unaffected.

6thly. While with one voice it is denied that the Cyprian, to whose memory the stain of attempting Justina's seduction attached could be the Bishop of Carthage, many of the circumstances specified by the orator, as belonging to the subject of his eulogy, correspond precisely with the acknowledged facts of that Saint Cyprian's life. Cyprian's biographer was Pontius his own deacon, who witnessed his martyrdom; and what he tells us of the birth, station, learning, wealth, liberality, and the death of his master, coincides exactly with the descriptions in this panegyric. The circumstances, too, beautifully told by the orator of his Cyprian having written many letters to encourage and comfort his people, both the memoir of Pontus and Cyprian's letters still extant prove to have belonged to the Bishop of Carthage. Whereas,

<sup>4</sup> P. 448.

<sup>5</sup> Cyprian, Paris, 1726, cxlvii.

on the other hand, the stories detailed by the orator of his Cyprian practising arts of magic, and summoning the devil to his aid in the work of seduction, and then destroying his books, and then being converted by Justina (the very name of her who was the fellow-martyr of Cyprian of Nicomedia) after he had attempted to ruin her, are all irreconcilable with the facts of the life of St. Cyprian of Carthage, who was himself a married man before his conversion; who was converted in his fiftieth year, by his friend Cæcilius the presbyter, and who, instead of disgracing himself by magical and diabolical arts, was engaged in the pursuits of literature, and practised every moral virtue. The orator distinctly announces that the person of whom he spoke was the renowned Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, the glory of the Christian Church: the question again forces itself upon us, "Could Gregory the Theologian have been that orator?"

7thly. To avoid the scandal of leaving such fabulous imputations on the character of the great St. Cyprian, commentators suggest that not he, but Cyprian of Nicomedia, was the person meant by the orator. But that suggestion only involves the oration in other inconsistencies, besides contradicting the express declaration of the orator himself. The orator says his Cyprian was beheaded under Decius, who died about the year 251, whereas no account fixes the martyrdom of Cyprian of Nicomedia at an earlier date than the reign of Diocletian and Maximinian, which did not commence till after the lapse of thirty years from the death of Decius.

8thly. Supposing the orator to mean Cyprian of Nicomedia, then he is altogether mistaken as to the kind of death suffered by the martyr; he says it was by the sword severing the head from the body (the real mode of the martyrdom of Cyprian of Carthage), whereas Cyprian of Nicomedia, together with his fellow-martyr, Justina, was burnt on an instrument of torture, called the gridiron, or frying-pan.

9thly. If Cyprian of Nicomedia be the subject of the orator's panegyric, then the story of the body having been hidden by one woman, and afterward supernaturally shown to another, is no less inapplicable to him, than to Cyprian of Carthage. For we are expressly told, that the corpse of the martyr of Nicomedia was exposed to be devoured by wild beasts, but that some Christian soldiers carried it away by night, and bore it to Rome, whence it was removed to Constantinople, and buried in the basilica, near the baptistry.

Lastly. The passage in which the orator tells us that one woman concealed and another discovered the remains of Cyprian, contains, as it now stands, a most extraordinary sentence, by no means to be overlooked in our present inquiry as to the author of this oration,—"That the women might also be purified; as THOSE WOMEN, who both before gave birth to Christ, and told his disciples after his resurrection from the dead; so now also the one woman showing, the other giving up [the body of Cyprian as] a common benefit."

With such inconsistencies, and contradictions, and inextricable confusion before us, it is impossible for us to regard this panegyric as the production of Gregory of Nazianzum. We cannot conceive that a bishop so deeply imbued with learning in all its branches, sacred and secular, doctrinal and historical, could have delivered an oration, which professes, in the plainest language and by a variety of expressions, to be a panegyric of that Cyprian who was the renowned prelate of Carthage, the glory of Africa and the world, and yet which is pervaded with a tissue of inconsistencies and contradictions, historical and biographical, from its first to its last page.

The insulated parenthesis, however, in this oration, which we have above quoted, is confessed by Roman Catholics to be, of all, the most clear and explicit testimony of the invocation of the Virgin, which the fourth century supplies!

But here a question naturally forces itself upon the

mind: If no satisfaction can be afforded as to the authenticity and genuineness of this oration, will not the undisputed works of Gregory of Nazianzum enable us to infer what were his own sentiments as to the invocation of the Virgin Mary? Will not his compositions, either in prose or in verse, satisfactorily inform us whether he addressed the Virgin in prayer himself, or was aware that the Christian Church, as a body, and by its members, so addressed her?

Undoubtedly Gregory has left quite enough upon record, in his own undisputed works, to enable any one to answer these questions for himself. The result of a diligent inquiry is, that there is no intimation whatever of Gregory's having looked to the Virgin Mary for any help or aid, or ever having invoked her himself; nor does he ever allude to her worship by others, as a practice with which he was acquainted.

But the nature and circumstances of Gregory's works take his testimony out of the common class of negative evidence, and invest it with a force of no ordinary cogency. The course of his argument often led him to speak of the union in Christ of the divine and human nature, and consequently of the birth of Christ. On all these occasions he speaks of the Virgin Mary as a being of untainted purity in body and mind, often using expressions which, though not in themselves involving any unsound doctrine, yet are liable to misinterpretation, and which perhaps made the descent to errors in a subsequent age more easy; but none of which imply any trust in her mediation, or any invocation of her aid<sup>6</sup>.

Gregory has left behind him a large number of poems on religious and moral subjects, of unequal merit as compositions, still breathing throughout the spirit of an enlightened and pious Christian. Of these poems, thirty, at least, are hymns of prayer and thanksgiving. Yet, among them, it is in vain to search for

<sup>6</sup> See vol. i. pp. 728. 852; vol. ii. p. 85.

any invocation to the Virgin, or any address to her, or any recognition of her influence as intercessor, or of any power given to her as the dispenser of blessings or mercies. In the variety of his petitions, we find him asking for all things needful, both for the soul and body. It is interesting and edifying to compare these prayers, not only with the less solemnly authorized hymns of prayer and praise now offered in Roman Catholic churches, but even with the appointed services in the Liturgy of Rome. He prays for guidance in his journey, for protection from his enemies, for a pure heart and life, for help and acceptance in the hour of death; but we find no "Mary, mother of grace, protect us from our enemies, make our lives pure, prepare for us a safe journey, receive us in the hour of death." Every address is made to God his Saviour; no mention occurs of the Virgin's name, nor any allusion to her advocacy. From first to last, God is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega of Gregory's worship and invocation.

There are, however, both in his prose compositions and in his poems, references to the Virgin; and the testimony they bear is clear and satisfactory.

In his oration on the Nativity, he uses this strong expression, "Christ is born of a virgin: ye women, live as virgins, that ye may be mothers of Christ."

In a short poem, speaking of his own mother, he says, "Nonna praying at this table was taken away, and now shines (with Susannah, Mary, and the Annas,) a support of women."

In one verse, he applies to the Virgin an epithet which the translator renders, "like to God," but which the commentator properly directs us to interpret "pious."

In another poem written in honour of the virgin state, as an example of the offspring surpassing its parent in excellence, he says:—

"And Christ is indeed of Mary, but far more excellent NOT ONLY THAN MARY, and those who are

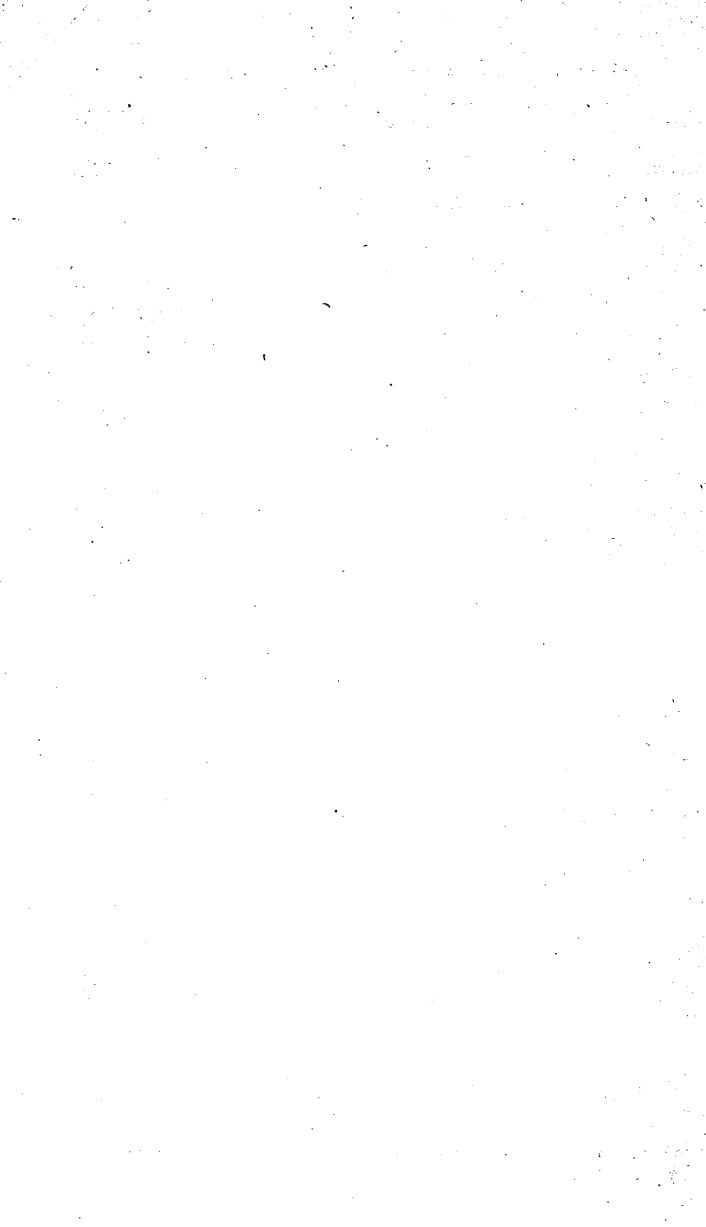
clothed with flesh, but also than all the intellects which the spacious heaven inveils."

These are not the addresses and sentiments of one who invoked the Virgin, or acknowledged her (as the spurious tragedy does) to be "supreme above all heavenly orders of beings."

We will only make one more reference. In his sermon on the Nativity, he calls upon the Christian to honour Bethlehem and the manger; to hasten with the star; and offer with the magi; and worship with the shepherds; and sing with the angels and archangels. "Let there be," says the preacher, "one united celebration made by the powers of heaven and earth; for I am persuaded that they join in this festival." Of Joseph and the Virgin he there says nothing.

THE END.





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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XIV.

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ON THE  
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
AGAINST IT.—*Continued.*



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- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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*On the Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the  
Primitive Church against it.—Continued.*

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*St. Ephraim the Syrian, A.D. 370—380.*

EPHRAIM the Syrian is said to have been born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia, and (though the tradition is much questioned) to have been ordained deacon by St. Basil. It is generally considered that he never became a priest. The place of his ministry was Edessa; and his death probably happened between the years 375 and 380. His works, as they are now offered to us, are written partly in Greek, partly in Syriac; though many of the learned are disposed to doubt whether he ever wrote himself any work in Greek. A legend, which has, not without reason, been thought to savour of the fabulous, says, that he spoke only his own language till he was ordained by Basil, when suddenly, and at once, he spoke Greek as fluently and as accurately as his native tongue.

The great and, for the present at least, the almost insurmountable difficulty of distinguishing the genu-

ine works of Ephraim from the spurious, renders the evidence, which would otherwise be valuable, most unsatisfactory. The Roman edition, by the two Assemani, has materially added to the difficulty by admitting, for the first time, as genuine, many compositions which are unquestionably spurious; and they have so unfaithfully rendered passages to support the doctrines of Rome, that till the labours of the learned shall have separated the genuine from the spurious works, Ephraim Syrus will still be quoted to countenance errors, which had no place in his creed.

These Roman editors attempt to justify their admission of works among Ephraim's which were never published as his before, on the principles of the Church of Rome with regard to apocryphal books of Scripture; and then indulge in triumphant rhapsodies on the annoyance which heretics would feel on finding such accumulated support to Roman doctrine poured in from the east.

For a more particular statement of the unjustifiable proceedings of these editors, we must refer the reader to "*The Worship of the Virgin*," p. 224. He will there see how impossible it is to depend with any satisfaction on their edition; and how necessary it is, for the sake of the truth, that the arduous task of preparing an edition worthy of Christian scholars should be undertaken afresh.

In the midst of so much uncertainty we might under other circumstances have been induced to pass on; or, according to the beautiful suggestion of Tillemont, we might have been satisfied with culling a few of those affecting passages, which can never fail to find a response in the breast of every contrite Christian from whatever pen they came. But when persons of high station in the Church of Rome confidently appeal in the present day to the evidence of Ephraim in proof that prayers were offered to the Virgin Mary in the primitive Church; and in that appeal cite passages as genuine and indisputable,

which on the very face of them have no pretensions whatever to be regarded as Ephraim's, to abstain from noticing such proceedings would in an inquiry like the present, be nothing else than to sacrifice the truth.

Dr. N. Wiseman, Roman Catholic Bishop of Melipotamus, in his lectures delivered in the chapel in Moorfields, in the year 1836, thus speaks (vol. ii. p. 109):

“Another saint of this age, St. Ephraim, is remarkable as the oldest father and writer of the Oriental Church. His expressions are really so exceedingly strong, that I am sure many Catholics of the present day would feel a delicacy or difficulty in using some of them in their prayers, for fear of offending persons of another religion; they go so much beyond those which we use.”

Having referred to two passages which need not detain us, Dr. Wiseman proceeds—

“There are passages, however, innumerable in his writings much stronger, and I will read you one or two as specimens of the many prayers found in his works addressed to the blessed Virgin:—‘In thee, patroness and mediatrix with God, who was born from thee, the human race placeth its joy, and ever is dependent on thy patronage, and in thee alone hath refuge and strength, who hast full confidence in Him. Behold, I also draw nigh to thee with a fervent soul, not having courage to approach thy Son, but imploring that through thy intercession I may obtain salvation. Despise not then thy servant who placeth all his hopes in thee after God; reject him not placed in greatest danger, and oppressed with many griefs; but thou who art compassionate, and the mother of a merciful God, have mercy upon thy servant; free me from fatal concupiscence, &c.’ In another prayer we meet with the following words addressed to the same ever-glorious Virgin: ‘After the Trinity, thou art mistress of all; after the Paraclete, another paraclete; after the Mediator, mediatrix



of the whole world.' Surely this is more than enough to prove that if the glory of the Syriac Church, this friend of the great St. Basil, had lived in our times, he would not have been allowed to officiate in the English Church, but would have been obliged to retire to some humble chapel, if he wished to discharge his sacred functions !”

This letter Dr. Wiseman published in 1836 ; and after a lapse of five years, in his remarks on the letter of the Rev. W. Palmer<sup>1</sup>, the same author undertaking to compare the present Pope's Encyclical Letter with the language of ancient times, has felt himself justified in making the following statement:—

“The Fathers—S. Ephraim Syrus, the friend of St. Basil, and most highly extolled by contemporary Fathers, thus prays to the blessed Virgin: ‘Entirely renew me, making me a temple of the most holy, and life-giving, and most excellent Spirit, who dwelt and overshadowed thy immaculate womb, Power from on high.’”

“Again<sup>2</sup>, the same must be said of St. Ephraim. Page after page of his writings is filled with prayers to the mother of God, which go far beyond any thing that Catholics are in the habit of using now-a-days. The few extracts that I make chiefly with reference to Mr. Palmer's objections, will afford but poor specimens of the context of his prayers. Thus he addresses her: ‘O Virgin, Lady, mother of God, most blessed mother of God . . . . incline thine ear, and hear my words, sent forth from unclean and impure lips. For, behold, with a contrite soul and an humble mind I have recourse to thy mercy. *For I have no other hope or refuge, my only comfort and quick defence; . . . . of my withered heart divine refreshment. For in thee I hope, in thee I exult.*’ Again, ‘Virgin Lady, mother of God, in thee I place all my hopes; and in thee I trust, more exalted than all heavenly power!’—Operum, tom. iii. Græco Lat. p. 524.”

<sup>1</sup> London, 1841, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> P. 23.

It is very painful to reflect, that Dr. Wiseman in aid of his argument, should have thus triumphantly quoted, we do not say passages the genuineness of which was disputed on one side, and maintained on the other (although even in that case we might have expected some notice to have been in fairness taken of their disputed genuineness)—we do not say passages from works which, though once ascribed to a Father, have been long acknowledged, even by the authorities of his own Church, to be spurious (as we found to be the case in his citing the authority of St. Athanasius), but absolutely from works which never were ascribed to Ephraim IN ANY AGE, which are not ascribed to him in ANY ONE manuscript or printed book, which were NEVER EVEN BOUND UP with Ephraim's works before the Roman edition of 1732, whose editors published them from a Vatican manuscript; while that very edition (from which also Dr. Wiseman quotes them) so far from representing them as the prayers of Ephraim, itself enables us to prove them not to have been his. The reader who wishes to see the case stated fully will find it in "The Romish Worship of the Virgin," p. 229.

These prayers having nothing whatever to do with Ephraim Syrus, we need scarcely remark, that internal evidence, clear and irresistible, proves them to have been of a much later age, while, in point of direct worship to the Virgin, they might be cited as countenancing all the lamentable corruptions of Bonaventura, when he applies to Mary the language which, in the Psalms, is addressed to the Most High. The writer scruples not to say to the Virgin, "Thou only art the most highest over all the earth," nor to apply to her the name which our blessed Saviour appropriated to Himself—"the true vine." The first of these prayers ends thus (it is painful to transcribe such an ascription of glory to a creature, however pure and holy): "That being liberated from the darkness of sin, I might be deemed worthy to glorify and freely celebrate thee,

the only true mother of the true Light, Christ our God, because thou alone WITH HIM and THROUGH HIM, art blessed and glorified by every creature, visible and invisible, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.”

But in the same section, Dr. Wiseman quotes a passage found in a sermon, formerly attributed to Ephraim, “On the praises of the blessed Virgin,” and which contains stronger and more decided passages than those which he has extracted. For example, the following:—“By thee we are reconciled to Christ our God, thy most sweet Son. Thou art the only advocate and succour of sinners, and of those who are destitute of help. Thou art the redemption and liberation of captives. We have no confidence but in thee, most pure virgin. We are wholly under thy guardianship and protection. Wherefore, we fly to thee alone, and with frequent tears, O most blessed mother, we implore thee, and fall before thee, suppliantly calling upon thee, and praying thee, that thy most sweet Son, our Saviour, and Giver of the life of all, may not, on account of the many crimes we have committed, take us away from the midst, and, LIKE A LION, TEAR OUR MISERABLE SOUL IN PIECES. Hail, fountain of grace, and of all consolation! Hail, refuge of sinners! Hail, best mediatrix between God and man! Hail, most efficacious reconciler of the whole world! Hail, our comforter! Hail, sure and best hope of our soul! Hail, sure salvation of all Christians who sincerely and truly have recourse to thee!”

This discourse is not a whit more the genuine work of Ephraim Syrus, than are the prayers already examined. Neither the Syriac nor the Greek has it. And the candid and judicious Tillemont, though he sets the seal of genuineness on all which he is not compelled to reject, or, at least, leaves, in doubtful cases, the decision to the reader, dismisses this work without hesitation, and in these strong words:—“Neither the eulogy of the holy Virgin, nor the prayer addressed

to her, has any thing of St. Ephraim. The eulogy appears to be the production of a Jerusalem monk."

In a passage of the treatise on the second Advent, which some have declared to be supposititious, the writer addresses the mother of our Lord; but, since he equally addresses the cross, and Jerusalem above, and the kingdom of heaven, and since the whole is an imaginary representation of what will happen to a condemned soul, and has nothing to do with our worship on earth, the passage needs not detain us<sup>3</sup>. The following is represented as being the language of the lost souls, mingled with groans and bitter cries, when they see themselves left altogether by the Lord and his saints:—

“Farewell, ye holy and just, from whom we are separated; friends and relations, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, apostles, prophets, and martyrs of the Lord! Farewell, lady, who didst give birth to God! Thou, indeed, didst labour much, exhorting us to save ourselves; but we would not repent and be saved. Farewell thou, too, honoured and life-giving cross! Farewell, thou paradise of delight, which the Lord planted! Farewell, Jerusalem, who art above, the mother of the first-born! Farewell, kingdom of heaven, that hast no end! All ye, farewell! we shall never see you again; we are going to judgment, which hath no end or rest!”

On this passage, however, we must observe, that though the Virgin seems to be represented as exhorting sinners to repent and be saved, yet that implies no belief in the writer as to her personal good offices, or as to any power in her of addressing the minds of sinners; for in another treatise on the same subject, the writer says, “Our mother, Jerusalem above, is calling upon us with love and desire to come to her: ‘Come to me, come to me, my dear children. In the bridechamber of your Lord let your numbers

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. p. 220.

be increased in the light of the holy angels. Let me see you with glory and honour, and with joy and exaltation. Desire me, my children, as I desire you<sup>4</sup>.”

But while in no one of the works, which we may with any thing approaching satisfactory assurance regard as Ephraim's, can any address to the Virgin be found, praying for her patronage and intercession; many passages occur in which the entire absence of the Virgin's name seems to afford strong evidence that the writer did not look to her as her worshippers would do, nor habitually recur to her as an exalted and especial object of pious meditation. For example, in his exhortation to fly to God in prayer, when we are assailed by the enemy, urging his brethren to keep their minds from evil by a succession of holy thoughts, he assures them that they never need to be in want of a proper subject of meditation; and he proceeds thus:

“We have what we may meditate upon at all times. We have the angels, we have the archangels; we have the powers, the glorious dominions; we have the cherubim and seraphim; we have God, the Sovereign of all, that glorious and holy name. We have the prophets, we have the apostles; we have the holy Gospels, the words of the Lord; we have the martyrs, we have all the saints, we have the confessors; we have the holy fathers, patriarchs; we have the shepherds, we have the priests; we have the heavens, and all things in them! Think on these things, and you shall be the sons of the Lord God, by the grace and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power, now and for ever, through all eternity. Amen<sup>5</sup>.”

If the Virgin Mary had possessed that place in this writer's mind which our Roman Catholic brethren now assign to her in theirs; if he contemplated her as “being exalted above the choir of angels in

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 169.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. i. p. 198.

heaven," as having "been taken up into the ethereal bridechamber, where the King of kings sits on his starry throne," as being the "refuge of sinners," "the queen of angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all saints," can we conceive that, when enumerating the various subjects of a Christian's pious contemplation, from the Eternal Father down to the Christian himself, he could have omitted all mention of the Virgin Mary?

Instead, then, of agreeing in the sarcasm that, "if this glory of the Syriac Church had lived in our times, he would not have been allowed to officiate in the English Church, but would have been obliged to retire to some humble chapel, if he wished to discharge his sacred functions, because he uses expressions, when addressing the Virgin, stronger than are ever used by any of the Roman Church now;"—instead of allowing that "page after page of Ephraim's writings is filled with prayers to the Mother of God;" we believe that the most zealous and indefatigable advocate of her worship cannot bring forward a single passage which an upright and enlightened criticism would pronounce genuine, and which contains the record of a single act of adoration or religious invocation of the Virgin Mary, either by Ephraim himself or by any of his contemporaries. The prayers cited with such unqualified confidence by Dr. Wiseman, have nothing whatever to do with Ephraim the Syrian of Edessa, as their author or recorder.

*St. Gregory of Nyssa, A.D. 390<sup>6</sup>.*

Gregory, brother of Basil the Great, devoted himself for many years to the calling of an orator and rhetorician. About the age of forty, and about the year 372, he was consecrated Bishop of Nyssa in Capadocia by Basil. He was a married man; and<sup>7</sup> Gre-

<sup>6</sup> Three vol. fol. Paris, 1633.

<sup>7</sup> Epist. 95.

gory of Nazianzum condoles with him on the loss of his wife, after he had been admitted into the Christian priesthood. In common with many of his contemporaries, he suffered much discomfort and persecution in consequence of the bitter controversies which distracted the Church. The time of his release from the burden and cares of a servant of Christ is not certainly known; but it could not have been before the closing years of the fourth century, for he was unquestionably present at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 394<sup>8</sup>.

Besides those works the genuineness of which is not disputed, some are ascribed to him which are with reason suspected, while others must at once be set aside as spurious, bearing in their very titles and character the impress of a later age. With reference, however, to the question now before us, we need not dwell on this point, because in none of the works, whether rightly or incorrectly referred to Gregory, is any countenance whatever given to the invocation of the Virgin Mary. In other departments of faith and practice we perceive traces of superstition in his own mind, and indications of that degeneracy and corruption which then began to tarnish many portions of the Christian Church. In his oratorical harangues over the ashes of martyrs (if those homilies be the genuine productions of this Gregory), while we are offended by much of the declamation of the sophist, we seek in vain for that soberness of judgment which is indispensable in a teacher of divine things. But in those genuine works, in which he evidently wrote his thoughts calmly and deliberately, there is much worthy of the pen of a Christian philosopher. Thus in his elaborate work written against the errors of Eunomius, we find reflections seldom surpassed by the best writers of any age:

“That nothing which is brought into existence by

<sup>8</sup> Fabricius, vol. ix. p. 98.

creation is an object of worship to man, the divine word has enacted, as we may learn from almost the whole of the sacred volume. Moses, the tables, the law, the prophets in order, the Gospels, the decrees of all the Apostles, equally forbid us to look to the creature<sup>9</sup> . . . That we may, therefore, not be subject to these things, we who are taught by the Scriptures to look to the true Godhead, are instructed to regard every created being as foreign from the divine nature, and to serve and reverence the uncreated nature alone, the characteristic and distinguishing property of which is neither to have had any beginning of existence, nor ever to cease to exist<sup>1</sup>.”

In his comment on the Lord's Prayer<sup>2</sup>, which will repay a fuller examination, Gregory defines prayer to be “A petition for some good presented with supplication to God;” adding among other valuable suggestions, “Have a pure mind, and then boldly address God with your own voice, and call Him your Father, who is the Sovereign of all. He will look upon you with fatherly eyes; He will clothe you with the divine robe, and adorn you with his ring; He will prepare your feet with Gospel sandals for the journey upwards, and will settle you in the heavenly country<sup>3</sup>.”

We have already said that in the works of Gregory we can discover no single trace, however faint, of any religious invocation of the Virgin. His evidence, however, does not consist merely in the absence of an expression of religious feelings towards her in discussions which might not naturally suggest them, and where silence might be compatible with such feelings; but when speaking of God manifest in the flesh, of the pure and spotless nature of Christ as man, of God becoming man, taking Himself a body in which the fulness of the Godhead should dwell, though he speaks much of the miraculous conception of Christ,

<sup>9</sup> Vol. ii. p. 572.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. ii. p. 724.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 574.

<sup>3</sup> P. 731.



and his miraculous birth, he draws our minds, as it were, of deliberate purpose, from the person of her who gave birth to the Saviour, and fixes them on the office and part assigned to her in that mysterious dispensation. There may be exceptions which even a careful examination may have passed unobserved; but, in general, when he is most specific in maintaining the spotless purity of Christ's birth, he never mentions the Virgin Mary by name; his expressions for the most part being "The Virgin purity," "The Virginity," and (much less frequently) "The Virgin." His object is to maintain that God became man by a miraculous birth of virgin-purity; and he seems to regard the Virgin as having discharged her office in this mysterious economy of grace when she had given birth to the Redeemer, who took our nature of the seed of David from her substance.

In his work on the life of Moses, and his account of the creation, he thus speaks of Christ:

"This is the only-begotten God, who Himself comprehends all things, and yet pitched his tabernacle among us. Marriage did not produce his divine flesh; but He becomes the framer of his own body, marked out by the finger of God; for the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her<sup>4</sup>."

It must be remarked that, whereas the Roman Ritual applies the language of the book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon to the Virgin Mary, and<sup>5</sup> authors who have written in defence of her worship, appeal to those oracles of truth as evidence of her exalted character, yet this Gregory, in his elaborate interpretation of those books, though he speaks very much at large, and very minutely of Christ's birth, does not allude to the Virgin at all. This point is more especially observable in his spiritual application

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. pp. 224. 234.

<sup>5</sup> Coccius, vol. i. 262, appeals to Canticles, iv. 7, as a scripture proof of the supreme excellence of the Virgin. See also Roman Breviary, Æst. p. 600.

of the Song of Solomon to the Christian dispensation. He considers that under the figure of a marriage, is represented the union between the human soul and God. In the course of his discussion he refers to St. John lying on our Lord's bosom; he invites the daughters of Jerusalem to look to their mother Jerusalem which is above; he interprets one passage as foreshadowing the angels attending our Lord when He became man; another as fulfilled in the devotedness of the twelve Apostles; another in the beauty of the Christian Church; he speaks of the genealogy of Christ traced from Abraham and David; he directs our thoughts to Nathanael and Andrew, and "the great Apostle John;" he tells us of Paul pouring the pure doctrine of truth into the ears of THE HOLY VIRGIN, but that virgin was Thecla. Of the Virgin Mary he says nothing.

If from the works of Gregory of Nyssa we turn to the Roman Ritual as established and observed at the present day, the conclusion is forced upon us, that the framers of that Liturgy and this Gregory have not drawn from the same well-head. Passage after passage in the Roman service on the feasts of the Virgin are applied to her, which Gregory applies to the glory of Christ's divinity, of his truth, and of his Church. Nay, when he dwells on the mystery, that Christ alone of all the myriads on myriads of men was born, not as others, but of the purity of a virgin<sup>6</sup>, he applies no single passage of the whole book to the Virgin Mary; nor does he speak of her personally, but only of the VIRGINHOOD of which Christ was born<sup>7</sup>.

One or two passages will suffice to establish these points, though the full weight of the evidence can be felt only by seeing in the very writings of Gregory how many opportunities offered themselves to him, for the natural expression of sentiments of religious reverence and worship towards the Virgin Mary, as

<sup>6</sup> P. 667.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 668, 669.

an object of invocation, where we find very different thoughts suggested. In his first homily on the Canticles, he says :

“Think ye that I am speaking of that Solomon who was born of Bathsheba? Another Solomon is signified, who is also himself born of the SEED OF DAVID, whose name is Peace, the true King of Israel, whose wisdom is unbounded, or rather whose essence is wisdom and truth<sup>8</sup>.”

On the mystery, How in Virginhood there could be birth? he says :

“Since one part of Christ is not produced, and the other is produced, the unproduced we call that which is eternal and before the world, and which made all things; the produced that which, according to the dispensation effected for our sakes, was conformed to the body of our humility. Rather it would be preferable to set forth this idea in the very words of God: the Unproduced we call the Word, who was in the beginning, by whom all things were made, and without whom was nothing that was made; the Produced, we call Him who became flesh and dwelt among us, whom even when incarnate the effulgent glory shows to be God manifest in the flesh—verily God, the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father<sup>9</sup>.”

In all these passages, (and many others might be added,) even when maintaining that the Virgin purity was preserved in the birth of Christ<sup>1</sup>, there is no mention made of the Virgin Mary, nor one word uttered in her praise; no reliance placed on her merits, or on the power of her intercession; no religious invocation for her good offices, or for the mediation of her prayers. With Gregory of Nyssa, God in Christ is all in all.

*St. Ambrose, A.D. 397.*

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, has ever been held

<sup>8</sup> Vol. i. p. 475.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. i. p. 662.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 537.

in high esteem by every branch of the Catholic Church, no less than by the Church of Rome. In a collect in the Roman Ritual, (a prayer unjustifiably and unholily addressed to the spirit of a mortal, however pure,) he is called "most excellent Teacher," "Light of the Holy Church," "Lover of the divine law;" and many of the hymns which are ascribed to him, the Church of Rome has adopted into her public service. He was born in France, probably about the year 340; and his death is generally referred to the year 397. He became Bishop of Milan in 374.

Through all the works of St. Ambrose, not a single passage can be found which gives the faintest indication that the worship of the Virgin in any shape formed part of Christian worship in his time, or that he and his fellow-Christians placed any confidence in her intercession, or offered prayers to Almighty God pleading for acceptance through her mediation. And this, in the case of St. Ambrose, is proof of no ordinary weight and character. For not only are his writings interspersed throughout with prayers and supplications to the throne of grace, (in some of which mention is directly made of the incarnation of our Lord in the Virgin Mary,) but he has left us many of his own hymns which, as we have said, the Roman Church has incorporated into her Liturgy. These hymns glow, indeed, with fervent piety, and are well fitted to lift the Christian's soul heavenward to our God and Saviour; but in no single line does Ambrose rob that Saviour of his own proper and exclusive honour as our only Mediator and Advocate; no where does he make mention of the Virgin's intercession under the plea that he is honouring the Saviour when he honours the Mother of that Saviour.

Had any such worship of the Virgin prevailed in his time as we now see in the Church of Rome, surely these fruits of the heart and the pen of the Christian poet would have contained some intimations of it. Surely these divine songs would have

afforded ample room for his feelings and his imagination in addresses to the Virgin, had his faith and his understanding sanctioned any mention of her name as an object of religious worship. But the contrary is most strikingly the case.

In the Breviary, corrected agreeably to the decree of the Council of Trent, and commanded by Pope Pius in 1568 to be used throughout the world, many of the hymns are ascribed to their supposed authors. The hymns ascribed to St. Ambrose stand out in strong, and at the same time lovely, contrast with the degenerate effusions of later days. No address to the Virgin is discoverable in any of them; no prayer to the Supreme Being to hear her intercession in the Christian's behalf. The addresses of Ambrose are made to God alone, and are offered to Christ alone. In these hymns he speaks again and again of the Virgin-mother<sup>2</sup>, whose honour and joy was Christ; he quotes our Lord's words upon the cross, "Woman, behold thy Son!" he speaks of the believer's hopes in life and in death; but that hope he describes as being founded not in the patronage, and advocacy, and intercession of the Virgin, but solely in the mercy of God, who for our sakes became man and was born of a pure Virgin. We must also observe that whereas the hymns of later ages represent her as the Bride of the Most High, and speak of the Almighty as her Husband, whose wrath she may appease, Ambrose represents her as the royal palace of chastity, the chamber from which the Saviour proceeded (alluding to the Psalmist's expression of the Sun going forth from his chamber rejoicing as a giant to run his course), the temple in which for a while He dwelt. But when he speaks of Him as a Bridegroom the bride is his holy Church, of whom He is at once the Spouse, the Redeemer, and the Builder.

The works of Ambrose lead us to infer that he

<sup>2</sup> Hymn xii.

considered the Virgin Mary holy and immaculate in her person, and holy and mysterious in her office; blessed among women; and in purity of mind, piety of soul, devotedness to God, attention to friends and relatives in their need, in a word, in all that can adorn the servants of heaven, a bright example for those who would be approved servants of God. He also strenuously maintains (though sometimes by arguments which may not be generally approved) that after the birth of Christ she remained a virgin<sup>3</sup>. In his work on Virgins, and in his treatise called "The Institution of Virgins," he dwells very much on her excellence; and he encourages Christian virgins by suggesting the thought of her presenting them to our Saviour in heaven<sup>4</sup>; and had he addressed her by invocation, or offered prayers to God through her intercession, it would appear of all things most improbable that he should not have given the slightest indication of such belief and practice, either on his own part or on the part of the Church. But so it is.

It may be satisfactory to quote two or three specimens of the mode in which Ambrose speaks of the Virgin. He generally calls her Mary; but sometimes, though very rarely, adds (what we are ever ready ourselves to add) the epithet "holy<sup>5</sup>."

On the words of Elizabeth, "And blessed is she who believed," Ambrose observes, "You see that Mary did not doubt, but believed; and consequently she obtained the fruit of faith. 'And blessed,' he says, 'art thou who believest.' But ye also are blessed who have heard and believed; for every soul that believeth both conceives and brings forth the Word of God, and acknowledges his work. Let the soul of Mary be in every one so as to magnify the Lord; let the spirit of Mary be in every one so as to rejoice in God. If, according to the flesh, there is

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. pp. 260, 261.

<sup>4</sup> De Virg. lib. ii. c. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. i. pp. 1290, 1291.

one mother of Christ; yet, according to faith, Christ is the fruit of every one: for every soul receives the Word of God; provided, nevertheless, that, being immaculate and free from vice, it preserves its chasteness with unpolluted modesty."

Thus it is, that when he speaks of the Virgin's character and conduct, his object is not to exalt her, but to excite others to follow her example.

The following is the comment of Ambrose, on the passage of St. Luke, "My mother and brethren are these who hear the word of God and do it."

"He is a master in morality who affords, in his own person, an example to others; and the preceptor is himself the person to put his own precepts in practice. For whereas He was about to instruct others, that one who would not leave his father and mother is not worthy of the Son of God, He first subjects Himself to this same rule; not that He might disclaim the kindnesses of maternal piety, (for his own rule is, He who honoureth not his father or mother, let him die the death,) but because He acknowledges that He owes more to the mysteries of his Father than to the affections of his mother. Nor are parents unjustly discarded here; but the ties of the mind are represented as more obligatory than the ties of the body. They who seek to see Christ ought not to stand without; for if PARENTS THEMSELVES, when they stand without, are not acknowledged, (and perhaps they are not acknowledged, for an example to us,) how shall we, if we stand without, be acknowledged? Consequently, here the case is not (as some heretics lay their snares) that the mother is denied, who is acknowledged even from the cross; but Heaven's commands are preferred to bodily relationships<sup>6</sup>."

The heretics to whom Ambrose here refers were those who denied that Christ was very man, born of Mary<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. i. p. 1392.

<sup>7</sup> See Jerôme on Matt. xii.

In his observations on what took place at the Crucifixion, Ambrose, recognizing the entire and perfect sacrifice for sin offered by Christ alone, and powerfully setting aside all assistance from others in that work, at the same time suggests the possibility of a strange idea having arisen in the Virgin Mary's mind, that her death might assist somewhat towards the good of mankind, to be effected at that hour; an idea which Ambrose represents as the offspring of ignorance in a truly pious mind, ready to sacrifice self to duty. It is remarkable too that here, as in his hymns, he calls her, not the Queen of Heaven, or the Spouse of God, but the palace of the King, the habitation of the temple of the Son of God; just as the Apostles called every true Christian the temple of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit<sup>8</sup>. The same sentiments occur in other of his works<sup>9</sup>.

“But Mary, no less than it became the mother of Christ, when the Apostles fled, stood before the cross, and with pious eyes beheld the wounds of her Son, because she expected not the death of the pledge, but the salvation of the world; or perhaps, because she had known of the redemption of the world by the death of her Son, the royal palace thought that she might herself, by her death, also add somewhat to the public good; but Jesus wanted not an assistant for the redemption of all. He accepted his mother's affection, but He needed not the assistance of man.” “We have, then, a teacher of piety. This lesson teaches us what a mother's affection should imitate, and what the reverence of sons should follow; namely, that they (the mothers) should offer themselves amidst the dangers of their children; that to the children, the mother's anxiety should be a source of greater grief than the sadness of their own death<sup>1</sup>.”

In his comment on the 118th Psalm, St. Ambrose thus speaks<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>8</sup> Eph. ii. 22. 2 Cor. vi. 16, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 1533, and vol. ii. p. 1048.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. ii. p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 1254.



“Come, O Lord Jesus, seek thy servant; seek thy wearied sheep; Come, O Shepherd. Come, O Lord, because thou alone canst recal a wandering sheep. Come, and seek thy sheep, not by servants, not by hirelings, but by thine own self. Do thou take me in the flesh, which fell in Adam. Take me Thou, not of Sarah, but of Mary, that it [the flesh taken of Mary] might be a virgin not corrupt, but a virgin by grace, free from every stain of sin. Bear me on the cross which brings salvation to those in error, in which alone is rest to the weary, in which they who die will live.”

We must not bring to a close our review of the evidence of St. Ambrose, without referring briefly to a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which was for ages ascribed to him as its author, but which, as the Benedictine editors are decidedly of opinion, is not to be received as his composition. We will, therefore, (as the safer course,) not cite it in evidence of his sentiments<sup>3</sup>. But, whatever were its origin, whether it were of an earlier or a later age, it is a very interesting work; and if it must be assigned to a time when the Invocation of Saints and the pleading of their merits had been established, it becomes indeed a very extraordinary production. On the passage, “Professing themselves wise, they became fools,” we read this comment<sup>4</sup>:

“They think themselves wise because they fancy they have investigated the laws of nature; examining the courses of the stars, and the qualities of the elements, but despising the Lord of these. They are therefore fools; for if these are objects of praise, how much more the Creator of these? Yet, when they

<sup>3</sup> Henemar, and the Church of Lyons, and the Third Council of Aken, with many others, have quoted largely from this work as the production of Ambrose. Rabbanus, Lanfranc, Peter Lombard, and Gratian, and innumerable others, as the Benedictine editors candidly inform us, and even Cardinal Bellarmin considered it as the genuine work of Ambrose.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. p. 34 of Appendix.

are under a feeling of shame, they are accustomed to use this wretched excuse for neglecting God, that by means of those<sup>5</sup> they can approach to God as men approach a king by his courtiers. Come then; is any one so foolish and forgetful of his own safety as to claim for the courtier the honour due to the king? Should any be found attempting such a thing, they would justly be condemned of high treason. And yet these men do not think themselves guilty who transfer the honour of God to a creature, and, leaving the Lord, adore their fellow-servants; AS IF THERE WERE ANY THING FURTHER THAT COULD BE RESERVED FOR GOD. Men approach a king by his officers and courtiers, only because the king is a man, and knows not to whom he ought to entrust his government. But to secure God's favour, (from whom nothing is hid, for He knows the deserts of every one,) there is need not of an intercessor, but of a devout mind; for where-soever such a one addresses Him, He will answer him."

Whoever was the author of these passages, they entirely coincide with the sentiments of St. Ambrose, in his undisputed work upon the death of Theodosius: "Thou alone, O Lord, art to be invoked; Thou alone art to be implored to cause him (the Emperor) to be represented in his sons. Do thou, O Lord, by guarding even the little ones in this humility, preserve those safe who hope in Thee<sup>6</sup>."

<sup>5</sup> Per istos—"those men." The passage is obscure, but he immediately speaks of the dead men and their images, whom idolaters worship.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. ii. p. 1207. See also the strong language in which he discards all idea of any created being becoming our spiritual physician, or promoting by his good offices our restoration to God. Vol. i. p. 1352.



# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XV.

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ON THE  
ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.  
EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
AGAINST IT.—*Continued.*



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

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- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.°
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
- XII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- XIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XIV. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XV. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

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*Romish Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the Primitive Church against it (continued).*

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*St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine.*

Two of the brightest ornaments of the Christian world next offer themselves for our examination; St. John Chrysostom, the glory of the Greek Church, and St. Augustine, equally the honour of the Latin. According to some accounts, these two luminaries of our holy faith were born into the world in the very same year, A.D. 354, though others place the birth of Chrysostom as early as A.D. 347. Chrysostom was called to his rest when he had not long passed the meridian of man's life as a labourer in Christ's vineyard; whereas, his brother confessor was left to toil successfully in the same field, till he had passed the age after which the Psalmist bids us to expect only labour and sorrow.

*St. Chrysostom, A.D. 405<sup>1</sup>.*

John, surnamed from his eloquence, Chrysostom, or "the golden-mouthed," was born in Antioch, of Cælo-

<sup>1</sup> Thirteen vols. fol. Paris, 1718.

syria. His father died soon after his birth; and he was not baptized till his twenty-third year. At the age of twenty-seven, he was ordained deacon, and at thirty-two priest. In his forty-fourth year, he succeeded Nectarius, the successor of Gregory of Nazianzum, as Bishop of Constantinople. From this office he was deposed, and he died in exile somewhere about the year 407.

In our endeavours to ascertain the standard of doctrine, the habitual views, and ruling principles and sentiments of this noble Christian writer, the greatest care is necessary in distinguishing between his genuine works, and those productions which must be pronounced spurious. The treatises (as the Benedictine editor assures us) are innumerable which the fraud of booksellers, and the vanity of petty authors, have combined to impose upon the world as Chrysostom's, but which have no pretensions to such a place in literature! Would that a wide and careful research were instituted by men adequate to the task, into the treasures which still remain unexamined, or are mingled with deceitful counterfeits! Next to the blessed Scriptures themselves, no department of theology so powerfully appeals to the Christian world for the united efforts of those to whom primitive truth is dear, as the text of the early writers; nor would any field more abundantly repay the labour bestowed upon it. Applicable as this remark would be in the case of every one of those ancient Fathers any of whose remains have been saved from the wreck of time, it is forced upon us with especial interest in our examination of St. Chrysostom's testimony.

The attempt to support a system, however long propagated, or however highly valued, by counterfeit witnesses, and by evidence which will not bear the sifting of fair and able criticism, (even were it consistent with the principles of Christianity, or of common honesty,) cannot be eventually successful. The Benedictine editors have done much toward purifying the volumes

of Chrysostom from the gross impositions with which age after age had loaded them; but much yet remains to be done. For the immediate object of our investigation, to keep on the safe side, we shall cite no passage which those editors have not admitted as genuine, nor exclude any which they have not pronounced to be spurious.

The result, then, of a thorough examination of the genuine works of St. Chrysostom is the conviction, that from his first to his last page there is not the faintest intimation that he either addressed the Virgin Mary by invocation, or placed any confidence in her merits and intercession himself, or was at all aware that Christians either individually or as a body in the Church, prayed to her even for her prayers, or prayed to God to hear them, through her intercession. But the testimony of Chrysostom is not merely negative; on the contrary, it is direct, and clear, and manifold, that he addressed in prayer God alone, and only through his blessed Son; never invoking the Virgin, nor mentioning her name even in a subordinate sense as intercessor or mediator.

The sentiments of Chrysostom on the necessity, the dignity, and the blessed effects of prayer, are so just, and at the same time so encouraging and uplifting, and so applicable to us all, that before we cite the proofs of these positions, the time will not be misspent which we may devote, by way of preparation, to some few of the passages which convey his views on prayer in general. We shall find him exhorting sincere Christians to approach with humble confidence to the throne of grace, taking with them faith, and repentance, and obedient love; and seeking then for no foreign aid or recommendation, and looking for no intercessor in heaven but Christ only. In his comment on the fourth Psalm we read these beautiful observations on the efficacy of prayer<sup>2</sup>:—

<sup>2</sup> Vol. v. p. 8.



“If I possess justice, some one will say, what need of prayer, for that will guide us right in all things; and He who gives knows what we need? Because prayer is no slight bond of love towards God, accustoming us to habitual intercourse with Him, and leading us to wisdom; for if any one by intercourse with some admirable man gathers much fruit from the intercourse, how much more will he who has continual intercourse with God! But we have not an adequate sense of the value of prayer, since we do not apply to it with thoughtful care, nor employ it agreeably to the law of God.

“If we would approach with becoming carefulness, and as persons about to converse with God, we should then know even before we received what we asked, how great a gain we must reap by its fruit; for a man who is trained to converse with God as we ought, will afterwards be an angel. It is thus that his soul is loosened from the bonds of the body; thus his reason is lifted on high; thus is his home removed to heaven; thus does he look above the things of this life; thus is he stationed by the royal throne itself, though he be poor, though he be a servant, obscure and unlettered. For God seeketh not the beauty of language, nor the composition of words, but the loveliness of the soul; and if that speak what is well-pleasing to Him, the man goes away with the full accomplishment of his purpose. See you how great facility is here? Among men, when a man applies to any one, he must needs be a good speaker, and must well flatter those who are about the great man, and devise many other schemes to insure a favourable reception; but here he wants nothing but a sober mind, and then there is nothing to prevent his being nigh to God, ‘for I am a God drawing nigh, and not a God far off.’ So that to be far off is owing to ourselves, for He is Himself always near. And why, say I, that we need not oratory? Often we do not even need a voice; for even if you speak in your hearts, and call upon Him aright, He will readily assent even then.

“No soldier stands by to drive you away; no javelin-bearer to cut off the opportunity; no one to say, You cannot approach Him now, come again. But whenever you come, He is standing to hear; be it in the time of dinner, or of supper, at midnight, in the market-place, in the way, in the chamber; though you approach within, and present yourself to the Ruler in his judgment-hall, and call Him. There is nothing to hinder Him from assenting to your request, if you call on Him aright. There is no ground for saying, I fear to approach and present my petition; my enemy is standing by. Even this obstacle is removed. He will not attend to your enemy, and cut short your suit. You may always and continually plead with Him, and there is no difficulty.

“There is no need of porters to introduce you; nor stewards, nor comptrollers, nor guards, nor friends; but when you by yourself approach, then He will most of all listen to you; then, I say, when you ask no one. We do not so much prevail with Him when we ask by others, as when we ask by ourselves; for since it is our own friendship He loves, He takes every means of fixing our confidence in Him. When He sees us doing this by ourselves, then He especially grants our request. Thus did He in the case of the woman of Canaan: when Peter and James applied to Him in her behalf, He did not assent; but when she herself persevered, He soon granted her request. For though He seemed to defer it for a little while, He did so, not to put her off, but to crown her the more, and to draw her supplication nearer to Himself. Let us therefore take good heed to approach God in prayer; and let us learn how we ought to offer our prayer.”

On the importunity and success of this Syrophœnician, Chrysostom dwells repeatedly, and in such a manner as to force us to believe that he cannot himself have had recourse to the invocation of any other being than God alone, or have suggested to others any confidence in the intercession of any other

mediator than Christ only, certainly not making an exception in favour of the Virgin Mary. In his comment on Genesis, chap. xvi.<sup>3</sup>, he furnishes us with many valuable reflections on the mercy of the Saviour, and the holy confidence with which true Christians may rest all their hopes in Him, and approach Him in prayer, with sure trust that they will never be sent empty away. But on the general sentiments of Chrysostom, as to the duty of our praying only to God through the mediation of his blessed Son, without interposing any other mediation, we will confine ourselves to two more extracts; the first from his Homily, composed expressly on the woman of Canaan; the other from his Comment on the Epistle to the Romans. In the first passage we read these words:

“‘And Jesus going out thence, went into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold a woman!’ The Evangelist wonders, ‘Behold a woman!’ the ancient armour of the devil, she who expelled me from paradise, the mother of sin, the prime leader of transgression. That very woman comes, that very nature, a new and unlooked for wonder. The Jews fly from her, and the woman follows Him. ‘And behold a woman, coming out from those coasts, besought Him, saying, O Lord, thou son of David, have mercy on me.’ The woman becomes an Evangelist, and acknowledges his divinity and the dispensation. ‘O Lord,’ here she confesses his sovereignty: ‘Thou son of David,’ here his incarnation: ‘Have mercy on me,’ see her wise spirit. ‘Have mercy on me;’ I have no good deeds; I have no confidence from my manner of life; I betake myself to mercy, to the common haven of sinners; I betake myself to mercy, where is no judgment-seat, where my safety is freed from investigation. Though she were thus a sinner and a transgressor, she is bold enough to approach. And see the wisdom of the woman! She calls not on James, she does not supplicate John, she approaches not Peter, she does

<sup>3</sup> Vol. iv. p. 386.

not force her way through their company. 'I have no need of a mediator; but taking repentance to plead with me, I approach the Fountain itself. For this cause He came down, for this cause He became incarnate, that I might converse with Him.' The Cherubim tremble at Him above, and here below a harlot converses with Him. 'Have mercy on me.' It is a simple word, and yet it finds a fathomless sea of salvation. 'Have mercy on me. For this cause Thou didst come; for this cause Thou tookedst upon thee flesh; for this cause Thou becamest what I am. Above is trembling, below is confidence. Have mercy on me. I have no need of a mediator. Have mercy on me!'"

In the other passage, to which we adverted above, we find Chrysostom thus commenting on the Apostolic benediction:—

“ ‘The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.’ See you whence we ought to begin, and where to end all things. For from this He laid the foundation of his epistle, and from this also he put on its roof; at once both praying for the parent of all good things for them<sup>4</sup>, and mentioning also every benefit. For the chief province of a true instructor is to benefit his disciples, not by word only but also by prayer; wherefore, he says, we will persevere in prayer, and in the ministration of the word. WHO THEN WILL PRAY FOR US, NOW THAT PAUL HAS GONE AWAY? THESE WHO ARE IMITATORS OF PAUL. Only let us render ourselves worthy of such patronage, that we may not only hear Paul's voice here, but even when we go thither may be found worthy to see the champion of Christ. And if we listen to him here, we shall the rather see him there; even though not ourselves standing near, yet we shall at all events see him shining near the royal throne. There the cherubim glorify, there the seraphim fly; these we shall see, together with Peter and the choir of saints, Paul being their chief leader

<sup>4</sup> Chrysostom has been here misunderstood; he speaks of grace as the parent, or mother of every blessing.

and president<sup>5</sup>; and we shall enjoy true love. For if when he was here he so loved men, that on the choice being offered him to depart and to be with Christ, he chose to be here, how much more ardent will he show his love there!"

Here it may be asked, whether it is within the verge of probability that St. Chrysostom, when he speaks of these things in this manner, could have believed it lawful and beneficial for a Christian to pray to any other mediator, or through any other intercessor in heaven, than Christ alone? "I want no mediator." "She applies not to the Apostles." "Who shall pray for us, now Paul is gone<sup>6</sup>?" Is it conceivable that, had he practised the invocation of saints, he would not have alluded to it here; and have assured his disciples that, though Paul was absent, yet he was still carrying on the office of intercessor, and that he should be implored by us to carry it on. Instead of this, he tells them, that those who were imitators and followers of Paul would pray for them, now that Paul was gone.

But to proceed with the immediate subject of our inquiry into what was Chrysostom's faith and practice with regard to the Virgin Mary. Is she made an exception?

For the dignity to which it pleased the Almighty to raise her, that she should be the mother of our Lord, Chrysostom held the Virgin's memory in reverence, and he strenuously maintained that she remained a virgin unspotted to the day of her death. But while he professes no sentiments of honour towards her which a true and enlightened member of the Church of England would not profess; at the same time he reflects on her conduct upon one occa-

<sup>5</sup> It may be remarked, that in this passage not Peter but Paul is represented as the chief leader and president of the saints, even when Peter is also named.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. ix. p. 756.

sion, and speaks of her knowledge and state of mind generally with regard to our Saviour, in terms which few members of our Church would be disposed to employ.

Chrysostom generally calls the Virgin simply Mary; seldom adding any epithet expressive of her sanctity and blessedness. He never calls her "Mother of God." He declares her to be a pure and unpolluted virgin<sup>7</sup>, and finds in the Old Testament types and figures by which her office was foreshadowed. In one place<sup>8</sup>, he tells us that Eden, signifying a virgin-land, in which God, without the work of man, planted a garden, prefigured the Virgin, who, without knowing a man, brought forth Christ. In another part<sup>9</sup>, he considers Eve and the tree of knowledge, and death when man fell, to correspond with Mary, and the tree of the cross, and our Lord's death, which gained for us the victory; that as a virgin's fault caused us to be expelled from paradise, so by the instrumentality of a virgin, we found eternal life<sup>10</sup>. He thinks her superior excellence showed itself in her admirable self-command, when she heard announced to her that she should bring forth the Saviour, behaving with exemplary modesty, instead of being transported by a sudden burst of excessive joy<sup>1</sup>. He regards the flight into Egypt as a means of making Mary conspicuous, and a bright object of admiration<sup>2</sup>. She was given, he says, by the angel to the care of Joseph, as she was by Christ upon the cross to John, in order to protect and defend herself and her character from reproach and oppression<sup>3</sup>.

We must now direct our especial attention to three passages in the genuine works of Chrysostom, and weigh well the import of his words in each as indications of his general sentiments concerning the Virgin Mary. First, his remarks on our Lord's

<sup>7</sup> Vol. iii. p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. iii. p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. iii. p. 752.

<sup>10</sup> Vol. v. p. 171.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vii. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> P. 125. <sup>3</sup> P. 57.

words at the marriage-feast at Cana; secondly, his account of what took place at the cross; and thirdly, his representation of the Virgin's conduct, and our Lord's words on that previous occasion, when his mother and his brethren stood outside the house desiring to see Jesus. The question will force itself upon our mind, Could the Virgin Mary have been regarded by St. Chrysostom, or by those whom he addressed, as she is now regarded by the Church of Rome?

I. His account of the miracle of turning water into wine, St. Chrysostom thus prefaces<sup>4</sup>:—

“No unimportant question is propounded to us to-day; when the mother of Jesus said ‘They have no wine;’ Christ said, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;’ and though He said this, He did what his mother suggested. Invoking, then, Him Himself who wrought the miracle, let us proceed to the solution of the difficulty. . . . . Christ was not subject to the necessity of seasons, for He pre-eminently assigned to seasons themselves their order; for He was their Maker. But John introduces Christ using this expression, ‘Mine hour is not yet come,’ to show that He was not yet manifested to the great body of the people, and that He had not as yet the full complement of his Apostles; but that Andrew and Philip followed Him and no other. Nay, rather, not even these all knew Him as He ought to be known; not even HIS MOTHER nor his brethren. For after his numerous miracles the Evangelist says this of his brethren: ‘For neither did his brethren believe in Him.’ But neither did those at the marriage know Him; otherwise they would have come to Him, and sought his aid in their want. On this account He says, ‘Mine hour is not yet come. I am not known to those who are present; nay, they do not even know that the wine has failed. Suffer

<sup>4</sup> Vol. viii. p. 125.

them to become aware of this first. I ought not to learn this from you; for you are my mother, and you throw suspicion on my miracle. Those who want it, ought to come and ask; not because I need this, but that they may receive what is done in full acquiescence.' And for what reason (some one will say) after saying, 'Mine hour is not yet come,' and after refusing, did He do what his mother said? Chiefly to afford to gainsayers, and those who think Him subject to times and seasons, a sufficient demonstration that He was not subject to times. In the second place, He did it because He honoured his mother; that He might not appear to contradict her entirely throughout; that He might not expose Himself to the suspicion of weakness; that He might not in the presence of so many put his mother to shame; for she had brought the servants to Him. Thus it was that though He said to the woman of Canaan, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to dogs,' yet He granted the boon afterwards, because He was affected by her perseverance. Yea, moreover, though He said, 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' yet afterwards He healed the woman's daughter. Hence we learn that though we be unworthy, yet by our perseverance we may make ourselves worthy to receive. Wherefore also his mother remained, and wisely brought the servants, so that the request might be made by more persons. She consequently added, 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do it.' For she knew that the refusal was not from want of power, but from the absence of boastful display; and that He might not seem absolutely to throw Himself upon the miracle, she therefore brought the servants."

This author's assertion, that Mary was not even herself acquainted with our Lord's real character and dispensation, is by no means confined to that passage; in some instances, indeed, it has called forth the animadversion of his editors. Thus, in his exposition of



the Psalmist's words, which he thus renders, "God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not keep silence," he says—

"See you how He proceeds gradually to open his word and reveal the treasure, and emit a more cheerful ray, saying, 'God shall come manifestly!' Why? When was He not present manifestly? At his former advent. For He came without noise, hidden from the many, and for a long time escaping observation. Why do I speak of THE MANY? whereas, NOT EVEN THE VIRGIN WHO CONCEIVED HIM KNEW THE IN-EFFABLE MYSTERY, nor even his brethren believed on Him; nor he who appeared to be his father formed any high opinion of Him<sup>5</sup>."

2. The following is Chrysostom's comment upon the act of our blessed Saviour when He commended his sorrowing mother to his beloved disciple<sup>6</sup>:—

"But He Himself hanging on the cross commends his mother to his disciple, teaching us to our last breath to take every affectionate care of our parents. Thus, when she unseasonably annoyed Him, He said, 'What have I to do with thee?' and 'Who is my mother?' But here He shows much natural affection, and entrusts her to the disciple whom He loved. . . . Observe how freely from agitation He does every thing, even when hanging on the cross; conversing with his disciple about his mother, fulfilling the prophecies, suggesting good hope in the thief. . . . Now the women stood by the cross; and the weaker sex appears the more manly. And He Himself commends his mother, 'Behold thy Son!' Oh, for the honour! With what honour does He invest the disciple! For when He is going Himself away, He delivers her to the disciple to take care of her. For since it was probable that she as a mother would grieve, and look for protection, He with reason commits her to the hands of one who loved Him. To him He says,

<sup>5</sup> Vol. v. p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. viii. p. 505.

‘Behold thy mother!’ This He said to unite them in love; and the disciple understanding this took her to his own home. But why did He make mention of no other woman though another stood by? To teach us to pay more than common attention to our mothers. For as we must not know those parents who oppose themselves in spiritual things, so when they interpose no obstacle in those matters, it is right to pay them every respect, and to place them above the rest, because they gave us birth, and nourished us; and underwent so many thousand dangers. Thus, too, does He silence the impudence of Marcion; for had He not been born in the flesh, nor had a mother, why should He have taken such care of her alone?”

3. In Chrysostom’s homily on St. Matthew xii. 46, we read the comment which we must now quote. We do not wonder at the Benedictine editor exclaiming in the margin, as he does very quaintly, “Fair words, Chrysostom!” Had a member of the Church of England published such sentiments now, he would probably have been reproved by members of his own communion. The propriety, however, or incorrectness of Chrysostom’s observation, is not at all before us; but we may confidently ask, Could he have addressed such a homily to the faithful Christians of his day, if either he or they entertained those sentiments with regard to the Virgin Mary, which are professed by our Roman Catholic brethren; if he, or the Church, had then invoked her in supplication, or trusted to her intercession, and mediation, and advocacy; and sung praises to her as the Queen of heaven, in dignity, and power, and glory, above the Seraphim<sup>7</sup>?

“What I lately said, that if virtue be absent all besides is superfluous, this is now proved abundantly. I was saying that age, and nature, and the living in a wilderness, and all such things were unprofitable, unless our principle and purpose were good; but to-day

we learn something more, that not even the conceiving of Christ in the womb, and bringing forth that wonderful birth, hath any advantage, if there be not virtue; and that is especially manifest from this circumstance<sup>8</sup>: ‘While He was yet speaking,’ says the Evangelist, ‘some one says to Him, Thy mother and thy brethren seek Thee; and He said, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?’ Now, this He said not because He felt ashamed of his mother, nor with the intention of denying her who brought Him forth; (for had He been ashamed, He would not have passed through her womb;) but it was to show that she would derive no advantage from this, unless she did her duty in every thing. For what she was then undertaking was the effect of EXCESSIVE AMBITION; for she wished to show to the people that she commanded and controlled her Son, she having as yet formed no high opinion of Him. Consequently, she comes to Him unseasonably.

“Now, see the FOOLISH ARROGANCE<sup>9</sup> both of herself and of them. Whereas they ought to have entered, and heard Him with the multitude; or had they been unwilling to do this, to have waited till He had finished his discourse, and then to have approached Him; they call for Him out: and this they do before all, exhibiting their excessive ambition, and wishing to show that they commanded Him with great authority. A point this which the Evangelist marks with disapprobation; for it was to intimate this, that he said, ‘While He was yet speaking to the multitude;’ as much as if he had said, ‘What! was there no other opportunity? What! could they not have conversed with Him in private? And what after all did

<sup>8</sup> Even Calvin dissents from this view of Chrysostom (which is also the view of Ambrose), and says their views are groundless and unworthy of the piety of the Virgin. Calvin in loc. vol. vi. p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> Ἀπόνοια, *vesana quædam insolentia et animi elatio*. Steph. The Benedictines translate it *arrogantia*; the Library of the Fathers, “Self-confidence.”

they want to say? If it was on the doctrines of the truth, then it was right He should propound them to all in common, and to speak before all that others also might be benefited; but if it was on other subjects interesting to themselves, they ought not to have been thus urgent. For if He would not suffer a man to bury his father, that his following of Him might not be broken off, much more ought not his address to have been interrupted for things which were not of interest to Him.' Hence it is evident that they did this solely out of vain glory. And John shows this when he says, 'Neither did his brethren believe on Him;' and he records some words of theirs full of great folly, when he tells us that they took Him to Jerusalem, not for any other purpose, but that they might derive glory from his miracles. 'If Thou do these things,' said they, 'show thyself to the world, for no one doeth any thing in secret, and seeketh himself to be conspicuous;' at which time He rebuked them for this, and reprov'd their carnal mind. For when the Jews reproach'd Him, saying, 'Is not this the carpenter's son, whose father and mother we know? and his brethren are they not among us?' they wishing to get rid of the charge from the meanness of his origin, excited Him to a display of miracles. He, therefore, gives them a repulse, wishing to heal their malady; since, had He desired to deny his mother, He would surely have denied her, when they cast this reproach. On the contrary, He shows Himself to have entertained so great care for her, that on the very cross He intrusts her to the disciple who was his best-beloved of all, and leaves many kind injunctions concerning her. But He does not so now, and that because of his care for her and his brethren; for since they approach'd Him as a mere man, and were puffed up with vain glory, He expels that disease, not by insulting, but by correcting them.

“ He did not wish to excite doubts in the mind, but to remove the most tyrannical of passions, and by

little and little to lead to a correct estimate of Himself, and to persuade her that He was not only her Son, but her Sovereign Lord. You will thus see that the rebuke was eminently becoming in Him, and profitable to her, and withal containing much of mildness. He did not say, 'Go, tell the mother she is not my mother;' but He answered him who brought the message thus, 'Who is my mother?' together with what has been already said, effecting another object—that neither should they nor any others, trusting to their connexions, neglect virtue. For if it profited HER nothing to be his mother, unless that qualification were added, scarcely will any one else be saved in consequence of his relationship. There is only one nobility of birth, the doing of the will of God. This is a kind of good birth far better and nobler than the other."

In the next section, too long to transcribe into these pages, (though its paragraphs contain many sentiments, all leading to the same point,) we read these expressions:

"When a woman said, 'Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked,' He does not say, 'Her womb did not bear me, I sucked not her paps,' but this, 'Yea, rather, blessed are they who do the will of my Father.' You see how, every where, He does not deny the relationship of nature, but He adds that of virtue. . . . The same object He is effecting here [as in his remonstrance with the Jews as children of Abraham], but less severely, and with more gentleness; for his speech related to his mother. He did not say, 'She is not my mother, they are not my brethren, because they do not the will of my Father.' He did not pass his sentence, and condemn them; but left them the option, speaking with a considerateness which became Him. 'He that doeth the will of my Father, he is my brother, and sister, and mother; so that if they wish to be such, let them enter upon this path.' And when the woman cried out, 'Blessed is the womb that bare Thee,' He says

not, 'She is not my mother;' but, 'If she wishes to be blessed, let her do the will of my Father, for such a one is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Oh, how great an honour! How great is virtue! To what an exalted eminence does it carry one who embraces it! How many women have called that holy Virgin and her womb blessed, and have longed to be such mothers, and to give up every thing besides! What is there to hinder them? For behold, He has cut out for us a broad way, and it is in the power, not of women only, but of men also, to be placed in such a rank as that, rather in a much higher one; for this far more constitutes one his mother, than did those labour-pangs. So if that is a cause for calling a person blessed, much more is this, inasmuch as it is paramount. Do not, then, merely desire, but also with much diligence walk along the path which leads to the object of your desire. Having said this, He went out of the house. See how He both rebuked them, and also did what they desired. The same thing also He did at the marriage; for there, too, He rebuked her when she unseasonably applied to Him, and yet did not refuse; by the first act correcting her weakness, by the second showing his goodwill towards his mother. So here also, He both healed the disease of vain glory, and yet rendered becoming honour to his mother, although she was preferring an unseasonable request."

Thus is the testimony of St. Chrysostom, beyond controversy, conclusive against the present doctrine of the Church of Rome, as to the worship of the Virgin Mary, and against our supposing that the prevalence of any religious trust in her merits, intercession, and advocacy, was familiar to him. And this brings us within the commencement of the fifth century.

Before we proceed to the evidence of St. Augustine, it may be well to refer to John Cassian, who was at first one of St. Chrysostom's deacons, and who after-

wards removing to Gaul, was ordained priest at Marseilles. He composed many theological dissertations in Latin, in which he writes at much length on the duty of prayer, and on the objects and subjects of a Christian's prayer; but he speaks only of prayer to God, without any allusion to the present influence or advocacy of the Virgin, or to any invocation of her to be made by Christians<sup>10</sup>.

In his treatise on the Incarnation of Christ, he argues against those who would call Mary *Christotocos*, 'She who brought forth Christ,' and not *Theotocos*, 'She who brought forth God;' but he speaks not of any worship due to herself on that account. His mind was fixed upon the union of the divine and human nature in Him who was Son of God and of man<sup>1</sup>.

*St. Augustine, A.D. 430<sup>2</sup>.*

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in Africa, was born about A.D. 354, and died at an advanced age, A.D. 430, the very year before the Council of Ephesus, to which he was summoned.

When we reflect on the rapidity with which Pagan superstition invaded the integrity and purity of primitive worship, after the conversion of Constantine, and how much the influence of many unhallowed innovations had mingled itself with the spirit of Christianity, when Augustine was first initiated into the mysteries of our holy religion, our surprise may be great, that his works, full and noble monuments of Gospel truth, present so few stains of an unscriptural and unprimitive character. We cannot, indeed, appeal to him as one who when he was compelled to walk in the midst of the furnace yet felt no hurt, and on whose garments the smell of fire had not passed (this would

<sup>10</sup> Collat. ix.

<sup>1</sup> De Incarn. lib. ii. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, 1700.

have required an interposition of the Most High, like that which preserved the three faithful martyrs in the furnace of Babylon); but while some points, even in Augustine, indications of frail man, warn us, with voices strong and clear, to look for our rule of faith only to the written word of God, to which he himself most constantly appealed; we have cause for thankfulness, that the great Head of the Church raised up at that season this burning and shining light, who, as the servant of the Holy Spirit, yet still only as a fallible and an erring brother, will continue to enlighten, and guide, and support the children of God, as long as sacred literature has a place on earth.

Augustine found a large portion of the Christian world leaning decidedly to superstition, and encouraging the substitution of human learning and a degenerate philosophy, for the simplicity of the Gospel. From time to time, as occasion offered, he recalled his fellow-believers from those superstitions to which converts clung when they professed to resign Paganism for Christianity; and he discountenanced those subtle disquisitions which flattered the pride of our nature, but were little in accordance with the truth as it is in Jesus. He found many substituting the angels and martyrs, of whom they heard in Christian churches and read in Christian books, for the gods many and lords many, whom their fathers had served; and some of his most powerful and eloquent compositions are directed to the counteraction of that evil. But he did not so vigorously as he might have done, set about the utter eradication of the growing bane; and sometimes, in the unrestrained flow of his eloquence, he would address the subject of his eulogy in such a manner as even to supply arguments from his example for the very practices which he disowned. The principle on which he professed to act, in the case of unauthorized novelties in Christian worship, seems, to a certain extent at least, to have guided him gene-



rally:—"Approve of these things I cannot; reprove them more freely I dare not<sup>3</sup>." Still, his pure and exalted sentiments on the subject of religious worship must have materially tended, within the sphere of their influence, to withdraw men's minds from all other objects of invocation, and to fix them on the one only supreme God; as also to withdraw them from all other mediators and intercessors, and induce them to anchor their hopes on the mediation and intercession of Christ Jesus our Lord alone.

It cannot be necessary to refer to those works, which though once attributed to St. Augustine, are acknowledged by the best critics, and even by the Benedictines, to be utterly spurious; such, for example, as the "Book of Meditations," in which prayer is offered to God through the intercession of the Virgin, and prayer is also offered to herself. It is lamentable to find some Roman Catholic writers so forgetful of the principle which should guide us all, as even at the present day<sup>4</sup> to quote passages from such works as evidence of Augustine's faith.

It may be safe and interesting, before we proceed to Augustine's testimony on the immediate subject of our inquiry, to recal to our minds one or two passages in confirmation of the views we have given above of his principles and sentiments on Christian worship in general.

In his book on "True Religion," Augustine thus speaks<sup>5</sup>—

"Let not our religion be the worship of dead men, because if they lived piously they are not so disposed as to seek such honours; but they wish Him to

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. p. 142. Epist. ad Januar. 55, s. 35.

<sup>4</sup> See Kirk and Berrington, p. 445. It is painful to observe that whereas those authors quote in other cases from the Benedictine editors, 1700, which (vol. vi. Appendix, p. 103) pronounces this book to be a forgery, they here refer to the edition of 1586, without even alluding to any doubt as to the genuineness of the work.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. i. p. 786.

be worshipped by us, by whom being enlightened they rejoice that we are deemed worthy of being partakers with them. They are to be honoured, then, on the ground of imitation, not to be adored on the ground of religion; and if they lived ill, wherever they be, they must not be worshipped.

“This also we may believe, that the most perfect angels themselves, and the most excellent servants of God wish that we with ourselves should worship God, in the contemplation of whom they are blessed. . . . . Therefore we honour them with love, not with service. Nor do we build temples to them; for they are unwilling to be so honoured by us, because they know that when we are good we are as temples to the most high God. Well, therefore, is it written, that a man was forbidden by an angel to adore him.”

Moreover, we think it impossible that St. Augustine looked to any other mediator or intercessor than Christ alone. Surely his comment on the words of St. John he could never have left without any modification or explanation, had he been accustomed to pray to God trusting in the mediation of the Virgin Mary, or of any other than the Lord Jesus alone:—

“‘We have an advocate with the Father.’ Ye see John himself preserving humility. Certainly he was a righteous and great man who drank from the bosom of the Lord mysterious secrets; he who imbibing divine truth from the breast of the Lord uttered, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.’ He being such a man said not, ‘YE have an advocate with the Father,’ but ‘If any man sin, WE have an advocate.’ He says not, ‘YE have,’ nor ‘Ye have ME;’ nor does he say, ‘YE have Christ Himself;’ but as he puts ‘Christ,’ not ‘himself,’ so does he say, ‘WE have,’ not ‘YE have.’ He had rather put himself in the number of sinners, that he might have Christ for his advocate, than put himself as an advocate in Christ’s stead, and be found among the proud who must be condemned. My brethren, we have Jesus

Christ Himself our advocate with the Father—He is the propitiation for our sins. . . . . But some one will say, ‘What then, do not holy persons pray for us (sancti)? What then, do not the Bishops and chiefs pray for the people?’ Nay, attend to the Scripture, and see that the chiefs even commend themselves to the people; for the Apostle says to the people, ‘Praying at the same time for us also?’ The Apostle prays for the people, the people pray for the Apostle. We pray for you, brethren, but pray ye also for us. Let all the members pray mutually for each other, and the Head intercede for all<sup>6</sup>.”

This subject had evidently impressed itself strongly and deeply on St. Augustine’s mind. Thus we find him again, in his refutation of Parmenianus, expressing himself in words which were they written by a divine of our Church now, would be considered to have been directed expressly against the present errors of Rome.

“John says, ‘I write this, that ye sin not.’ If it had followed thus, and he had said, ‘If any one sin, YE have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for YOUR sins,’ he might seem, as it were, to have separated himself from sinners, so that he might no longer have had need of the propitiation which is made by the Mediator sitting at the right hand of the Father, and interceding for us. This, doubtless, he would have said, not only proudly but also falsely. And had he thus said, ‘This have I written to you that ye sin not; and if any man sin, ye have ME for a mediator with the Father, and I pray pardon for your sins’ (as Parmenianus somewhere puts the bishop as a mediator between the people and God), what good and faithful Christian would endure him? Who would regard him as an Apostle of Christ, and not as antichrist? . . . . . All Christian men mutually commend them-

<sup>6</sup> Vol. ii. part ii. p. 831.

selves to each other's prayers: but He, for whom no one intercedes, while He intercedes for all, is the one and the true Mediator, the type of whom in the Old Testament is the priest; and no one is there found to have prayed for the priest. . . . . Thus let the mutual prayers of all yet toiling on the earth, ascend to the Head who is gone before us into heaven, in whom is the propitiation for our sins. For were Paul a mediator, so would his fellow-apostles be mediators; and Paul's reasoning would be inconsistent with himself, by which he said, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus<sup>7</sup>.'

These are by no means solitary passages; indeed the works of St. Augustine breathe the same spirit throughout. We will refer, however, only to one more passage, which is found in his "Confessions<sup>8</sup>."

"Whom could I find who could reconcile me to Thee? Was I to betake myself to the angels? With what prayer? By what sacraments? . . . . . The Mediator between God and man must have somewhat of the likeness of God, and somewhat of the likeness of man; lest being in both cases like man, he might be far from God; or being in both like God, he might be far from man, and so would not be a mediator. . . . The true Mediator whom by thy secret mercy Thou hast shown to the humble, and whom Thou hast sent, that by his example they might learn humility, that Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, appeared between sinful mortals and the righteous and immortal One. . . . . How didst Thou love us, O good Father, who sparedst not thine only Son, but didst deliver Him for us ungodly men! D deservedly is my hope strong in this, that Thou wilt heal all my infirmities by Him who sitteth at thy right hand, and intercedes with Thee for us; otherwise I should despair."

Is it possible to conceive that this holy man, when

<sup>7</sup> Vol. ix. p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. i. pp. 93, 194.

he presented his prayers to the blessed and eternal Trinity, carried to the throne of grace in his heart, or on his tongue, the advocacy of any being, save only the eternal Son of God and man?

To the question, What is St. Augustine's testimony as to the worship of the Virgin Mary? the only answer which can be made is this—That from the first to the last page of his voluminous works there is not found a single passage which would lead us to suppose that he either prayed to her himself, or was aware that the invocation of her formed any part of the worship of his fellow-Christians, either in their public assemblies, or at their private devotions; nor is there a single expression which would induce us to believe that Augustine looked to her for any aid, spiritual or temporal, or placed any confidence whatever in her mediation and intercession. On the contrary, there is accumulated and convincing evidence, that he knew nothing of her worship, let it be called *dulia*, or *hyperdulia*; that he was a stranger to the doctrine of her immaculate conception, her assumption into heaven, and to festivals instituted in honour of her. In a word, though he maintains strong opinions on some points left open by our Church, his belief and sentiments in all essentials corresponded with the belief and sentiments of the Church of England, and were utterly inconsistent with the present belief and practice of the Church of Rome.

Many of the spurious works ascribed to St. Augustine contain passages strongly impregnated with errors, which owe their origin to an age long after he was taken to his rest; and such spurious works are still quoted, without any intimation of their doubtful or supposititious character. Thus, in a work called "The Manual of Devotion, by Ambrose Lisle Philipps, Esq., of Grace Dieu Manor" (Derby, 1843), the author says<sup>9</sup>, "The ancient Fathers of the early

<sup>9</sup> P. 98.

Church give us full warrant to apply to the blessed Virgin all the passages of Scripture which may also be applied to the Church. Thus the glorious St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in the third discourse to the catechumens on the creed, applies the vision of St. John the Evangelist, in the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse, where he sees a woman clothed with the sun, and a crown of twelve stars on her head, as referring to our blessed Lady. Vol. vi. Paris, 1837; p. 965." It is astonishing to find this sermon thus quoted as St. Augustine's, when in the very volume in which it is found, the editor prefaces the sermons (to the third of which the above author refers, as an acknowledged work of St. Augustine, and without the slightest allusion to its condemnation as spurious) with this heading (p. 930), "Here follow three other sermons on the creed, which by no means bring Augustine before us, to whom hitherto, in former editions, they have been ascribed; but an orator far his inferior in the character of his speaking, in learning, and in talent."

St. Augustine is not one of those who, either from the scantiness of his remains, or the nature of his works, might leave us in doubt as to his sentiments on this head; for he is led, in very many parts, to speak of the Virgin Mary, her nature, and her character, both directly and incidentally. On two subjects of especial interest to him, he is led to speak of her in every variety of light: the one subject is the incarnation of the Son of God; the other is the institution of the life of virginity by professed and devoted virgins, a life which he says originally derived its dignity from her<sup>10</sup>. He maintains that Mary was a devoted virgin before the angel's salutation, and that so she remained to her death. He considers her a bright example of religious and moral excellence; and<sup>1</sup> FOR THE HONOUR OF OUR LORD, he wishes no question

<sup>10</sup> Vol. v. p. 296.<sup>1</sup> Vol. x. p. 144.

to be entertained as to her being guilty of sin. He says that her question 'How shall this be?' did not imply a want of faith in her, but only a desire to know God's pleasure<sup>2</sup>; and that she conceived Christ in her soul through faith, before she conceived Him in her womb. He calls her The Virgin Mary, The Holy<sup>3</sup> Mary, The Mother of our Lord, a virgin when she conceived, when she brought forth, and when she died. He never uses the expression 'Mother of God.'

He speaks of the Virgin dying<sup>4</sup>, but he alludes not to her assumption. He speaks of the conception<sup>5</sup> of her by her father and mother, but he expressly says she was conceived and born in sin, though she herself conceived without spot or stain of sin, and gave birth to the sinless Saviour. Instead of representing her as the bride and spouse of the Almighty (a title too commonly applied to her by our Roman Catholic brethren), he represents her as the chamber<sup>6</sup> only in which the Divine Word was, as a bridegroom, united to his human nature as his bride. He considers the tradition which represents the Virgin as having been the daughter of Joachim, of the tribe of Levi, to have been drawn by Faustus<sup>7</sup> from an apocryphal source; and if he were induced to regard Joachim as her father at all, he would consider him as appertaining not to the sacerdotal tribe of Levi, but the regal tribe of Judah. He tells us that angels adore Christ in the flesh<sup>8</sup>, sitting at the right hand of the Father; but for any rejoicing of the angels on the Virgin's admission to heaven, such as the Roman service on the day of her supposed assumption asserts, we look into Augustine's works in vain.

But it will be more satisfactory to quote more fully some few of the passages which embody his senti-

<sup>2</sup> Vol. v. p. 1167.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. v. p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. vi. p. 289.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. iv. p. 241; vol. x. p. 654; and vol. iii. part i. p. 268.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. iii. part ii. p. 354.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. viii. p. 427.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. v. p. 970.

ments on the subject of our inquiry: many such there are, edifying and interesting in themselves, as well as valuable testimonies on the point at issue. The question will repeatedly force itself on the reader of St. Augustine, Could this writer have suppliantly invoked the Virgin? Could he have hoped for acceptance with God, through her intercession? If, for example, we examine his treatise on the twelfth verse of the second chapter of St. John—"After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples<sup>9</sup>," we read this comment:—

"You will find that all the relatives of Mary are brethren of Christ; but the disciples were still more his brethren, for even those relatives would not have been his brethren had they not been his disciples; and without any reason would they have been his brethren, had they not acknowledged their brother for their master. For in a certain place, when his mother and his brethren were announced to Him as standing without, and He was speaking with his disciples, He said, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?' and stretching forth his hand to his disciples He said, 'These are my brethren; and whoever will do the will of my Father, he is my mother, and brother, and sister;' therefore was also Mary, because she did the will of the Father. In her the Lord magnified this, that she did the will of the Father, not that flesh gave birth to flesh. Attend to this, my dear friends. Wherefore, when the Lord seemed the object of admiration in a crowd, working signs and wonders, and showing what was hidden in his flesh, some souls admiring Him said, 'Happy the womb that bare Thee;' and He answered, 'Yea, happy are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' This is to say, Even my mother, whom you call happy, is therefore happy because she keeps the word of God, not because in her the Word was made flesh and dwelt

<sup>9</sup> Vol. iii. part ii. p. 369.



in us; but because she keeps the Word of God, by which she was made, and which was made flesh in her. Let not men rejoice in their temporal offspring; let them leap for joy, if they are in Spirit joined to God."

At the commencement of his book on Virginhood, he thus comments on the same passage<sup>1</sup>:

"What else does he teach us but to prefer our spiritual family to our carnal relationships? and that men are not blessed, because they are joined to just and holy men by kindred, but if they are united with them by obeying and imitating their instructions and moral character. Consequently Mary was more blessed by receiving the faith of Christ than by conceiving the flesh of Christ. . . . Finally, what did their relationship profit his brethren, that is, his relatives according to the flesh, who did not believe on Him? So also the near relationship of a mother would have profited Mary nothing, unless she had carried Christ more happily in her heart than in the flesh. He, the offspring of one holy virgin, is the ornament of all holy virgins; and they, together with Mary, are mothers of Christ, if they do his Father's will; hence also Mary is in a more praiseworthy and blessed manner the mother of Christ. He spiritually exhibits all these relationships in the people whom He has redeemed; He regards as his brothers and sisters holy men and holy women, because they are joint heirs in the heavenly inheritance. The whole Church is his mother, because she truly bears, by the grace of God, his members, that is, his faithful ones. So, likewise, every pious soul is his mother, doing the will of his Father with most fruitful love, in those whom she brings forth, until He be formed in them. Mary, therefore, doing the will of God, is bodily only the mother of Christ, but spiritually his mother and his sister."

In his comment on our Lord's address to his mother

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vi. p. 342.

at the marriage-feast, Augustine deems it necessary to refute the false inferences of two opposite classes of men: first, those who from the words, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" maintained that Mary was not the mother of the Lord Jesus; and secondly, those fatalists (mathematicians he calls them) who alleged Christ's last words to her, "Mine hour is not yet come," in proof that our Saviour Himself was under the necessity of destiny. In his refutation of the latter error, there is nothing which we need quote here. In his answer to the former, his words may help us in forming a correct view of the habitual sentiments entertained by him of the Virgin, and of her office and character:

"The Lord, when invited, came to a marriage<sup>2</sup>. What marvel that HE should go into that house to a marriage, who came into this world for a marriage? For had He not come to a marriage, He would not have had a bride. He has a bride, whom He redeemed by his blood; and to whom He gave the Holy Spirit as a pledge. He rescued her from the thralldom of the devil; He died for her transgressions; He rose again for her justification. Who will offer so much to his bride? Let men offer any adorning presents of the earth,—gold, silver, precious stones, horses, slaves, fields, and farms; will any one offer his own blood? . . . . But the Lord, secure in his death, gave his own blood for her, whom, at his resurrection, He might have, whom He had already united to Himself in the Virgin's womb. For the WORD is the bridegroom, and his human flesh is the bride; and both are one Son of God, and the same the Son of man. When He was made the Head of the Church, that womb of the Virgin Mary was the bride-chamber: then He went forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber. As the Scripture saith, 'He went as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiced as a giant to run his

<sup>2</sup> Vol. iii. part ii. pp. 354, 355. 357.

course,'—He went from his chamber as a bridegroom, and being invited He came to a marriage. For some undoubted mystery, He seems not to acknowledge the mother from whom he proceeded as a bridegroom.

“Why then does the Son say to the mother, ‘What have I to do with thee, mine hour is not yet come?’ Our Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man; in that He was God, He had no mother; in that He was man, He had. She, therefore, was the mother of his flesh, the mother of his humanity, the mother of the infirmity which He took upon Him for our sakes. But He was about to perform the miracle according to his divinity, not according to his infirmity; in that He was God, not in that He was born a weak man. The weakness of God is stronger than man. His mother required Him to perform a miracle; but He, as it were, does not acknowledge his human origin<sup>3</sup>, when about to effect a divine work; as though He said, To that part of me which works the miracle, thou didst not give birth.’ ‘Thou didst not give birth to my divinity; but because thou gavest birth to my infirmity, I will then acknowledge thee when that infirmity shall hang upon the cross.’ For this is the meaning of ‘Mine hour is not yet come.’ For then He, who truly had always known her, acknowledged her. And before He was born of her, He had known her in predestination; and before He, as God, created her, of whom He, as man, was created, He had known his mother; but at a certain hour, in a mystery, He does not acknowledge her; and at a certain hour, in a mystery, He again acknowledges her. He then acknowledged her, when that to which she gave birth was dying; for that was not dying by which Mary was made, but that was dying which was formed from Mary; the eternity of the Godhead died not, but the infirmity of the flesh died. He consequently makes this answer, distinguishing in the faith of the disciples

<sup>3</sup> *Viscera humana non agnoscit.*

who it was that came, and by what way; for He, the God and Lord of heaven and earth, came by his mother, a woman. In that He was the Lord of the world, of the earth, and the heaven, He was Lord also of Mary; in that He was the creator of the heaven and the earth, He was the creator also of Mary: but according to what is said, 'Made of a woman, made under the Law,' He was the son of Mary, Himself the Lord of Mary, and the Son of Mary; the creator of Mary, and Himself created from Mary.

“Marvel not that He is both Son and Lord; for as of Mary, so also of David, is He called the son, and of David is He therefore called the son, because He is the son of Mary. In the same manner, then, as He is both the son and Lord of David—the son of David according to the flesh, the Son of God according to his divinity; so is He the son of Mary according to the flesh, and the Lord of Mary according to his Majesty. Therefore, because she was not the mother of his divinity, and it was by his divinity that the miracle was about to be performed, He answered, 'What have I to do with thee? But do not think that I shall deny thee as my mother; for then I will acknowledge thee when the weakness of which thou art the mother shall begin to hang upon the cross.' Let us test the truth of this. When the Lord suffered, as the same Evangelist (who had known the mother of the Lord, and who even at this marriage-feast introduced the mother of the Lord to us) himself relates,—'There was about the cross the mother of Jesus; and Jesus said to his mother, Woman, behold thy Son, and to the disciple, Behold thy mother.' He commends his mother to his disciple, He who was about to die before his mother, and to rise again before his mother's death, commends his mother; as a human being He commends to a human being, a human being: this had Mary brought forth. That hour was then already come of which at that time he had spoken, 'Mine hour is not yet come.'”

Here we cannot but advert to an essential difference constantly forcing itself on our notice, between the manner in which St. Augustine employs the fundamental truth, that the Son of God was born the Son of man of the Virgin-mother of her substance, and the turn generally given to the same truth by Roman Catholic writers. They employ that truth to exalt Mary, and to draw our minds to a contemplation of her exalted nature, and excite our praise towards her. Augustine employs the same truth to fix our thoughts on the atonement, to excite in us a lively faith in Christ alone, and to fill our hearts with thanksgiving. He is ever drawing our minds away from the means to the end, from the instrument to the agent; from the Virgin to God. Thus, "Mary believed, and what she believed was effected in her. Let us also believe, that what was effected may also be profitable to us<sup>4</sup>."

Thus, too, in a sermon on the Nativity he says—

"Therefore that Day, even the Word of God, the Day which shineth on angels, the Day which shineth in that country whence we are sojourners, clothed Himself with flesh and is born of a Virgin. . . . We were mortals, we were oppressed by our sins, we were bearing our own punishment. . . . Christ is born, let no one doubt to be born again; let his mercy be poured in our hearts. His mother bare Him in her womb; let us also bear Him in our heart. The Virgin was filled by the incarnation of Christ; let our hearts be filled by the faith of Christ. The Virgin brought forth the Saviour; let us also bring forth praise, let our souls be fruitful to God<sup>5</sup>."

But so many instances of this habitual reference from Mary to God, from her office as mother to our duty as Christ's members, present themselves throughout the works of St. Augustine, that the difficulty is not to find, but to choose; not to gather, but to se-

<sup>4</sup> Vol. v. p. 951.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. v. p. 890.

lect from what we have gathered; and on this immediate point we will only add one more specimen: it is from a sermon on the Nativity<sup>6</sup>:—

“With reason, then, did the prophets announce that He should be born; and the heavens and angels that He was born. He lay in a manger, who held the world; He was an infant, and the Word. Him whom the heavens do not contain, the bosom of one woman bare. She ruled our Ruler; she carried Him in whom we are; she gave suck to our Bread: O manifested weakness, and wondrous humility, in which the whole Divinity thus lay hid! The mother to whom in his infancy He was subject, He ruled by his power; and her whose breasts He sucked, He fed with truth. May He perfect his gifts in us, who did not abhor to take on Himself our origin! May He Himself make us the sons of God, who for our sakes willed to become Son of man.”

Although the importance of St. Augustine's testimony has induced us to dwell thus long on his works, yet we cannot anticipate the regret of any one at our closing this number with another passage in itself most animating to the Christian, and at the same time, though not so fully, nor so much in detail as other parts of his works, yet virtually presenting to us the habitual sentiments of this great master in the Christian Israel on the nature of angels, and on the part in the work of our redemption to which the Virgin Mary was called. On the words of the 149th Psalm, “He hath made them fast for ever and ever: He hath given them a law which shall not be broken:” Augustine says:—

“All heavenly things, all things above, all powers and angels, a city on high, good, holy, blessed; from which, because we are wanderers, we are yet miserable; and whither, because we are about to return, we are blessed with hope; and where, when

<sup>6</sup> Vol. v. p. 882.

we shall have returned thither, we shall be blessed indeed. What precept do you think the heavenly beings and holy angels have? What precept did God give to them? What, except to praise Him? Blessed are they whose business it is to praise God! They plough not, neither do they sow; they grind not, neither do they dress food; for these are works of necessity, and no necessity is there. They steal not, they plunder not, they commit not adultery; for these are works of iniquity, and no iniquity is there. They break not bread to the hungry, they clothe not the naked, the stranger they take not in; they visit not the sick, they reconcile not the contentious, they bury not the dead; these are works of mercy, and no misery on which mercy might be shown is there. O blessed ones! Do we think we shall be thus? Ah! let us sigh and groan for it. And what are we, that we might be there? Mortals cast forth, cast away, earth and ashes. But He who promised is omnipotent. If we look to ourselves, what are we? If we look to Him, He is God, He is omnipotent. Will not He make an angel of a man, who made man of nothing? Or would God esteem man for nought, for whom He was willing that his only Son should die? Let us look to the proof of his love. We have received such an earnest of God's promise. We hold fast the death of Christ; we hold fast the blood of Christ. Who died? The only One. For whom did He die? We might have wished it had been for the good—for the just. But, what? Christ, says the Apostle, died for the ungodly. He who gave his own death for the ungodly, what does He reserve for the righteous, but his own life? Let then human weakness raise itself up; let it not despair, nor crush itself, nor turn itself away, nor say, 'I shall not be.' He who promised is God, and He came that He might promise. He appeared to man, He came to take upon Himself our death, to promise his life. He came to the country of our sojourn, to receive here what here abounds—

reproaches, scourging, smiting on the cheek, spittings in the face, revilings, a crown of thorns, hanging on the tree, the cross, death. These things abound in our country, and to this treatment He came. What did He give here? What did He receive here? He gave exhortation, He gave doctrine, He gave remission of sins: He received reproaches, the cross, and death. He brought from that country good things to us, and in our country He endured evils.

“Yet He promised us that we should be there, whence He came; and He says, ‘Father, I will that where I am, there may they also be!’ So great love went before. Because where we were, He was with us; where He is, we shall be with Him. O mortal man, what hath God promised thee? That thou shalt live for ever. Thou dost not believe! Believe, believe! What He hath done already is more than He hath promised. What has He done? He has died for thee! What has He promised? That thou shalt live with Him. It is harder to believe that the Eternal One died, than that a mortal should live for ever. We have that already which is the harder to believe. If for man’s sake God died, shall not man live with God? Shall not man live for ever, for whose sake He who is eternal died?

“But how did God die? and whence did God die? and can God die? He took FROM THEE that whence He might die for thee. He could not die except as flesh; He could not die except as a mortal body. He clothes Himself where He might die for thee; He will clothe thee where thou mayest live with Him. Where did He clothe Himself with death? In the virginity of his mother. Where will He clothe thee with life? In the equality of his Father. Here He chose for Himself A CHASTE CHAMBER, where He might be united, a bridegroom with HIS BRIDE. The Word was made flesh, that He might be the head of the Church; for the Word Himself is not part of the Church, but took upon Himself flesh that He might



be the head of the Church. Somewhat of ours is already above, namely, what He received here, where He died, and was crucified. Already have certain first-fruits of thee gone before, and dost thou doubt that thou shalt follow<sup>7</sup>?"

The evidence of St. Augustine is clear, strong, and manifold against the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome with regard to the blessed Virgin Mary; and his testimony brings us into the second quarter of the fifth century.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. iv. p. 1676.

THE END.

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XVI.

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ON THE

ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

AGAINST IT.—*Concluded.*



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- XV. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

## WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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*Romish Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the Primitive Church against it (continued).*

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*St. Jerome, A.D. 418*<sup>1</sup>.

IN the estimation of Roman Catholic writers, the name of Jerome — “the greatest master of the churches” — stands among the highest, if not the very highest, of the early fathers of the Christian Church. He was born in an obscure town; but as his biographer assures us, he was nourished from the cradle with the pure milk of catholic truth<sup>2</sup>. He was the friend and the oracle of Pope Damasus; and by the canon law of Rome, not only are his own books received implicitly, but of the works of some other writers, those only are stamped with authority, “which the most blessed Jerome does not reject<sup>3</sup>.” On the question before us, we are led to attach more than ordinary importance to his testimony, because the state and condition of the Virgin Mary as the mother of our Lord, repeatedly formed the subject both of

<sup>1</sup> Verona, 1734. 11 vols. fol.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. xi. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> See Gibert, Jur. Can. 1732, p. 12. See also Sacrosancta Conc. Paris, 1671, p. 1263.

his discussions with those whose opinions he controverted, and of his instruction to those who esteemed him as their teacher in Christian truth<sup>4</sup>.

And what is the character of his evidence? He speaks of Mary as a holy virgin and a holy mother, and propounds her as an example of purity to all. He says, Death came by Eve, and life by Mary; but from the first to the last page of his voluminous works, embracing every variety of theological subject, not only does no single expression occur to warrant the conclusion that Jerome looked with faith to the intercession of the Virgin, or ever invoked her aid or her prayers, but nothing meets us which would imply his knowledge that any dependence on her intercession, or any invocation of her aid, prevailed in any part of the Catholic Church in his day. No intimation is given to us of any festival instituted to her honour; we find no allusion to her immaculate conception; to the miracles attending her death, or to her assumption into heaven.

We need quote only one or two passages, to enable us to form a correct opinion of Jerome's sentiments as to the object of religious worship, and as to any invocation of the Virgin, or any trust in her mediation.

“We worship not nor adore, I do not say the relics of martyrs, but neither the sun, nor the moon, nor angels, nor archangels, nor cherubim, nor seraphim, nor any name that is named, in the present world or in the world to come, lest we serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. We honour the relics of martyrs, that we may adore Him whose martyrs they are; we honour the servants, that the honour of the servants may redound to the Lord<sup>5</sup>.”

The Council of Trent declares that the Virgin Mary, by the special privilege of God, never was

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 231, p. 120, and p. 679.

<sup>5</sup> For a fuller reference to passages in the works of Jerome, bearing on the inquiry before us, we refer to the *Romish Worship of the Virgin*, p. 300, &c. Note vol. i. p. 720.

chargeable with any sin at all; and, consistently with the worship now offered her, less could scarcely have been expected. But many of the ancient teachers in the Christian school took a very different view of this point. We have already seen how St. Basil contradicts this notion, in his interpretation of Simeon's prophecy, and how St. Chrysostom agrees with him; and the words of Jerome on the same Scripture are these:—

“Simeon<sup>6</sup> then says, ‘And a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.’ What is that sword which pierced through the hearts not of others only, but also of Mary? It is plainly written, that at the time of the Passion, all the Apostles were offended; our Lord Himself also saying, ‘All ye shall be offended this night.’ Therefore, all of them together were offended; so that Peter also, the chief of the Apostles, denied him thrice. What! do we suppose, that when the Apostles were offended, the mother of our Lord was free from the offence? If she felt not offence at the passion of the Lord, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified by his grace and redeemed, surely Mary also was offended at that time. And this is what Simeon now prophesies, ‘Thine own soul also’—thine, who knowest that thou, being a virgin, without a husband didst bring forth—who didst hear from Gabriel, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,’ shall the sword of unbelief pierce through; and thou shalt be struck with the point of the weapon of doubt, and thy thoughts shall tear and distract thee, when thou shalt see Him whom thou hast heard to be the Son of God, and whom thou knowest to have been conceived without the seed of man, crucified and die, and be subject to human punishments, and at last lamenting with tears, and

<sup>6</sup> Vol. vii. p. 300.



saying, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.'"

Again, on the passage, "When the days of THEIR purification (so he reads it, *eorum*) were accomplished," he says "The purification of what persons? If it had been written on account of HER purification, that is, Mary's, who had brought forth, no question would have arisen; and we should have confidently said, that Mary, who was a mortal, needed purification after childbirth<sup>7</sup>."

Again, on the passage, "And they understood not this saying," Jerome's words—very obscure and doubtful on some points, but clear and decisive in the point before us—are these, "Observe this also, that as long as He was in the possession of his Father, He was above; because Joseph and Mary had not yet a full faith, therefore they could not remain above with Him, but He is said to have gone down with them<sup>8</sup>."

Now, whether we regard these as the sentiments of Jerome himself, or as Origen's sentiments translated by Jerome, and left without any note of disapprobation by him, it may be asked, Could these men have believed what the modern Romanists profess to be their belief, as to the Virgin Mary? Is the faith of the Church of Rome, or of the Church of England, the faith of the primitive Fathers? The dissatisfaction evinced by the Benedictine editor at "these audacious accusations" of Mary by Origen (for so he calls them); suggests the only answer—The primitive Fathers of the Christian Church did not entertain the same thoughts and the same belief, as to the Virgin Mary, which the Church of Rome now suggests, and teaches, and requires in her members. The correctness of the views of Origen or of Jerome, is not the point before us; our only question now is, what their sentiments really were.

Surely had Jerome felt that the Virgin Mary was "the

<sup>7</sup> Vol. vii. p. 285.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. vii. p. 309.

ground of his hope;" had he "invoked her protection and guidance;" had he been aware of such feelings or such practices prevailing among his Christian contemporaries, indications of this must have shown themselves, in some part or other of his works; but nothing of the kind is discoverable<sup>9</sup>.

*Vincent of Lirens, 440.*

Vincent, called "of Lirens" from an island, or, as Bellarmin says, from a monastery of that name, was the author of a short but celebrated work called "Commonitorium," directed against the heresies which had perverted Scripture doctrine, and disturbed the peace of Christendom. In his introductory remarks he points out with equal brevity and clearness the use of primitive tradition in our inquiries after Apostolic truth, and the faith once delivered to the saints. In this work a passage occurs which on every account deserves our serious attention. Vincent having stated that Nestorius held that there were two sons, one who was God from the Father, the other, man born of his mother; "consequently that the holy Mary is not to be called Theotocos, because, forsooth, of her was born not that Christ who was God, but that Christ who was man," thus proceeds:—

"Through this unity of person, by reason of a like miracle it was brought to pass, that the flesh of the Word growing entirely from his mother, God the Word Himself is with most truly Christian faith believed, and is with greatest impiety denied, to have been born of a virgin. This being the case, let no one attempt to defraud the holy Mary of the privileges and special glory of Divine grace. For by the singular gift of our Lord and God, her Son, she must be most truly and blessedly confessed to be Theotocos;

<sup>9</sup> For the reasons which exclude a work ascribed to Basil of Seleucia from the list of the genuine remains of the early Fathers, see "Worship of the Virgin," p. 310.

not, however, in that sense Theotocos in which a certain impious heresy supposes her to be, asserting that she is only to be called Mother of God by a figure of speech, because she brought forth that man who was afterwards made God; just as we speak of the mother of a bishop or a priest, not because she gives birth to one already a bishop or priest, but by producing that man who was afterwards made priest or bishop. Not so is the holy Mary Theotocos; but for this reason rather, because in her most holy womb the mystery was effected, that by a singular and solitary unity of person, as the Word was flesh in flesh, so man is God in God."

After making this most explicit declaration of our true catholic faith<sup>1</sup>, "that the Word, the Son of the Father, very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance;" and after reprobating with sentiments of abhorrence the rashness and impiety of those who would rob the Virgin of her lawful character and honour as the mother of that man who was very God,—how does Vincent of Lirens proceed? Had he been trained in that school which offers religious invocation to the Virgin, and prays to our heavenly Father through her mediation, and professes to honour her above angels and cherubim, and to regard her as the chief source of a Christian's hope, surely some intimations of such principles could not have failed to show themselves in this place. But nothing of the kind appears. The author does immediately pronounce blessings, and honour, and reverence; yet not the Virgin Mary, but the Church, which maintains the truth as to the person of Christ is the object of his pious admiration; he draws a comparison between what is going on in this world and the exalted duties and office of the holy angels; but it is the profession of the true faith in Christ, not the glory of the Virgin Mother of which he speaks:—

<sup>1</sup> Second Article of the Church of England.

“Blessed Catholic Church, which worships one God in the fulness of the Trinity, and also the equality of the Trinity in one Godhead. Blessed Church, which believes that there are two true and perfect substances in Christ, but Christ to be one person. By that (the unity of person) we confess both man to be the Son of God, and God to be the Son of the Virgin. Blessed, therefore, and worshipful, praised, and most holy, and altogether to be compared with the praise of angels above, is that confession which glorifies one Lord God in threefold holiness.”

*Orosius and Sedulius.*

Among the doctors approved of by the Roman Canon Law, are Orosius, whose date is about A.D. 400, and Sedulius, who lived, probably, to the year 440; we therefore refer to their works. Orosius, a Spaniard, wrote seven books on the history of Rome, in which he traces the hand of Divine Providence preparing the way for the Christian dispensation. Here he speaks of the Saviour as the Son of God and Man, the offspring of the Virgin. He wrote also a work on the freedom of the will, in framing which many opportunities would have offered themselves to him of referring to the Virgin, had he associated the idea of sinless perfection with her name. He refers to St. Paul, and St. Peter, and St. James, and Zacharias, and the Canaanitish woman, and others; but to the Virgin Mary he makes no reference at all: and he speaks of Christ as the only mediator and intercessor.

Sedulius, in his beautiful Christian poems, speaks much of the Virgin as the mother of Him who was God from eternity, and man born in this world; and he speaks of her as the person through whom the way of life was effected. But in his writings we find nothing to countenance a Christian either in addressing her in prayer, or in praying to God through her mediation.

*Cyrl of Alexandria, A. D. 440.*

Cyrl who became Bishop of Alexandria, A. D. 412, is said to have been present at Chalcedon, A. D. 403, when St. Chrysostom was deposed. By many he was called the rule or standard of sound doctrine. His writings have never had so able and thorough an examination with the view of separating the genuine from the spurious as they deserve. The Benedictines left him untouched; and a work attributed to him, but which carries with it its own condemnation as the corrupt version of a rhapsody composed long after this Cyrl's time, is at the present day appealed to in support of the worship of the Virgin<sup>2</sup>.

It is not necessary that we should acquiesce in all the interpretations of Scripture adopted by this truly evangelical and apostolic man, in order to feel sentiments of admiration and gratitude for his example in one essential point; we mean his habitual reference to holy Scripture in support of whatever he advances as to doctrine or practice. It is indeed cheering and animating to witness in him so steady and constant an appeal to the word of God. "Our hope is all in Christ," is the golden sentiment with which he closes his treatise on the Right Faith<sup>3</sup>; and the same principle seems to have filled his whole soul and guided his life. The thoughts of his heart appear to have revolved round God in Christ as their centre; the incarnate Word is all in all to him: he shows that he needed no other mediator than Jesus Christ; he looked for no other intercessor in the unseen world. In his genuine works we have much satisfactory proof that he neither invoked the Virgin Mary, nor prayed to God through her mediation.

The subject which mainly occupied his thoughts compelled him to refer constantly to the blessed Vir-

<sup>2</sup> Paris, 1638. See "*Romish Worship of the Virgin*," p. 348, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. vi. p. 180.

gin. His mind seems to have been absorbed in the duty of establishing the true doctrine then assailed from opposite quarters, that the blessed fruit of her womb, the Lord Jesus Christ, was perfect God and perfect man. In his references he speaks of her always with respect and reverence as the mysterious Virgin Mother. He tells us that East and West confessed Mary to be Theotocos<sup>4</sup>, "parent of Him who was God." He calls her generally the Holy Virgin; but he speaks as though her office was discharged when she had given birth to the Redeemer.

Many of Cyril's sentiments assure us that he thought and spoke of the Virgin Mary as we of the Church of England now do; though some of his expressions would seem to sink below that reverential feeling which our language generally implies.

Cyril's comment on the miracle at Cana<sup>5</sup> of Galilee is full of interest; and his reflections on the act of our Lord in consigning his mother to the care of St. John deserve a careful perusal throughout, as containing important evidence on the subject of our inquiry. We need, however, cite only a few extracts from the latter, of the genuineness of which no doubt can be entertained:—

"The divine Evangelist introduces as standing by the cross his mother, and with her the other women, evidently weeping; for the female race is, we know, much given to tears. What induced him to dwell on such minute points as to specify the tarrying of the women there? His object was to teach us this:—that, as was probable, the unexpected suffering of our blessed Lord gave offence to his very mother; and the death upon the cross being very bitter, and besides this the mocking of the Jews, and the soldiers probably watching him at the very cross, and laughing to scorn Him who hung upon it, and in the very sight of his mother daring to divide his garments,

<sup>4</sup> Vol. vi. p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. iv. p. 135; vol. iv. p. 1064.

threw her somewhat off from the reasoning which became her. For doubt not that she admitted some such musings as these<sup>6</sup>—‘I gave birth to Him who is now laughed to scorn upon the cross; but when He said He was the true Son of Almighty God, perhaps He was deceived. How could He who said, ‘I am the life,’ be crucified? How could He be seized and bound by the cords of his murderers? Why did He not master the designs of his persecutors? Why does not He come down from the cross, who commanded Lazarus to return to life, and astonished all Judea with his miracles?’”

“It is exceedingly probable that the female mind, (τὸ γύναιον,) not knowing the mystery, should slip into some such reasonings as these. We may well believe that the nature of those events was dreadful enough to turn from its course even the most sober mind; and it is nothing marvellous if a woman was made to stumble into this state. For if the chief of THE BLESSED DISCIPLES himself, Peter, once was offended when Christ spoke and taught plainly that He was to be delivered into the hands of sinners, and to suffer the cross and death, so that he hastily exclaimed, ‘That be far from Thee, O Lord,’ what wonder if THE DELICATE MIND OF A WOMAN should be hurried into weaker views? And this we say, not vainly forming conjectures, as some may think, but drawn into our suspicion concerning the mother of our Lord from what is written. For we remember that Simeon the Just when he took our Lord, then a babe, into his arms, as it is written, gave thanks and said, ‘Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’ And to the holy Virgin herself he said, ‘Lo, this one is set for the fall and rising

<sup>6</sup> The reader will bear in mind, that Cyril here only takes the same view which Tertullian, Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzum, Ambrose, Jerome, and others, took before him, of the Virgin's faith faltering at the cross.

again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against: Yea, a sword shall pass through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.' By the sword he meant the sharp attack of the Passion, which distracted the female mind into reasonings which were out of place; for temptations try the hearts of those who suffer, and lay bare the surmisings which are in them."

Having then beautifully referred to the act of our blessed Saviour, in committing his beloved mother to the care of his beloved Apostle, as an example of that "honour to parents which is the most precious form of virtue," he adds these sentiments:

"How could it be otherwise than becoming for the Lord to take provident care of his own mother, when she had fallen so as to feel offence, and was confounded by disordered thoughts? for being the true God, and looking into the motions of the heart, and knowing what was in its depth, how could He but know the thoughts which at that time especially disturbed her at the honoured cross? Knowing, therefore, the reasonings which were in her, He delivered her to the disciple who was the best instructor in mysteries, and who was able well and not inadequately to explain the mystery; for he was a wise man and a divine, who both receives her and takes her away rejoicing, intending to fulfil the whole desire of the Saviour concerning her."

Here Cyril of Alexandria tells us that the Virgin Mary was astounded at the unexpected sufferings and death of her Son, and was unable to reconcile what she then saw with what He had told her of his divine nature; but that we must not wonder at such weakness and stumbling in her, since even Peter himself had felt somewhat of the same disappointment. Here he tells us, that when our Saviour saw the disturbed state of his mother's mind, arising from her ignorance of the divine dispensation, He mercifully intrusted her to St. John, a theologian profoundly acquainted



with the divine will, and able to explain to her the whole mystery of Christ's passion.

With the soundness of Cyril's views, in our present inquiry, we have nothing to do; but is it possible to read these passages and not infer that Cyril was very far indeed from entertaining those sentiments concerning the perfection of the Virgin which were afterwards propagated, and are still professed by the Church of Rome? Can any other conclusion be drawn from his argument in another homily, delivered to a very crowded audience, in which he speaks in such a manner of the prophecy of Simeon addressed to Mary, as to leave no doubt that he ranked her, both in faith and in knowledge, below the Apostles? "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also:" by the 'sword' meaning perhaps the pain which she felt on account of Christ, when she saw Him crucified to whom she had given birth, NOT AT ALL KNOWING that He was stronger than death, and would rise again from the dead. And do not wonder at all if THE VIRGIN is ignorant on a point on which we shall find EVEN THE HOLY APOSTLES themselves to have been of little faith<sup>7</sup>."

We will only add one of many passages which stand in striking contrast with those representations of later times, and which we find even in the authorized services of the Roman Church, and which abound in the works of her divines and the books of devotion generally circulated; those representations, namely, in which the Virgin is magnified as a being of such surpassing perfections, that far above all created beings, principalities, and powers in heavenly places; far above all prophets and apostles, angels and cherubim; she stands next to the Trinity, to be approached by a worship peculiarly her own.

Having quoted St. Paul, as applying to Christ the title of the Lord of Glory, and as representing

him to be better than the angels, Cyril thus speaks<sup>8</sup>:

“Now to be and to be called the Lord of Glory, how is this otherwise than exceeding great, and surpassing every thing created or brought to its birth. I pass by mortal things, for they are very small; but I say that if any one should name angels, and enumerate the principalities, and thrones, and dominions, and mention also the highest seraphim, he would confess that these fall far short of his exceeding glory.”

Repeatedly does Cyril of Alexandria thus enumerate all things held in the highest honour by the faithful; but neither above the highest of created beings, nor among the highest, does he ever mention the Virgin Mary.

*Isidore of Pelusium, A.D. 450<sup>9</sup>.*

Isidore, called “of Pelusium,” from the mountain of that name near one of the mouths of the Nile, where the convent stood of which he was the abbot, was a disciple of St. Chrysostom, and was renowned as a philosopher, a rhetorician, and a divine. His works consist almost entirely of epistles to various persons on subjects chiefly in immediate connexion with the faith and life of Christians. Between two and three thousand of those letters have escaped the ravages of time; and it is said they once amounted to ten thousand. In the remains of this Christian there are many interesting and beautiful portions, which no believer can carefully read without profit. With regard to his evidence on the worship of the Virgin, we need say but few words.

Throughout the long series of his letters, the name of Mary is scarcely found at all; and the passages are very few which refer to her as the mother of our Lord. The following are the only sentences which

<sup>8</sup> Vol. v. p. 697.

<sup>9</sup> Paris, 1638.

seem to bear sufficiently on our subject to justify the citation of them; and the reader will immediately see how far they are from indicating the existence of such religious sentiments and practices as our Roman Catholic brethren now profess and maintain :

“‘I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,’ said the Lord to the Canaanitish woman, desiring to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, having taken upon Him his seed, and having chosen a mother from it, and in her and of her having been made flesh and become man, in all things like ourselves, sin only except<sup>1</sup>.”

“The holy volume of the Gospels bringing down the genealogy to Joseph, who drew his relationship from David, sufficed to show through him that the Virgin also was of the same tribe with David, since the Divine Law directed marriages to be made between persons of the same tribe<sup>2</sup>.”

“You ask, ‘What more extravagant tenet, or what doctrine different from ours do the deceived and polytheistic Greeks maintain when they write of the mother of the Gods; whereas we also believe in a mother of God?’ The Greeks acknowledge that the mother of their gods, even of the highest, both conceived and brought forth from incontinence, and passions which may not be named. . . . But her whom we confess to be the mother of our God incarnate, all generations acknowledge to have conceived one Son, in one solitary way, without seed and without corruption.” Having described the sufferings of our Saviour, he proceeds: “His resurrection proved Him to be a suffering incarnate Deity, and that she who brought Him forth was the mother of an incarnate Deity<sup>3</sup>.”

In another letter, Isidore says, “Let nothing be suffered to become an impediment to the Gospel of our Lord, and let no distraction of mind attend

<sup>1</sup> Book i. Ep. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Book i. Ep. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 54. Ep. 159.

spiritual instruction; nor let the intervention of any disturbance interrupt useful discussion: for neither did Christ when He was sought for by his mother and his brethren, pay any attention to their call, when He had begun his instruction, and was attending to the salvation of his hearers; showing that spiritual things should be held in higher estimation than carnal."

The evidence of Isidore brings us to the middle of the fifth century.

*Theodoret*, A.D. 457<sup>4</sup>.

Theodoret was born at Antioch, about A.D. 386. He was educated near his native place, and continued to live there till he became Bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, at the age of thirty-six. At Ephesus he was deprived of that bishopric, but was restored to it at Chalcedon, after he had solemnly declared himself a firm adherent to the Catholic faith.

It is impossible to read the works of Theodoret without finding evidence of the lamentable extent to which superstition had then shot forth its roots and branches, and encumbered the garden of the Lord. In his writings, indisputable proofs present themselves that in his time Christians, in their zeal to convert their heathen neighbours to the religion of the Cross, conceded to them the adoption of saints and martyrs to take the place of their fabled divinities of the lower ranks; and those saints and martyrs who shed their blood, rather than renounce their allegiance to the one only God, and their faith in the one only Mediator, were themselves made the substitutes of the household deities of paganism, and of the tutelary gods of the fields, and woods, and mountains, and seas, and winds, and storms<sup>5</sup>. To this delusive and fatal principle of accommodating Christianity to the prejudices

<sup>4</sup> Halle, 1769.

<sup>5</sup> Some divines of great authority are disposed to think, that the Christians here adverted to did not act upon the principle of accommodation, but had themselves been led into the practices, which they recommended to others, by the natural tendency of the human mind to superstition. The evidence of Theodoret on the question before us is not affected by either of these theories.

of the pagan world, and the tendencies of corrupt human nature, Christendom may ascribe, with tears of sorrow, a large and fearful share of those superstitious tenets and practices, which in times past well nigh buried primitive faith and apostolic worship. Theodoret tells us, that the adoption of that principle gave great offence to the more enlightened among his heathen contemporaries.

But gigantic and rapid as were the strides which the corruption of the truth had even then taken, and strange as it must appear to those who have not examined the question historically, and traced the gradual growth of these superstitions from their first germ to their full magnitude, yet the fact is demonstrable, that the worship of the Virgin Mary came not into existence till long after the invocation of the martyrs had made its inroads on the integrity of Christian worship. In the time of Theodoret, the Church is proved to have been kept in the primitive faith, still free from the worship of the Virgin Mary, and from the innovation of addressing God in prayer through her mediation.

The subject which more than any other seems to have engaged the thoughts of Theodoret, was the perfect union in our blessed Saviour of the Divine and human nature. Disputes connected with this doctrine too long banished peace from the kingdom of the Prince of Peace on earth. These disputes of necessity involved at every turn an inquiry into the office sustained by the Virgin Mary herself, in the mystery of the Incarnation. One question in Theodoret's time was, whether the title, "She who brought forth God<sup>6</sup>," as well as the title, "She who brought forth a man<sup>7</sup>," could be properly applied to her. Never did any theological controversy give more ample room for the full profession of whatever sentiments of reverence and religion were entertained towards her; and yet we find that the thoughts of Christians were then fixed, not on the superior ex-

<sup>6</sup> Theotocos.

<sup>7</sup> Anthropotocos.

cellence of the Virgin herself, but on the nature of her office in giving birth to the Saviour. The question was, not whether the Virgin was the proper object of religious worship, but whether that fruit of her womb which the angel pronounced to be the Son of the Highest, and to have David for his father; Jesus, born of her in Bethlehem, though one Christ, was very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, and very man of her substance.

There are many passages in Theodoret, all leading to the same conclusion, that in his view Mary was a holy and blessed virgin, ever to be held in reverence and honour as the mother and the handmaid of the Lord. But in his writings, we find no trace whatever of any invocation of her; we meet with no application to herself to exert her interest with God; nor any supplication to God to allow the mediation of the Virgin to prevail with Him for mercy. He seems moreover to intimate that persons in his time were beginning, in elucidation of the mystery of the incarnation, to apply to her titles which had not before been ascribed to her.

In Theodoret will be found many passages, which lay before us with much clearness the true doctrine of the Incarnation, and the general views and feelings of himself and his contemporaries on the subject immediately before us; but we must content ourselves with one or two passages.

“The natures were not confused, but remained in their integrity. If we thus view the subject we shall see the harmony of the Evangelists: for concerning that only-begotten, the Lord Christ, one proclaims what belongs to the Godhead, another what belongs to the manhood; and the Lord Christ Himself teaches us to take this same view, calling Himself at one time the Son of God, at another the Son of Man; and at one time He honours his mother as her who gave Him birth, at another as her Lord He chides her<sup>8</sup>.”

<sup>8</sup> Vol. iv. p. 105.

“If we declare Christ to be God and Man, who is so foolish as to shun the word ‘She who gave birth to the Man,’ in conjunction with ‘She who gave birth to God?’ for in the case of the Lord Christ we employ both appellations; wherefore the Virgin is honoured and called ‘highly favoured.’ What sensible person would refuse to apply names derived from the Saviour’s names to the Virgin, who through Him is held in honour by the faithful? for it is not that He who sprang from her derives his dignity from her, but she through Him who was born of her is adorned with the highest appellations. If Christ be only God, let the Virgin be called and named Theotocos, as having given birth to Him who by nature is God. But if Christ is both God and man, and the one nature was always (for He never began to exist, being co-eternal with the Father), and the other in these last days sprang from human nature, let him who wishes TO STATE DOCTRINES, combine the Virgin’s appellations from both these views. . . . But if any one is desirous of speaking in the panegyric form, and to weave hymns and compose praises, and wishes, at all events, to employ the more dignified appellations, NOT STATING DOCTRINES BUT PANE-  
GYRIZING, and to the utmost holding up to admiration the greatness of the mystery, let him enjoy his bent, and employ the high titles, and praise, and admire: we find many such things among orthodox teachers. But every where let moderation be highly regarded.”

It is to be observed that Theodoret is here checking the rising tendency to employ, when speaking of the Virgin, the more honourable titles, to the exclusion of the less distinguishing appellations; and that while he urges the Christian teacher, when stating doctrines, to speak the whole truth, and to refer to the Virgin as

<sup>9</sup> Vol. iv. p. 1303. In “The Romish Worship of the Virgin,” the reader will find many more extracts from Theodoret, confirmatory of the views of his doctrine here given.

the mother of the Man, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, as well as the mother of Him who was God, he expressly gives to the poet and panegyrist, when not strictly teaching Christian doctrine, a greater latitude; but even then not to exalt the Virgin, but to extol the mystery. We have often traced the error of the worship of the Virgin (or rather the invocation of Saints in general) in its origin mainly to the enthusiastic and unchastened language of popular harangues, and the poetical effusions of the panegyrist. To this error Theodoret gives no countenance.

His testimony brings us within the latter half of the fifth century.

*Prosper*, A.D. 460<sup>10</sup>.

Contemporary with Isidore of Pelusium, and Theodoret, though a few years younger, was Prosper, of Aquitaine, who died about A.D. 463, and whom the Roman canon law honours as a very religious man. To this character of Prosper we shall all cordially add our testimony, as far as the mind and heart of an author are discernible by a fellow mortal through his writings. His reference of all that we have of spiritual good to the grace of Christ alone; his steady constant fixing of the eye of faith on our blessed Saviour; his entire renunciation of all human merits; the pure love of high and unaffected piety manifesting itself throughout; his strong and warm-hearted exhortation to a persevering study of Holy Scripture; these, with his many other excellences, recommend him much to every true Christian. His annotations on the Psalms, from the hundredth to the last, are in themselves very beautiful, and have a truly spiritual and evangelical tone pervading them; and few will not regret that we have not the same pious man's assistance in our interpretation and Christian application of the larger

<sup>10</sup> Paris, 1711 and 1739.



portion of that holy book. In the remains of this witness to the truth, we seek in vain for any intimation of his hope resting elsewhere than in God alone. He bids us proceed boldly to the throne of Grace, trusting in the Saviour's atoning blood, renouncing all our own good deeds, pleading only for mercy through his merits, and hoping to be heard only through his mediation.

We find no passage in which Prosper alludes to the Virgin as an object of religious worship, or a source of the Christian's hope: he speaks of Christ as the offspring of the unspotted Virgin; and of her he says no more. We need not multiply proofs of this religious man's sentiments. In many places he cheers us with such sentiments as these<sup>1</sup>:

“The confidence of those who hope is in God's mercy. Let no one fear because of his iniquities, when he would approach God the Lord; only let him give up himself with his whole heart, and cease from willing and from doing what must displease even himself. Let him not say, that such and such a sin may be perhaps forgiven; and another, from its very nature, must be punished; but let him cry out from the depths, and let him hope from the morning watch even until night; because his Redeemer, who is without sin, for this very reason shed his blood for the unjust, that He might blot out all the sins of all who believe in Him.”

Prosper was a disciple of St. Augustine, and secretary to Pope Leo. He was not taken to the rest which awaits the people of God till about A.D. 463.

*Leo, A.D. 461*<sup>2</sup>.

Leo, the first pope of that name, and a canonized saint of the Church of Rome, was advanced to the popedom A.D. 440, and having governed that Church for 21 years, died A.D. 461.

<sup>1</sup> See Ps. cxl. cxli. cxxix.

<sup>2</sup> Venice, 1753.

Few saints in the Roman calendar are spoken of with so much reverence as Leo. He is often represented as equal to the Apostles; and with so great authority are his works invested, that A.D. 494 Pope Gelasius, and a council at Rome of seventy bishops, who were assembled chiefly to determine what books should be held to be canonical, and what apocryphal, what should be sanctioned, and what prohibited<sup>3</sup>, having numbered Pope Leo's letter, written A.D. 449, to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, among the books to be sanctioned, add these words, "The text of which if any one shall dispute, even to a single iota, and shall not receive it in all things with reverence, let him be accursed."

The evidence of such a man must be looked to with interest, and the result of our researches is most satisfactory. The genuine writings of Leo (his Roman editors themselves being judges of their genuineness) supply no indication whatever of Leo either praying to the Virgin himself, even for her intercession, or of being cognizant of any practice of the kind in the Church over which he so long presided. Two<sup>4</sup> homilies there are ascribed to Leo, said to have been delivered by him on the Feast of the Annunciation, which present very different views. These, however, are pronounced unhesitatingly by the Roman editor to be beyond question spurious; and we need not refer to them again. Nevertheless, it may be worthy of remark, that this is another instance of those homilies being proved to be spurious, which profess to have been delivered on the Feast of the Annunciation, before the beginning of the sixth century; and also of spurious works abounding with marks of the Virgin's worship from which the genuine works of the writers to whom these spurious works are ascribed, through the first five centuries, are entirely free.

<sup>3</sup> So early in the Church of Rome did the system of establishing an Index Expurgatorius begin.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. pp. 384 and 438.

Among the genuine works of Leo we have more than ninety discourses or homilies, and upwards of one hundred and seventy epistles, addressed to various individuals, or bodies of men, and embracing every variety of subject connected with the doctrine and worship, the principles and practice, of Churches and of private Christians. Of Leo's discourses ten were delivered on our Lord's Nativity, in every page of which had he believed and acted as his successors now believe and act, he would have been irresistibly led to give utterance to his feelings of devotion towards the Virgin. But Leo's thoughts were fixed on the Saviour Himself, and his heart was full of gratitude and adoring love to God; not on the blessed daughter of Eve, the root of Jesse (as he calls the Virgin), the mother of Him who was God and man. On the union of the Divine and human nature in one person never to be divided, Jesus Christ, God and man, Son both of God and man, Leo is continually speaking clearly and powerfully; so he does on the virgin-purity of Mary who brought forth the Saviour by wondrous birth. But throughout his sermons, and throughout his epistles, not one word is found leading us to infer that he offered religious praises to the Virgin, or invoked her name, or looked to her for any benefits, or supplicated her for her intercession. He is constantly exhorting his hearers and his brethren to join him in prayer; but God alone, through Christ alone, is the object of that prayer.

In Pope Leo we seek in vain for any expression to justify the present<sup>5</sup> Pope's profession of confidence in the Virgin's guidance, illumination, and protection. Here is no appeal to the faithful, "That all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of our hope." Leo directed his hearers

<sup>5</sup> Pope Gregory XVI. died after these pages were in the press, A.D. 1846.

to God alone as the destroyer of the enemies of the truth; as the Christian's greatest and only hope; as the dispenser Himself of every blessing to those who approached Him in faithful prayer by his blessed Son; as Himself ready to "send down an efficacious blessing on the desires, and plans, and proceedings of his servants, and to make his ministers to be as a wall against the invasion of false doctrine." In every one of these particulars Leo's primitive doctrine and practice stand in direct and marked contrast with the sentiments of the present pontiff. Almost every discourse will supply an example of this in some one point or other. Pope Leo knew nothing of the Assumption of the Virgin; for the legend had not then been framed; but he does again and again invite his fellow-sinners and fellow-believers to rejoice on the most solemn festival of our blessed Saviour's Incarnation.

POPE GREGORY XVI. A.D. 1833.

1. We select for the date of our letter this most joyful day, in which we celebrate the most solemn festival of the most blessed Virgin's triumph and assumption into heaven.

2. That she who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress,

3. May watch over us writing to you, and lead our mind by her heavenly influence to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock.

POPE LEO, A.D. 440.

1. Our Saviour, dearly beloved, was born to-day; let us rejoice. There is no room for sadness. No one is cut off from partaking of this joy: all have one common cause for rejoicing, because our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, as He found no one free from guilt, so came to set all free. Let the saint rejoice, because he approaches the palm of victory. Let the sinner rejoice, because he is invited to pardon. Let the Gentile be instructed, because he is called to life (p. 64).

2. God Almighty succouring us through all (p. 162).

3. I beseech you, by the mercies of God, assist me by your prayers, that the Holy Spirit may remain in me, and your judgment may not be unstable. To this our exhortation the grace of God is at hand, and gives suc-

4. But that all may have a successful issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary,

5. Who alone destroys all heresies;

6. Who is our greatest hope; yea, the entire ground of our hope.

7. May she exert her patronage to draw down an efficacious blessing on our desires, our plans, and proceedings, in the present straitened condition of the Lord's flock.

our, which [5] by revealing the truth through the world, has destroyed the enemies of Christ's incarnation, and death, and resurrection; so that the faithful in all the world, agreeing with the authority of the Apostolic faith, may rejoice in one joy with ourselves (p. 258).

4. Let us then fly to the mercy of God, which is every where present (p. 166). That your kindness to me may secure its intended fruit, do you supplicantly implore the most merciful clemency of our God, that he would in our days put [5] to flight those who oppose themselves to us [7]; would fortify our faith, increase our love, increase our peace, and vouchsafe to make me his poor servant, (whom to show the riches of his grace, He willed to preside at the helm of his Church,) sufficient for so great a work and useful to your edification, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6 and 7. The Grace of God, as we hope, will be present; and will enable us, by your prayers, to perform what we have undertaken (p. 242).

In Pope Leo we find evidence of implicit trust in God; no confidence in man's merit; but a full and thankful acknowledgment of the salvation obtained by the death of Christ, and made effectual to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be obtained by the earnest prayer of a faithful and obedient Christian. We find indications indeed of some rising errors which were unhappily soon to invade the integrity of primitive faith; still with Leo, God in Christ is all in all.

In the following, the closing words of his second ser-

mon on the Nativity, he speaks of the purity of the Virgin, and of the birth of Christ as an article of a Christian's creed; but nothing approaching to invocation of her, or confidence in her merits, or hope in her intercession can be found:—

“Praise the Lord, well-beloved, in all his works and judgments. Let there be in you a belief without doubt of the Virgin-purity, and of the Nativity. With holy and sincere devotedness honour the sacred and divine mystery of the Restoration of man. Embrace Christ born in our flesh, that you may be accounted worthy to see Him as the same God of glory reigning in majesty, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit remaineth in the unity of the Godhead for ever and ever.”

Pope Leo's testimony brings us far into the third part of the fifth century.

While Pope Leo presided at Rome, was held that celebrated council at Chalcedon, A. D. 451, in which the errors of Eutyches were condemned, and the orthodox faith in the article of the Incarnation of the Son of God was established. The grand question then agitated was this,—whether by the Incarnation our blessed Saviour possessed two natures, the divine and human. Subordinate to this, and necessary for its decision, was involved the question, What part of his nature, if any, Christ derived from the Virgin Mary? Again and again does this question bring the name, the office, the circumstances, and the nature of that “blissful maid,” the holy and blessed mother of our Lord, before this council, and before those of Constantinople, and Ephesus; all the proceedings at both of which were rehearsed at Chalcedon at length. Throughout these proceedings the name of Mary is continually in the mouth of the accusers and the accused, of the judges and the witnesses, and had Christian pastors then entertained the same feelings of devotion towards her—had they professed the same belief as to her as-

sumption into heaven, and her influence and authority in directing the destinies of man, and in protecting the Church on earth—had they habitually appealed to her with the same prayers for her intercession and good offices, and placed the same confidence in her as we find now exhibited even in the authorized services of the Romish Ritual; it is impossible to conceive that no signs, no intimation, no shadow, not the slightest reference to such views and feelings should either directly or incidentally have shown themselves some where or other, among the manifold and protracted proceedings of these three councils. A diligent search has been made with the single desire of ascertaining how this matter really stands; and no expression can be found, on the part of the orthodox present at that famous council, with regard to the Virgin's nature and office, or with regard to our feelings and conduct towards her, in which a member of the Church of England would not heartily acquiesce. No sentiment can be discovered implying invocation, or religious worship of any kind, or in any degree, directed towards her; no allusion to her assumption is found there. The Council of Chalcedon was held at least four centuries after the date of that pretended assumption.

<sup>6</sup> Between the death of Leo and the elevation of Gelasius to the see of Rome about thirty years elapsed. The intervening prelates in the imperial city left few literary works behind them; nor does any author of note appear to have flourished in any part of Christendom during this interval. These pontiffs of Rome were Hilarus, A. D. 461, Simplicius, A. D. 467, and Felix, A. D. 483.

Hilarus speaks of "the grace of God," and "the inspiration of the Lord Jesus Christ," as the source of mercies; and in his time the council held at Venice speaks of "the Confession of faith in the holy Trinity,"

<sup>6</sup> Sacrosancta Concilia, Paris, 1621. The pages in this edition are confused, but generally the references will be easily found.

and of a rising superstition called "The Lots of the Saints;" but of the Virgin Mary we read nothing.

In the Letters of Simplicius and of his correspondents we find continual reference to God's mercy as the fountain of hope and blessings; to Christ as the salvation of the emperor and the strength of his realm; and to the mercy of Christ as that power which wards off evil, and is the protector of the faithful. But throughout there is no mention of the Virgin Mary, nor of her influence or mediation<sup>7</sup>.

In the remains of Felix, though many indications of superstition show themselves, yet no allusion whatever is made to the mediation or intercession, the patronage, power, or influence of the Virgin Mary. The Roman synod held under him refers to God's power in conquering enemies, and to divine grace; but not the shadow of an intimation is there given that we can obtain that grace by the mediation of the Virgin. In his letter of admonition and reproof to Peter, bishop of Antioch, called the Fuller, warning him against the error of representing the divinity of Christ as suffering, Felix dwells at some length on the Incarnation of Christ; and he there speaks of the holy purity of the Virgin's womb when Christ was born of a woman. But he does not mention the name of Mary; and he applies the prophetic psalm, "Look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine," not as others have done, to the Virgin, but to "the saving Incarnation of the Word."

Felix died A. D. 492.

*Geladius*, A. D. 496<sup>8</sup>.

Geladius, by birth an African, held that synod of seventy bishops, which is usually called the First Roman Council. In this council, the celebrated decree was passed, to which we have already adverted, classing the works then known, comparatively few in num-

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 1154. 1042. 1057. 1073, 1074. 1059. 1061.

<sup>8</sup> Sacrosancta Concilia, p. 1263.



ber, under the two heads of approved and forbidden works. This Pope devoted himself much to the temporal advancement of the see of Rome, and to the promotion of its influence and authority over the rest of the world. In a letter<sup>9</sup> addressed to Laurentius, a bishop of Greece, who seems to have solicited his interference, Gelasius prescribes a rule of faith to which he desired all to conform. In this confession his reference to the Virgin Mary is couched in these terms:—

“We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God before all ages, without beginning, of the Father, as touching his Godhead, in these last times was incarnate, and became perfect man, of the most holy Virgin Mary, possessed of a rational soul, and taking a body; of the same substance with the Father as touching his Godhead, and of the same substance with us as touching his manhood. Christ brought not his body from heaven, but received it from our substance, that is, from the Virgin.”

In his striking dissertation on original sin, and the universal taint and infection of guilt, it is impossible that Gelasius could have omitted all mention of the Virgin, had the Church of Rome, of which he was Pope, then held the Virgin's total immunity from sin, as the present Church of Rome does. We are not here referring to the doctrine of her own immaculate conception in her mother's womb (that is so recent an invention, that even St. Bernard, in the twelfth century, reproves the monks of Lyons for giving any encouragement to such a novelty), but to an immaculate personal and divine purity in herself, such as the authorized services of the Church of Rome, and the devotions of her canonized saints, now set forth. There is much sound and healthful teaching in the scanty remains of this bishop, and on the point immediately before us, the following sentiments seem worthy of our notice and admiration. Having reprobated the fundamental error of those who held

that man, by his own strength and exertion, can, in this life, reach a state of spiritual and moral perfection, Geladius thus proceeds<sup>10</sup> :—

“ But should any one assert, that, not by the possibility of human strength, but by divine grace, such a state may, in this life, be conferred on a holy man, he surely does right to entertain that opinion with confidence, and with faith to cherish that hope. But whether any such have existed, who have ever reached to this perfection of the present life, as it is no where plainly asserted, so does it become us neither readily to affirm, nor to deny it. The more sober course is from the words of the holy Prophets and Apostles themselves (THAN WHOM, in truth, in this world, as far as concerns the course of a holy life, NOTHING EVER WAS OR IS MORE EXCELLENT) to determine to what extent we ought to measure our progress in this life. These, although by a more abundant gift of God they were assailed by very rare or very small failings of human nature, and by a fuller affluence of God's grace, they easily overcame the vices of mortality, yet themselves testify that they were not wholly free from them; so that it BELONGS ALONE to that immaculate Lamb, to have no sin at all; otherwise that might not seem to be imputed to Him alone, if ANY holy one besides should be thought free from sin. Let us, then, be content with the confession of the saints, and let us rather hear whatever they affirm concerning themselves, than pursue what may be either rashly entertained in our thoughts, or blown about by our own opinions.”

Could such sentiments, without any exception or modification, with respect to the Virgin, have been written by Geladius, if she had been habitually an object of his contemplation, as a mortal without sin? Both Geladius and Leo speak of Christ as having found no one mortal without sin, when He came to redeem all; no exception whatever being made in favour of the Virgin Mary.

In a letter to Rusticus, bishop of Lyons, having spoken of the storms of evil which pressed him, and the trials of affliction by which he was overwhelmed, Gelasius, like his predecessor Leo, and unlike his successor, Gregory, in the present day, makes no mention of the Virgin, her power and influence, her intercession, her guidance and watchful care: his heart, as far as language can be relied upon as an index of the heart, speaks only of God.

“But we faint not, and amidst so many pressures, neither does my mind sink, nor my zeal slacken, nor does fear cast me down; but though in straits and perplexities, we place our confidence in Him who, with the temptation, will provide a way for escape; and who, though for a time He will allow us to be depressed, yet will not suffer us to be overwhelmed<sup>1</sup>.”

This letter was written A.D. 494, after which Gelasius held the second Roman council, A.D. 495, and in the November of the next year he died. This brings us within four years of the close of the first five hundred years from the birth of Christ. Certainly, in Gelasius, the bishop and pope of Rome, we see not the shadow of any worship of the Virgin at all; nothing, with regard to her, in faith or practice, corresponding with the present belief and practice of the Church of Rome, either as held and exemplified in himself, or as existing, to his knowledge, in any part of the Church of Christ in his time.

#### *Anastasius and Symmachus.*

Gelasius was succeeded by Anastasius II.; and Anastasius, who presided over the Roman Church a few days short of two years, was followed by Symmachus, whose life extended fourteen years beyond the period to which our present investigation is limited.

In the scanty remains of these two popes, not one single expression occurs from which we could infer that the invocation of the Virgin Mary, or any faith

<sup>1</sup> P. 1259.

in her merits and influence was known to them; yet when speaking of the divine and human nature of our Lord, they would have found abundant room for references to her heavenly influence, had the habitual associations of their minds led that way. Such references were continually made in after ages. Invariably, however, these pontiffs refer to God alone, the first and immediate Giver of every good gift; and "their chief hope, yea, the entire ground of their hope," the hope of themselves and of their correspondents, is not in the Virgin but in Christ. Instead of declaring her to be "the sole destroyer of heresies," they hope in God that He will defend his truth, by his own mighty power, and silence the oppositions, and upbraidings, and corruptions of its enemies.

Anastasius, in his letter of gratulation to Clovis, king of the French, who had just professed Christianity, and had been baptized in the true faith, referring the king's spiritual birth to God, as the worker of it, thus admonishes him:

"Therefore, glorious and illustrious son, give joy to thy mother [the Church], and be to her a pillar of iron; for the love of many is waxing cold, and by the cunning of evil men, our barque is tossed by the billows, and beaten by the foaming waves. But we hope, for hope and against hope, and praise the Lord who hath rescued thee from the power of darkness, and hath provided for the Church so great a prince, who may be able to defend it, and to put on the helmet of salvation against the invading attempts of the baneful. Go on then, beloved son, that God Almighty may preserve thy peace and kingdom with his heavenly protection, and give his angels charge to keep thee in all his ways, and give to thee victory over thy enemies round about."

In the letter of Anastasius to his namesake Anastasius the emperor, we are struck by his continual recurrence to the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, for authority in support of his positions.

Symmachus, in his letter of defence against the Emperor Anastasius, who had been excommunicated, thus speaks of Christ's divine and human nature :

“Christ is truly wholly God and wholly man ; so was He conceived, so lived in the world, so suffered, so descended into hell, so was raised again, so appeared with his disciples, so was He exalted into heaven, and so is it said that He will come again, and so is He at this day in heaven <sup>2</sup>.”

To the bishops of Africa, Symmachus caused this to be written, (there is a doubt whether he wrote it himself, or employed a deacon as his amanuensis,) “God will happily accomplish the rewards of your confession, when it shall please Him to restore rest to the Churches ; that by the sweetness of peace He may console us for the sorrow which adversity brought upon us.”

“Is this done,” he says, “from the love of life, or from the love of souls, in imitation of their first Shepherd, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, OUR HOPE, who laid down his life for the sheep <sup>3</sup> ?”

To Cæsarius, writing on the restoration of peace to the Church, he says : “And if, by the help of God, the risen controversy be stayed, let us ascribe that to his merits <sup>4</sup>.”

Thus we find that the bishops of Rome itself up to the close of the fifth century, who, (as we learn from their own representation,) in respect to the difficulties in which they found themselves and their Church, were similarly circumstanced with the present reigning pontiff, instead of “lifting their eyes to the Virgin Mary as their hope, as the destroyer of heresies, as the guide and preserver of the Lord's ministers,” spoke only of God as the author of truth, and peace, and wisdom, and safety ; and looked for temporal and spiritual blessings to Him alone, through the merits and mediation only of his eternal Son, without the intervention of any

<sup>2</sup> P. 1297.

<sup>3</sup> P. 1301.

<sup>4</sup> P. 1308.

patronage, mediation, influence, power, or intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary.

Symmachus died A.D. 514.

#### CONCLUSION.

We have now brought to a close our proposed task, with regard to the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome. We have seen that in that Church, prayer, unequivocal and direct, is now addressed to her for her intercession, and for her patronage, and assistance, and protection, and for temporal and spiritual graces. We have seen that God is petitioned to grant the requests of those who pray to Him, for the sake of the Virgin, through her merits and intercession. We have seen that spiritual praises are offered to her for past benefits, and hymns are sung to her glory. We have found that Christians are taught to depend upon her as the anchor of their souls, and to devote themselves by a solemn act of religion to her service, as the Queen of heaven and the Spouse of God.

The pattern, and principles, and fundamental ground of all this worship, we find fully and unquestionably existing in the appointed offices, the authorized and prescribed services of the Roman Ritual; while the excesses and extravagancies of the worship of the Virgin we see in the doctrinal and devotional works of her votaries, many of them being canonized saints and accredited teachers. It is not for us to accuse our brethren in the Church of Rome of idolatry or heresy; though in our own conscience we should ourselves be guilty of both, were we to associate any created being with Almighty God as the object of our prayer, or with our blessed Saviour as our mediator and intercessor. We condemn not others; to their own master they stand or fall; but being persuaded in our own mind that we should act in direct opposition to God's own teaching if we were to pray to the Virgin, or to pray to God in her name, pleading her advocacy and

trusting to her merits, we at once protest against the fundamental errors of that Church which justifies, and enjoins, and requires, on pain of excommunication, such worship to be paid to the Virgin, as in our consciences we consider to invade the province of Almighty God, the Giver of all good, and the province of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, the only Mediator between God and man.

To assure ourselves on these essential points, we have first searched the Holy Scriptures; and from the first to the last page we find not one iota or tittle to suggest, or sanction, or admit of divine worship being offered to the Virgin; but much every way to discountenance and forbid it. And to assure ourselves that we understand the inspired volume as our forefathers in Christ received it from the first; that what we hold on this point was the tenet of the primitive Church; and that what we dread as a fundamental error was introduced by the corruptions of superstition in more recent ages; we have examined to the utmost of our ability and means the remains of Christian antiquity. Especially have we searched into the writings of those whose works (A.D. 492) received the approbation of the pope and his council at Rome; we have also diligently sought for evidence in the records of the early councils; and we find all the genuine and unsuspected works of Christian writers, not for a few years, or in a portion of Christendom, but to the end of the first five hundred years and more, and in every country in the eastern and the western empire, in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia, testifying as with one voice that the writers and their contemporaries knew of no belief in the present power of the Virgin, and her influence with God; no practice in public or private of praying to God through her mediation, or of invoking her for her good offices of intercession, and advocacy, and patronage; no offering of thanks and praise made to her; no ascription of divine honour and glory to her name. On the con-

trary, all the writers through those ages testify that to the early Christians God was the only object of prayer; and Christ the only heavenly Mediator and Intercessor in whom they put their trust.

The revealed truths of the Bible, and the witnesses of the Christian Church warn us, as with a voice from heaven, never to substitute the Virgin for Christ, not even for a moment, not by the most transient appeal to God in her name; never to seek what we need as souls on our way to God, from any source but the Almighty, the first Cause of all things, the Giver of every good gift, the God of all comfort, the Rock of our salvation, the only Ground of our hope; and to pour out our hearts before Him, through his only Son alone, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

We honour the Virgin Mary, we love her memory, we would, by God's grace, follow her example in faith and humility, meekness and obedience; we bless God for the wonderful work of salvation, in effecting which she was a chosen vessel; we call her a blessed saint and a holy Virgin; we cannot doubt of her eternal happiness through the merits of Him who was "God of the substance of his Father before the world, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world." But we cannot address religious praises to her; we cannot trust in her merits, or intercession, or advocacy, for our acceptance with God; we cannot invoke her for any blessing, temporal or spiritual; we cannot pray to God through her intercession or for it. This in us would be sin. We pray to God alone; we offer religious praise, our spiritual sacrifices to God alone; we trust in God alone; we need no other mediator, we apply to no other mediator, intercessor, or advocate, in the unseen world, but Jesus Christ alone the Son of God and the Son of Man. In this faith, we implore God alone, for the sake only of his Son, to keep us steadfast unto death; and in the full assurance of the belief



*Romish Worship of the Virgin.*

At this faith is founded on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, we will endeavour, by the blessing of the eternal Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, to preserve the same faith, as our Church now professes it, whole and undefiled, and to deliver it down without spot or stain of superstition, to our children's children, as their best inheritance for ever.

THE END.

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XVII.

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

INTRODUCTION.

PART I.

CONTRADICTORY DOCTRINES AND IRRECONCILEABLE  
DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE CHURCH OF  
ROME ITSELF.



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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THE merciful and wise designs of Providence can never be fully effectual for the conversion and sanctification of fallen and ruined man, so long as the inventions of superstition continue to impede the progress of Christianity by deforming and adulterating primitive truth; and nothing perhaps has adulterated that truth more than the adoption of Images<sup>1</sup> in the Church as objects of religious veneration and worship.

In this respect the Church of Rome has erred grievously; for just as heathens and pagans worshipped their idols before the light of the Gospel shone upon the world, in the self-same manner is worship now paid in the Church of Rome to the images of our blessed Lord, of the Virgin Mary, and of those whom that Church numbers among the saints. This has been of late years denied; that denial bringing to light and forcing upon our mind

<sup>1</sup> The reader will bear in mind, that by the words which we translate "image" (in Latin "imago," in Greek *Εἰκών*) is meant, in the language of ecclesiastical writers, not only a solid figure, (to which the word is now more usually applied,) but also any form, of whatever kind, intended to convey the likeness of any absent being, and to be its representative; whether the similitude is attempted to be made by colours on canvas, on boards, or on a wall; or by a molten mass of metal; or by a block of stone or wood chiselled and carved; or whether it consist of any other material, as of porcelain; and whether the figure be called a picture, a statue, an effigy, image, or by any other name.

this important fact, that within the Church of Rome itself, as on other points, so especially on this of image-worship, most discordant and contradictory doctrines and irreconcilable differences prevail. An attempt has also been made, as well by the Council of Trent, as by subsequent defenders of image-worship, to establish a distinction between the worship paid by the heathen to their idols, and the worship paid by the Church of Rome to images; such distinction being altogether groundless and imaginary. It becomes therefore necessary, before we show how inconsistent image-worship is with the faith and practice of primitive times, and with the whole tenour of holy Scripture, to ascertain what is in real truth the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome.

This inquiry, which must be a thorough and searching inquiry, has become in a far greater degree necessary within these late years, when we have been accustomed to hear from time to time, that the charge brought against the Church of Rome of worshipping and adoring images, is founded in ignorance or wilful misrepresentation; we have heard her bishops pleading as an apology for answering such charges, "the otherwise respectable sources whence the accusations spring," and expressing their "fear of insulting the understandings of their audience by supposing any capable of believing them." We have heard the same authorized teachers ask, with a triumphant assurance intended to silence every doubt, and put an end for ever to further question, "Is it possible, that, in an age and country which claims to be so learned and so enlightened, men should be found capable of believing that the majority of the Christian world,—the great, the good, the learned of almost every civilized nation under heaven,—are so ignorant, so debased, so stupid, so wicked, as to give divine honours

<sup>2</sup> See "Sermon preached at Bradford, in 1826, by Peter Augustine Baines, D. D., Bishop of Siga," and republished in the collection made by a society called the Catholic Institute in 1840.

to a lifeless and senseless image? Is it possible that any of you should persuade yourselves, that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of adoring, for instance, the ivory image which you see upon that altar?" We have heard, by the same authority, (whose words were most industriously circulated throughout the whole country about twenty years ago,) a most solemn and awful imprecation of divine vengeance pronounced upon others and upon himself in this matter: upon others, who act contrary to what he declares to be the doctrine of his Church; and upon himself, if the declarations he has made do not in very truth contain that doctrine:—

"Anathema to the man that worships an image as God, or gives to IT DIVINE HONOURS, or believes it to possess any portion of divine power or virtue; or places his trust in it; or PRAYS TO IT; or believes it to be any thing more than a lifeless, senseless lump of matter." "And, my brethren, I will add, without any hesitation or fear, Anathema to myself, if the doctrine I have here explained to you is not the true and universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church<sup>3</sup>."

Now, when, on the one hand, we find such solemn and reiterated protestations as these,—a bishop pledging his hope of eternal salvation as to their truth, and declaring unreservedly, that, not to receive divine honours, but to excite feelings of penitence and devotion towards God, images are placed on high in Roman Catholic churches; and when, on the other, we are ourselves witnesses of the clasped hands held up to the image, the tearful eye fixed on its countenance, the prostrate body, and the loud and bitter cry uttered to the image, calling it by the name of its prototype; when we witness clouds of frankincense rolled up to the image, which for a while apparently concentrates on itself the joint fervent devotions of a

<sup>3</sup> By "Catholic Church," and "Catholics," Dr. Baines throughout this consecration sermon designates the Church of Rome and her members.



whole body of worshippers; we are compelled to ascertain for ourselves what is the reality.

When, moreover, at the same time we read in the approved works of the most celebrated divines and doctors, bishops and cardinals of the Romish Church, that so ought things to be—that images of Christ and his saints ought to be set up for the purpose of being worshipped and adored, that divine honours are of right due to them, and that those are heretics to be abhorred who deny images to be fit objects of religious worship;—and, what is yet more, when we find the Roman Pontifical<sup>4</sup> asserting that the highest supreme divine worship is due to the material cross, which is regarded as the image of Christ; and the Roman Breviary<sup>5</sup> addressing the material cross with solemn and direct prayer; and the Roman Missal<sup>6</sup> enjoining the adoration of the material cross: what is our duty, as men accountable to God for our own faith, and for the instruction which we may give to our families and fellow-Christians? Can it be any other than patiently and dispassionately to examine the question for ourselves, and to state the results plainly and without reserve to others?

If moreover we find (as we have found) that the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome is to worship and adore images contrary to God's word and the example of the Primitive Church, (however industriously and skilfully on some occasions the more alarming and revolting features of that worship be kept out of sight,) then surely we are especially bound to apprise our fellow-Christians of what will be required of those who tender their allegiance to Rome; so that they may not, with blinded eyes and implicit reliance on partial representations, surrender themselves to be guided down a gentle and fascinating path, into a gulf from which few human footsteps have ever returned to the light; and where, when

<sup>4</sup> Pontif. Rom. 1595, p. 671. *Jussu Clementis, VIII.*

<sup>5</sup> *Brev. Rom.*, Sept. 14th and May 3rd. Norwich, 1830.

<sup>6</sup> *Missale Rom.*: Antwerp, 1641, p. 201.

inquiry is shut out, and consideration has neither place nor name, the veil will be removed, and the superstitious and deceitful devices of men will be seen in their own natural proportions and deformity.

In the present series of Tracts, after pointing out the contradictory doctrines and irreconcilable differences within the Church of Rome itself, it is purposed,

1. First, to show that image-worship is not only defended and insisted upon by the accredited teachers and doctors of the Church of Rome, but is also positively enjoined and prescribed in her most solemn appointed services of public worship.
2. Secondly, to establish the fact, that the worship paid by the heathen to their idols was in kind the same with the worship now paid by the Church of Rome to her images.
3. Thirdly, it will be proved that image-worship is required by the decrees of the Council of Trent.
4. Fourthly, the history of image-worship will be traced from the time when no image, even for the sake of ornament, was admitted into Christian churches, through the primitive ages, down to the period when even to deny the lawfulness of image-worship subjected a Christian to excommunication, to cursings, and to death.
5. Fifthly, as a portion of that history, the proceedings of the Council, called the second Nicene Council, will be detailed, which at the close of the eighth century first successfully decreed and established image-worship.
6. Sixthly, the evidences will be adduced which are borne against image-worship by the writings and uniform doctrine, practice, and discipline of the Primitive Church, from the first planting of Christianity, through five hundred years and more.
7. Seventhly, will be alleged the paramount and decisive testimony of Holy Scripture against image-worship under any form, or with any limitations and distinctions whatever.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

---

## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART I.

*Contradictory doctrines, and irreconcilable differences  
within the Church of Rome itself.*

BEFORE we proceed to establish those points in detail which fall more immediately within the scope and province of this work, we must invite the reader's especial attention to another matter of fact, of deep interest and great moment at the present day. The points which belong essentially to this portion of the present series of Tracts on "What is Romanism?" are chiefly these—that image-worship, such as it is proved both to prevail in the Church of Rome, and also to be inseparable from her present authorized worship and prescribed formularies, is contrary to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of Christ for the first five hundred years and more, and is directly opposed to the letter and the spirit of God's most holy and infallible word. The matter of fact to which we advert, and which though incidentally yet indisputably is established by a comprehensive inquiry into the nature and history of image-worship in the Church of Rome is this,—that instead of there being nothing but unity of doctrine within that Church, the doctrines maintained by their authorized writers are irreconcilable and contradictory; one class of them being no less inconsistent with another, than they are

with the prescribed formularies of that Church itself. The subject requires a patient and dispassionate examination, and will amply repay it.

It is matter then of notoriety, that many persons have been from time to time tempted and prevailed upon to join the Roman communion, by an assurance that within that Church oneness of faith, and uniformity of doctrine and practice in all essential points, prevail throughout. A topic which the pleaders and advocates of that Church never tire of urging with all importunity and persevering confidence is this—that among those who are separated from that Church there is no unity of faith, and doctrine, and practice, but as great a variety of opinions as there is of schools, or even of teachers in religion: so that the prayer of our blessed Saviour can never be realized, that his disciples may be one in Him; whereas, within the Church of Rome, they allege, all is unity, one unchanged and unchangeable uniformity of doctrine and practice, reigning throughout the world. Within that communion, they assert, is one faith, and one discipline; and should ever doubts or disputations arise, they have (they say) in the Bishop of Rome on earth, one infallible ruler and guide, to whom all must defer, and from whose decision is no appeal. Credible reports assure us that not a few have been drawn away by these representations to seek in that Church a refuge from the perplexities and din and disturbances of controversy, and from the agitation and distress of doubts within their own breasts.

Now, manifestly as these representations may be shown to be fallacious in many points of faith, and discipline, and practice, (especially by evidence which recent circumstances have brought into the light of day,) in no case more indisputably and beyond gainsaying, do they prove themselves to be utterly treacherous, ungrounded, and worthless, than in the doctrine and practice of image-worship. It would,

indeed; be difficult to fix upon any points among members of the reformed Churches, on which tenets are maintained more irreconcilable with each other, or with the principles of their Church, than are the contradictory doctrines set forth and defended within the Church of Rome, by those who must be regarded as her accredited and authorized teachers, irreconcilable with each other, and with the teaching of her prescribed formularies and ordinances. Few persons in England, it is presumed, are adequately alive to such inconsistencies and contradictions of the Roman Catholic Church; on the contrary, our people are still, again and again, told to consider the Roman doctrines, and tenets, and discipline, in all important points as one.

But on the subject before us, what have we found to be in very truth and fact the case? From the softened doctrines of Dr. Milner, (harmless and enlightened as they were called, but delusive as they really are,) spread through our country at the commencement of the present century, and in later years re-echoed from the pulpits by the Roman titular bishops of Siga and Melipotamus, we gradually, in our inquiry and review, pass upwards through every successive degree and shade of respect, reverence, veneration, worship, and adoration of images, till we reach that system of divine honour, and supreme spiritual worship and prayers and praises addressed to images, which was taught and maintained by Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Lyndwode, and others, and which is still taught and maintained within the Church of Rome. Beyond thus paying to images the highest and holiest divine worship, (a service, by their own confession and teaching, exclusively due only to Almighty God,) nothing, indeed, can further go; yet for this worship we find a direct, full, and perfect exemplar and prescription in the very Pontifical, the Breviary, and the Missal of Rome itself.

To those who are not practically familiar with the

subject, such an assertion as this may appear startling; indeed, it might fairly be thrown aside, were it not, step by step, capable of being substantiated by proof. It will, therefore, be necessary to state the facts of the case here; and we will do so as briefly as we may consistently with perspicuity and fairness; referring the reader for a more detailed account of the principal facts and statements to our subsequent treatises on image-worship, where they will be found in the order required by our argument. Our extreme limits in this brief summary will be the times in which we live on the one hand, and on the other the Council of Eliberis, A.D. 306, which forbade the introduction of "any images whatever into churches, lest the object of Christian worship might be painted on the walls."

In the year 1836, Dr. Wiseman, the present titular Bishop of Melipotamus, in his thirteenth lecture in Moorfields, with much to the same effect, spoke thus<sup>1</sup> :—

"Would any one charge me with bad feeling, if on coming before the representation or image of any one whom I had loved and had lost, I stood before it fixed in veneration and affection, as though the object itself were really before me? . . . Such is precisely ALL that the Catholic is taught to believe regarding the images and pictures set up in churches." And again, he said, "Whether pictures and images were used in the Church of old is not a point of much importance; for their use has always been a matter of discipline. The Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use them; it only says, that it is wholesome to have them; and that they are to be treated with respect, with a relative respect, that is, SUCH AS IS SHEWN TO THE PORTRAIT OF A FATHER, OR OF ANY ONE WHOM WE ESTEEM AND REVERENCE."

On Dr. Wiseman's strange and unaccountable

<sup>1</sup> London, 1836. Lecture xiii. vol. ii. p. 129.

mistake here, in representing the decree of Trent as not imperative, but merely commendatory, whereas it enacts positively that sacred images must by all means be retained in churches, we must hereafter remark<sup>2</sup>. Here we only desire it to be observed and kept in mind, that according to the teaching of this Roman Catholic bishop, Christians are to pay to the images of Christ and his saints such reverence only as is shewn to the portrait of one's parent, or an esteemed friend.

In 1826, just ten years before the delivery of Dr. Wiseman's lectures, Dr. Baines, the late titular Bishop of Siga, at the consecration of a Roman Catholic chapel at Bradford, in Yorkshire, in the sermon already noticed, thus expresses himself:—

“Really, my Christian brethren, I blush to think it should be necessary to say that Catholics as well as you [he was then addressing members of our Church and Dissenters] know the folly, and detest as much as you the impiety of giving divine honours to a lifeless piece of wood or ivory, however skilfully the sculptors may have fashioned it, or whatever object it may present to the imagination. . . . Is it possible that in an age and country which claims to be so learned and so enlightened, men should be found capable of believing that the majority of the Christian world—the great, the good, the learned of almost every civilized nation under heaven—are so ignorant, so debased, so stupid, so wicked, as to give divine honours to a lifeless and senseless image? Is it possible that any of you should persuade yourselves, that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of adoring, for instance, the ivory image which you see upon that altar?” Again he says, “Anathema to the man who worships an image as God, or gives it divine honours, or prays to it;” and again, “And, my brethren, I will add, without any hesitation or fear, Anathema to myself, if the doctrine

<sup>2</sup> See *Image-worship*, Inf. Part IV.

I have here explained to you is not the true and universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church.”

Here we are led to interrupt the course of our argument, and to ask, Are there not two churches of Rome? Can the Church, which canonized Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas, which thanks God for the light shed upon his Church by the doctrine of those its luminaries, and prays for grace to preserve their doctrine, be that same church of which this Dr. Baines was a bishop, and of which Dr. Wiseman is still a bishop—that church which gains proselytes (more than by any other means) by the groundless assumption, that at least that Church is at unity with itself; that there is no essential discrepancy in its doctrines? What can be more irreconcilable, more antagonistic, more utterly inconsistent, one with the other, than such doctrines as have been of late years current in England, preached and published by Roman Catholic divines with the highest sanction, on the one hand, and on the other, the doctrines solemnly promulgated by canonized saints and doctors, who have been invested with the highest conceivable credentials which any Church could by possibility confer on a mortal? But we return.

In 1825, Henry Howard, Esq., published a pamphlet, entitled, “Remarks on the Erroneous Opinions entertained concerning the Catholic Religion.” This was reprinted, with additions, in 1828, and being now (as well as Dr. Baines’ sermon) stereotyped for the “Catholic Institute of Great Britain,” seems to have received all the sanction which the Roman hierarchy in these islands can impart to any work. Under the head “Images and Relics of Saints” we read the following statement:—

“The Catholic is accused of worshipping them; but the Church particularly prohibits the belief of any thing divine, or of any intrinsic efficacy in images or relics for which they should be revered; or that we should ask any thing from them; and expressly



directs that any 'honour paid to them should be referred to what they represent.' In the common Catechism for children, to the question, 'Do Catholics pray to images?' the answer is, 'No, by no means; we pray *before* them, indeed, to keep us from distraction, but not *to* them, for we know that they can neither see, hear, nor help us.'" "Worship (continues this author) is to God alone; and if the sense of that old English word *worship*, which here means to revere, is to be perverted against the Catholics into an act of *adoration*, a foreigner might as well accuse us of adoring the Worshipful the Lord Mayor." And again, he says, "The Catholic neither adores nor serves the images, cross, or pictures<sup>3</sup>."

How irreconcilable the above statements are with the reality and matter-of-fact, whether in the doctrines of the most celebrated divines of Rome, or in the authoritative teaching and practice of that Church itself, is the point now before us. Here we would only observe in passing, that we are not disputing about words, nor forcing the word *worship* to mean more than the Church of Rome does in real truth mean by it. Mr. Howard (with others) asserts positively that the members of that Church do not adore the cross; and the Children's Catechism, to which he appeals, says that they do not pray to images: but we know and have seen, and their Liturgies leave no doubt, that on Good Friday every year the priests and the people are, in the very Missal itself, commanded to **ADORE** the cross; and on the 3rd of May, and the 14th of September, the Church of Rome does every year, to this very day, pray to the cross, as if it were God our Saviour.

<sup>3</sup> Our Roman Catholic brethren charge us with disingenuously supporting an accusation against them by employing the equivocal English word "*worship*." We would do no such thing. It is remarkable that in one single passage Bellarmin applies indiscriminately to images the words which are usually translated, by "honour," "veneration," "worship," and "adoration," *honor, veneratio, cultus, adoratio*, using all the words as the same in sense.—Vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. xxiv. sect. 23.

Dr. Milner, indeed, asserted fifty years ago, that the question of image-worship is a question about words, not about things; and assured us, that if we would make the same allowance to his Church as we claim for ourselves, "this phantom of verbal idolatry would dissolve into air." We are compelled to take an entirely opposite view of this point. The wider our inquiry, and the closer our examination of the two cases—image-worship now, and idol-worship in pagan times—the less can we discern any real and substantial difference between them. The heathen writers, with whom the fathers of the primitive Church had to contend, had just the same ground to charge their Christian opponents with entertaining a dispute about words, as our Roman Catholic brethren have now to represent in that light our objections to their worship.

The representations, however, of those modern writers to whom we have here adverted, are by no means novel. Bellarmin<sup>4</sup> refers to many former writers of note, who maintained that no worship of any kind is to be paid to the image even of our Saviour, and that the faithful are only to worship before the image, directing their worship to God alone. This very tenet was refuted and rejected as a spiritual error, by Bellarmin himself; and in direct terms the same tenet contradicts the solemn judgments and decisions of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and others of the first authority in the Church of Rome. And we must now, side by side with this tenet, which forbids all religious worship of images, lay the doctrines of canonized and accredited doctors of the same Church, which maintain that the images of Christ, and the Virgin Mary, and the saints, are to be adored with the self-same worship which is respectively due to the original beings whom their images, whether pictures or statues, represent; doctors, moreover, who appeal to the very Services of their Church in confirmation of their views.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. xx.

The reader will be furnished in subsequent parts of these dissertations on image-worship with a more detailed account of these doctrines ; here we need only advert briefly to the fact <sup>5</sup>.

Thomas Aquinas, a canonized saint, honoured above his brethren by having his festival exalted to the same rank and dignity with the festivals of the four great Doctors of the Western Church <sup>6</sup>, maintains unhesitatingly that the "Images of Christ, and the cross as being the image of Christ, must be adored with the self-same adoration which is given to Almighty God, —supreme, divine worship, *latría.*" On the 7th of March every year, this saint is prayed to thus : "Thou best doctor, light of the Holy Church, blessed Thomas, lover of the Divine Law, intercede for us with the Son of God ;" and on the same day the Church of Rome prays to God for grace to be enabled "to embrace with the understanding what Thomas Aquinas taught."

Thomas Aquinas was canonized, A. D. 1325. About a century and a half afterwards, A. D. 1482, Bonaventura was canonized, about two centuries after his death, by Pope Sixtus IV., who declared him "to have so written on Divine subjects, that the Holy Spirit seems to have spoken in him." Sixtus V., more than a century afterwards, A. D. 1588, in his decretal letters, pronounced Bonaventura to be an acknowledged doctor in the Church, to be appealed to in all places of education, and on all ecclesiastical subjects. And this great authority unreservedly maintains, that the images of Christ are to be worshipped and adored with the same, the highest supreme worship, which is of right due to their Original, Christ the Lord. "We pay the same

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Aquinas. *Distinc. lib. iii. dist. ix. Solut. iv.* (Venice, 1780. vol. ix. p. 136.)

<sup>6</sup> These four Doctors are St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Gregory.

reverence, and we ought to pay the same reverence to the image of the Blessed Virgin as we pay to the Virgin herself, and so of other saints. Therefore the same reverence is paid to the image of Christ as to Christ Himself; but the honour of supreme divine worship [*latria*] is paid to Christ, therefore it ought to be paid to his image<sup>7</sup>." Words these which stand out in broad contrast with the anathema which Bishop Baines imprecated on himself, if the doctrine explained by him, "Anathema to the man that worships an image as God, or gives TO IT DIVINE HONOURS," is not "the *universally* received doctrine of the Catholic Church." Again we ask, Is the Church which canonized Bonaventura the same Church of which Dr. Baines is speaking as the Catholic Church, and of which he was a bishop? or are there not two Churches of Rome?

Lyndwode, A. D. 1425, the most renowned English commentator on the laws of the Church, maintaining that the self-same supreme divine worship, *latria*, is to be offered to the cross, as is offered to our blessed Lord Himself, adds to his doctrine these words: "Wherefore, consequently, we address, WE SPEAK TO THE CROSS, and PRAY TO THE CROSS, AS TO CHRIST HIMSELF<sup>8</sup>." Words these, which certainly contrast forcibly with the curse imprecated by bishop Baines on any one who pays divine honours to the crucifix on the altar, or prays to it.

It is a curious circumstance, that the very year in which so great additional authority was conferred on the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas by the exaltation of his festival, Naclantus, "that day-star" of the Council of Trent, as he was called, dedicated his entire works to the pope. And this he did after that portion of his works which contains his doctrines on image-worship, had been commented upon by bishop Jewell as contrary to the doctrine which Mr. Harding

<sup>7</sup> Rome, 1596, vol. v. p. 112.

<sup>8</sup> "*Crucem alloquimur et deprecamur, quasi ipsum Christum.*" Oxford, 1679, pp. 252, 298.

declared to be the Roman doctrine, and after its real drift and meaning had been prominently put forward in the Second Book of the Homilies of the Church of England. And yet seven years after those homilies, pointing out the idolatrous nature of the doctrine, had been published, and four years after the decrees of Trent concerning "The Sacred Images" had been enacted, what does this author declare?—

"Wherefore it must not only be confessed, that the faithful in the Church do worship BEFORE the image (as some, perhaps for CAUTION-SAKE, speak), but that they do also, without any kind of scruple whatever, WORSHIP THE IMAGE; nay; moreover, they venerate it with the same worship with which they venerate its prototype. Consequently, if that [the prototype] has to be adored with *latria*, this [the image] must be worshipped with *latria*; if with *dulia*, or *hyperdulia*, this also [the image] is to be in like manner adored with the same kind of worship."

In good truth, however, such is the doctrine openly taught in some parts in our own times. In a catechetical work (to which we must again refer), published at Florence, A. D. 1837, called "Christian Doctrine," in page 35 of the third part, we read the following question and answer:—

"Q. Ought we to pay any adoration at all to the images of Christ, or of the Virgin, or of the saints?"

"A. If we consider them only in themselves as a sacred and blessed thing, we show them that respect only which we feel towards a sacred and blessed thing; but, considered as the representation of a saint [the holy Being], we ought to adore them with the same kind of adoration with which we adore the saint [the holy Being] whom they represent."

Thomas Aquinas set the example of confirming these doctrines by an appeal to the actual adoration, the religious worship of the Church of Rome itself prescribed in her ritual: and in this, his example has been with reason followed by many. For in that Ritual what do we still find?

**BREVIARY OF ROME.** The passage to which Thomas Aquinas appeals in proof, that agreeably to the sense of his Church, adoration must be offered to the Cross, we still find in her ritual: "Hail, O Cross, our only hope! To the pious, do thou multiply grace; and for the guilty, blot out their sins<sup>9</sup>."

**MISSAL OF ROME.** The officiating priest is enjoined to **ADORE** the Cross, barefooted and on his knees; and then all the priests are to approach, and **ADORE** the Cross two and two; and then the people; the choir meanwhile chanting the prescribed anthems<sup>1</sup>.

**PONTIFICAL OF ROME.** This book of Rites expressly declares what sort of worship and adoration that adoration which the Missal prescribes must be. The Pontifical pronounces that the service of *latria*—supreme spiritual worship, the most high and exalted adoration which can be paid to Almighty God—must be offered and paid as of right due to the Cross<sup>2</sup>.

Now suppose the case of a person, who, impelled by a strong desire of unity, ready for its sake to make a severe self-sacrifice, and assured by the asseverations of Romanists that their Church alone is possessed of that blessing, should in an evil hour leave the faith of his youth and surrender himself, his mind and conscience, captive to Rome;—what is such a convert to Romanism to do with regard to image-worship? Between members of that communion in which (confiding in the pledge given him) he trusted that he should find one faith and one prescribed rule of conduct, he soon discovers as wide a difference and as irreconcilable an opposition as ever he formerly was conscious of existing between the Church which he has forsaken and the Church which he has adopted. Whether he searches into the remains of those, who, though dead, yet speak in his

<sup>9</sup> Brev.: Norwich, 1830. May 3. Sept. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Missale Rom., Antwerp, 1641, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Pontif. Rom. 1595, p. 671. Jussu Clementis, VIII.

adopted Church, or whether he listens to the representations of her living members, he finds no uniformity, but all kinds of irreconcilable contradictions.

What is he to do? Must he dread the anathema of the bishop of Siga, and acquiesce in the assurances of the bishop of Melipotamus (supported as they are by many celebrated writers), and under the influence of those impressions shrink from joining in the prescribed public worship of his adopted communion; and must he acknowledge and feel that canonized saints, to whose decisions that Church bids "an appeal to be made in all controversies," declaring them "to have written as though the Holy Spirit spoke in them," were themselves subject to the same anathemas?

Or must this convert set at defiance the awful imprecations of his modern teachers in England? and reject as fallacious and misleading the assurances of some present bishops of his Church? Must he thus resolve to stand or fall in treading the footsteps of those former doctors and saints? And at all risks must he (together with them and with other doctors and catechists of the present day) worship and adore the image of Christ with the self-same adoration with which he worships the Godhead? and must he join in the service of his Church, when that Church compels him to pray to the Cross and to adore it? Which alternative must he adopt?

But other alternatives surround him, which, so far from relieving his distress, will only add to his distraction and perplexity. Other Roman doctors, whose praise he hears re-echoed in every branch of his adopted Church, he will find discarding at once as false and dangerous both those opposite views, and insisting that the only sure and safe course is to adopt a middle way, neither on the one hand refusing to worship the images, nor on the other ever assigning to them the self-same honour which is due to the spiritual Being represented by them. When he proceeds to ascertain for his own

practical guidance where that safe and middle course lies, he will find himself perplexed with subtil and refined distinctions, which, if at all, he will have great difficulty to comprehend; and with different kinds of worship suggested to him, between which he will have still greater difficulty to make his choice. Whichever of the many doctrines he may ultimately adopt, he must be charged with error, either by one party who believe him to have gone too far, and to have made in favour of image-worship encroachments on the worship due only to God; or else by another party, who will consider him to have fallen short of that worship and adoration which over and beyond respect and reverence must be paid to the images themselves.

If to solve his doubts and distracting perplexities, he betakes himself to Cardinal Bellarmin (usually recommended as the great oracle on such points), he will be only entangled in still more inextricable perplexities. That eminent casuist's distinctions involve at least the combination of eight different forms of image-worship, some of which were zealously maintained as the only right forms by certain sections of his Church, and with equal zeal were rejected by others. The Cardinal represents his own views as lying midway between the two extremes; at one and the same time refuting those from whom he differs, and yet making the extraordinary attempt to reconcile the opposite extremes, not only with his own intermediate doctrine, but even with each other; an attempt which has not unfitly been called "child's-play," *ludit pueriliter!*

But we must bring this subject to a close. The following Table will exhibit at one view, though not all, yet the chief of those contradictory doctrines which are maintained within the Church of Rome herself on the subject of image-worship. The references at the foot of each column will enable the reader to verify every statement for himself.



## 22 Image-worship—Contradictory Doctrines

COUNCIL OF ELIBERIS,  
A. D. 306.

“It is decreed that no images be admitted into churches, lest the object of religious worship come to be painted on the walls.”—See Part V. of the present Series.

POPE GREGORY THE  
GREAT, A. D. 598.

“By all means admit images to be placed in the churches for the edification of the unlearned. But shew by proofs of Holy Scripture, that it is unlawful to worship any thing made with hands; for it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ By all means forbid images to be worshipped.”—See Part VII.

SECOND NICENE COUNCIL,  
A. D. 787.

“Anathema to those who quote against the sacred images the words used in Scripture against idols.

“We venerate, *worship*, and *adore* the sacred images.

“Let no one be offended by the idea of worship; for it is said, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.’ The expression ‘ONLY’ is applied solely to the second word ‘*serve*,’ not to the word ‘*worship*.’ We may therefore *worship* the images, provided we do not serve them.

“All persons who profess to honour the sacred images, but refuse to *worship* them, do dishonour them, and are guilty of hypocrisy.

“But we must not worship the images with *latría*,”—the supreme divine worship due only to God Almighty.—See Part V.

THOMAS AQUINAS, A. D.

1260.

BONAVENTURA, A. D.

1270.

LYNDWODE, 1425.

NACLANTUS, A. D. 1567.

DOTTRINA CHRISTIANA,

A. D. 1837, &c.

*Aquinas.*

“To the image the same worship is due, which is due to the person of which it is the image. The cross and the image of Christ must be worshipped with the self-same supreme worship, ‘*latria*,’ with which Christ Himself is adored.”

*Naclantus.*

“The faithful in the Church do not only worship before the image, (as some, for caution-sake, affirm,) but they do worship the image itself, without any conceivable scruple whatever. Nay, they must worship the image with the worship of right due to the prototype or original being. So that, if the original being is to be worshipped with ‘*latria*,’ the image must also be adored with the same ‘*latria*.’

*Lyndwode.*

“We speak to the Cross, and we pray to the Cross, as to Christ himself.”—See Part IV.

See also Bonaventura, p. 16 of this Tract, and Dottrina Christiana, n. 18.

BISHOP BAINES,

A. D. 1827.

DR. WISEMAN,

A. D. 1837.

*Bishop Baines, 1827.*

“Is it possible that any one of you should persuade yourselves, that the most ignorant Catholic could be capable of adoring the ivory image which you see upon that altar? Anathema to the man who giveth to an image divine honours, or prays to it.”

*Dr. Wiseman, 1837.*

“If I stood before the image of any one whom I had loved and had lost, fixed in veneration and affection, no one would surely say that I was superstitious or idolatrous in its regard. SUCH IS PRECISELY ALL that the Catholic is taught to believe regarding images or pictures set up in churches.” — See this Tract, p. 11.

ROMAN RITUAL OF THE

PRESENT DAY, A. D.

1849.

*Roman Breviary.*

“Hail! O thou Cross! our only hope! To the pious do thou multiply grace; and for the guilty, blot out their sins.

“O thou Cross, do thou save the present congregation assembled for thy praise.

“The King is exalted to the sky, while the noble trophy of the Cross is ADORED by all the worshippers of Christ for ever.”

*Roman Pontifical.*

“LATRIA is due to the cross.”

*Roman Missal.*

“Adoration of the Cross.”

“The priest at the middle of the altar uncovers the cross, and says, ‘Behold the wood of the cross! Come, let us adore!’ The priest then, kneeling, fixes it in front of the altar, and putting off his shoes, approaches to ADORE the cross, kneeling thrice before he kisses it. Then the clergy, and then the laity, two and two, approach, and kneeling thrice, ADORE the Cross.”—See Part II.

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XVIII.

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## IMAGE WORSHIP.

PART II.

IMAGE WORSHIP ENJOINED IN THE RITUALS AND  
PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.



LONDON:

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INTERNATIONAL TABLE

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART II.

#### *Image-worship enjoined in the Rituals and Public Services of the Church of Rome.*

BEFORE the following statements and arguments can be thoroughly appreciated or understood, it is necessary that the reader have present to his mind two separate points; first, the distinction drawn by the Roman Church between three kinds of religious worship; and, secondly, the character with which the cross is invested by that Church.

In the first place, a threefold distinction of religious worship is made, for which, whether as to the name or the thing itself, there is not any shadow of countenance given, or the faintest trace found, either in the Holy Scriptures, or in the writings of the primitive Church<sup>1</sup>.

First, the worship which they say is to be paid to saints and angels they call "*dulia*," from a Greek word, which means the service due from a slave to his owner.

<sup>1</sup> That there is no foundation in Holy Scripture, or in the Fathers, for this threefold distinction of religious worship, and that it is purely arbitrary and gratuitous, the reader will find proofs in "What is Romanism?" Tract No. VIII.

Secondly, "*hyperdulia*," which signifies "a worship above and beyond *dulia*," and which is to be given to the Virgin Mary only; and which seems to lie between "*dulia*" the worship due to saints, and "*latria*" the worship to be paid to God only.

This third, "*latria*," the Romanists declare their anxiety to keep entirely and exclusively for the worship of the Supreme Being. This also is a Greek word, signifying "service."

This is one of the points to be borne in mind; the other is—That the crosses erected in their churches the Church of Rome<sup>2</sup> regards as images or representations of our Saviour; and consequently, both being on the same footing, both are to be worshipped with the same religious adoration. And here the question follows, What is that religious adoration? To this question only one answer can be given—Crosses and the images of Christ are to be worshipped with the very highest conceivable adoration; even the self-same religious worship which is to be offered to Almighty God, and to our blessed Redeemer Himself, inasmuch as He is Himself our God and Lord.

There is something so startling and so awful in this doctrine, that while we confess that the alleged maintenance of it requires to be substantiated by clear and indisputable proofs, we feel no wonder on discovering the refinements, and groundless frivolous distinctions adopted by learned men in the Roman communion to evade the charge, that they hold it; though we are astonished at the boldness with which some writers of our own times have ventured to deny it.

Now, Romanist writers distinguish between the real actual cross of wood on which our Saviour suffered (or any of its smallest particles, of which they maintain that there are very many still in existence), and

<sup>2</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Distinc. lib. iii. Dist. ix. Solut. iv.* (Venice, 1780), vol. xi. p. 136; and Cardinal Bellarmin, *tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. 26.* on the Adoration of the Cross.

the figure of that cross as erected in churches, and now consecrated for religious uses. The former, the actual material cross of wood to which our blessed Saviour was nailed on Calvary, and which had before been borne on the shoulders of Simon of Cyrene (that cross, or any the most minute particle of it), they number among the most precious of relics, to be, therefore, venerated like other the most precious relics<sup>3</sup>, but not to be worshipped with the supreme religious adoration of latria; whereas the other crosses they regard as images of Christ, and consequently to be worshipped with that highest worship of all that can be paid by man. We shall find, hereafter, that this was the doctrine before, and at the Council of Trent, and also at the present day. Here, however, we need only to refer to the doctrine as set forth by the celebrated Thomas Aquinas, who, on account of his pre-eminence, was called the Seraphic Doctor. "Here," he says, in the passage last quoted, "we must make a distinction. The very cross on which Christ suffered may be regarded, either as an image of the Crucified One, in which case it must be adored with the same adoration with which we approach the Saviour Himself; or else it may be considered merely as a thing belonging to Christ, and bearing a relation to Him, and in this light it is to be worshipped with hyperdulia. [This is the worship now appropriated by the Church of Rome exclusively to the Virgin Mary.] But," continues he, "other crosses are to be adored in no other light than that of his image; and, therefore, they are adored with supreme and divine worship." In stating the question which led to this distinction, he had before used this argument: "The cross is the image of Christ crucified; but the image of Christ crucified is to be adored with supreme divine worship; therefore the cross is to be so likewise."

This is no ordinary authority; this is not merely

<sup>3</sup> Some maintain that latria is due to the smallest particle of the actual cross.



the opinion of an individual. It is the authoritative doctrine of one to whose teaching the Church of Rome has in the most solemn manner set its seal. He was canonized, and made a saint to whom prayer should be offered, by Pope John XXII., A. D. 1325; and another pontiff, Pope Pius V., nearly two centuries and a half afterwards, A. D. 1567, "commanded the festival and office of St. Thomas Aquinas to be kept equal with those of the four doctors of the Western Church<sup>4</sup>." His festival is celebrated now annually, on the 7th March, and every year the Church repeats her most solemn testimony before God, to the soundness and purity of his doctrine. Two prayers offered on that day, one to God, the other to this Thomas himself, will be enough to show on what authority the proper adoration of the cross and the image of Christ is pronounced to be supreme divine worship, that is, the same adoration which is paid to God.

"O God, who dost enlighten thy Church by the wonderful erudition of the blessed Thomas the Confessor, and makest it fruitful by his holy operation; grant to us, we beseech Thee, to embrace with our understanding what he taught, and to fulfil by our imitation what he did; through our Lord."

"O best Doctor and Light of the Holy Church, blessed Thomas, lover of the divine law, intercede for us with the Son of God."

This Thomas Aquinas adverts briefly to the service in the Roman Church, on which we must now fix our attention. On the third day of May, called "The Invention," that is, the discovery "of the Holy Cross," and on the fourteenth day of September, called, "The exaltation of the Holy Cross," or "Holy Cross," or, anciently, "Holy Rood Day," the public services of the Church of Rome supply us of themselves abundantly with proof how far the innovation

<sup>4</sup> That is, he was put on an equality with St. Ambrose, St. Augustin, St. Jerome, and St. Gregory.

of image-worship has in her liturgies and formularies mingled itself with the worship of Almighty God, and polluted the purity and simplicity of primitive Christian worship.

On each of those two days, acts of adoration of the cross, containing as direct a prayer to the cross itself for spiritual blessings, and even for salvation, as could be made to the Saviour Himself, who died upon a cross on Calvary, are prescribed and enjoined annually now as an essential part of the public worship of the Church. In the Breviary, however, the following confession to our Saviour must first be noticed:—

“We ought to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection; by whom we are saved and set free. We **ADORE THY CROSS**, O Lord, and celebrate thy glorious passion.”

“The King is exalted to the sky, while the noble trophy of the Cross is **ADORED** by all the worshippers of Christ for ever.”

Among other anthems and confessions, the following acts of prayer and adoration are addressed to the cross itself:—

“O Thou Cross, hail Thou, our only hope! To the pious do Thou multiply grace, and for the guilty, blot out their sins.”

“O Thou Cross, more brilliant than all stars; celebrated in the world; much to be loved by men; more holy than all things; Thou who alone wast worthy to bear the price of the world—bearing sweet wood, sweet nails, sweet burden; **DO THOU SAVE** the present congregation assembled for thy praise.”

“O Thou venerable Cross, Thou who didst bring salvation to the miserable, with what heraldings shall I extol Thee, since Thou didst prepare life in heaven for us?”

“O victory and wonderful sign of the Cross, **CAUSE THOU** us to obtain a triumph in the court of heaven.”

These anthems are appended, instead of the *Gloria Patri*, to the proper Psalms.

If from the Breviary we turn to the Roman Pontifical, we find a rubric stating the reason why, in the procession in honour of an emperor entering a city, the cross of the Pope's legate should be on the right hand, and the emperor's sword on the left, to be no other than this: "That SUPREME DIVINE WORSHIP (*latría*) is due to the cross<sup>5</sup>."

To these authorized acts of public devotion we must join the religious worship, called, "The Adoration of the Cross," prescribed by the Roman Missal to be celebrated every Good Friday. We may well ask, whether the very grossest superstition which we now witness, or have heard of among the least enlightened of the votaries of Rome, can any longer excite our wonder, when on the very anniversary of the Redeemer's sacrifice, such things are exhibited, and such services enjoined in their holiest acts of public worship.

"The priest receives from the deacon the cross already prepared on the altar, and turning himself to the people, he uncovers it a little way down from the top, and begins the anthem alone, 'Behold the wood of the cross!' Then he is assisted in the chant by the ministers, down to, 'Come ye, let us adore;' and when the choir is singing, 'Come ye, let us adore,' all, except the celebrant, prostrate themselves. Afterwards he comes forward, and opens the right arm of the cross, and lifting it a little higher than at first, he begins, 'Behold the wood of the cross!' the others singing and adoring as above. Then the priest proceeds to the middle of the altar, and uncovering the cross entirely, and elevating it the third time higher, begins, 'Behold the wood of the cross!' others singing and adoring as above. Afterwards the priest alone carries the cross to a place prepared before the

<sup>5</sup> Pontif. Rom.: Rome, 1595, pp. 671, 672. Missale Rom.: Antwerp, 1641, p. 201. Brev. Norwich, 1830, May 3rd and Sept. 14th.

altar, and kneeling, places it there. Presently, having put off his shoes, he approaches to **ADORE THE CROSS**, kneeling thrice before he kisses it. Then the ministers of the altar, and next the clergy and laity, two and two kneeling, **THRICE ADORE THE CROSS**. Meantime, while the **ADORATION OF THE CROSS** is going on, the choir are to sing more or fewer anthems, according to the time required for the congregation, whether large or small. At the end of the adoration of the cross the candles are lighted on the altar."

It must be borne in mind, that the passage here quoted is not a clause in an historical work, merely giving an account of what we may see done, or of what may have been done, by over-zealous and superstitious members of the Church of Rome; it is the very rubric, the very ordinance of that Church itself on Good Friday at the present day, prescribing and enjoining what her priests and her people are bound to do annually. They **ADORE** the cross of wood, and they call the service, **The ADORATION OF THE CROSS**; and their most celebrated canonized saints, to whom they address their prayers, at least for their intercessions, declare that the cross itself is to be adored and worshipped with the self-same adoration and worship as must be rendered by faithful Christians to their Saviour and their God.

What, we would ask, is here left for superstition to add more? Should the mass of the people now worship the cross and images, as the pagans in times of old, in the darkest and blackest regions of heathenism, worshipped their stocks and idols, could that be regarded as any other than a natural consequence of the prescribed worship of the Church of Rome itself? Are not the most superstitious observances, and acts of prayer and adoration addressed to images and crosses by the most ignorant on the face of the earth, justified by such solemn acts of religious worship as these? What avail all those nice distinctions, and refined subtleties, many

of which (as Cardinal Bellarmin himself confesses) are not understood even by those who make them; much less by the ordinary worshipper? Put the flimsy trifling distinctions (made by controversialists) of worship into *direct* and *relative* worship, *primary* and *secondary*, *terminating* and *transitory*, in the one scale, and these palpable visible acts of mental and bodily adoration in the other, and fallen human nature will make the latter inevitably preponderate.

Here are prayers and praises addressed plainly and directly to the cross, as to an image of Christ; and the people can never be so powerfully influenced by abstruse refinements, and airy theories, as by what they hear and see. They hear and see their Church in her Liturgy, and by the persons of her priests, worshipping and adoring, and praying to images and the cross, and praising them on their knees, with eyes raised to the visible material object of their addresses, and their hands uplifted to them. They understand what they see and hear; and even were they to read or hear the subtleties with which their controversial books abound, they would not understand them. If moreover they heard the clashing, inconsistent, contradictory doctrines of their saints and authorized teachers, they could not weigh the arguments; and the practice, brought home to their understandings and feelings, being all on one side—the side of open, visible, palpable adoration—they would continue to adore the cross, and their images, and leave the defence of such adoration to others.

Indeed, this seems to be the very principle sanctioned and approved by some of their celebrated teachers<sup>6</sup>, who, in defence of the direct worship of images by the people, maintain, that even if the common people of the Israelites worshipped the

<sup>6</sup> See Naclantus on the Romans, ch. ii. ver. 23, A. D. 1567.

brazen serpent in the wilderness, without any idea of its spiritual character as a type of Christ crucified, but merely as a brazen serpent, they were not guilty of idolatry; because in what they did they merely followed their rulers in things spiritual. Thus if the people in the less enlightened Roman Catholic countries should worship the cross and images with the direct worship due only to God, not only would they do, as their learned doctors and canonized saints teach them that it is their duty to do; but they would be guiltless, because they would be only following the outward religious acts of their priests; though those priests offered the worship with a different view of its nature. But can this be justified on any principle of humanity, or Christian faith and truth? Can this allay all disquietude and misgivings in those Christians to whom the souls, for which as well as for their own Christ died, are precious?

Before leaving this point, and the prescribed worship on Good Friday, we have the painful task of laying before the reader what can scarcely be regarded in any other light than a disingenuous suppression of the truth, and the unworthy suggestion of a falsehood. In the year 1833, John England, the Roman Catholic bishop of Charleston, published a work at Rome, "Printed for the Foreign Catholic Library," and dedicated to Cardinal Weld, for the purpose of explaining to English travellers staying at Rome, the nature and ceremonies of the mass, especially "the peculiar observances of the holy week." In describing the ceremonies of Good Friday, this work misleads the reader in two important particulars: 'In the first place, the heading of the section stating its contents is "Adoration of Christ crucified. Veneration of the Cross;" whereas the words in the Roman Missal are throughout, not "The Adoration of Christ," but "The Adoration of the Cross." Again, having described

the proceedings, the writer says, "The performance of this ceremony is called 'The Adoration,'"<sup>23</sup> whereas it is over and over again called "The Adoration OF THE CROSS," and never "The Adoration" only. Then follows the misleading assertion of the Author; "Though the tokens of affectionate respect are given to the symbol, the homage of adoration is paid only to Christ." This has been said with regard to the worship of images from the time of the Nicene Council; and the self-same plea was made by the heathen, for their worship of idols.

Notwithstanding these testimonies as to the real teaching and practice of the Church of Rome, we are met by assurances from many quarters, that the members of that Church do not, and need not pray to the cross or images, or adore them, or pay them religious worship, or give praise to them. Roman Catholics, in their arguments with those who urge image-worship as an essential corruption in the Church of Rome, and also in their representations to those whom they would withdraw from the Church of England, still assert strongly and indignantly that (whatever might have been the case in former times) image-worship is not only left an open question among them now, but, so far from being exacted as one of their terms of communion, is not even sanctioned by the Roman authorities of the present day. They confess that they think images useful, and that they pray before them to keep their thoughts from distraction; but they repeat their solemn declaration that this is the very utmost, and that they worship with religious adoration neither cross nor image.

When our words may appear to charge others with duplicity and want of good faith, we ought to weigh carefully what expressions we employ; and we will not here intentionally give offence to any one. To our own Master, we all stand or fall. But that blessed Master's truth is too precious for those

who are possessed of it to shrink from its defence under the influence of any morbid delicacy. We must not be driven from our purpose by an apprehension of our raising suspicions as to the full integrity and honesty of others, or of our exciting a surmise that what were once called "pious frauds" may be still deemed justifiable, and be employed in the cause of the Roman Church. We would not be guilty of a breach of charity; but we must in the cause of Christian truth declare what we have seen, and heard, and known; and to others we leave the task of reconciling facts with the assertions of those who declare that the Church of Rome neither enjoins, nor requires, nor prescribes as expedient, nor even authorizes or sanctions the worship of images.

We cannot then but remember, that while at the very time of the Reformation assertions were over and over again made, that though the people in the Roman Church worship before images, yet they do not worship the image, the celebrated Naclantus, a chief worker in the Council of Trent, "shining among the doctors and bishops there, as the day-star among the lesser luminaries," professed openly, that this was said **ONLY FOR GREATER CAUTION-SAKE**<sup>8</sup>, and that the faithful not only do worship, and must worship images, but that they must also adore each image with the self-same adoration with which the original being, whose representative it is, is himself or herself to be adored.

Again, we cannot forget that even the present titular Bishop of Melipotamus, Dr. Wiseman, assures us, "that the Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use images; and that it only says, that it is wholesome to have them, and that they must be treated with respect<sup>9</sup>;" whereas the truth is, that that Council (as we shall see in a subsequent Tract) does decree that we are bound to use them, and does not only say that it is wholesome to have them.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. Venice, A. D. 1567, p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> London, 1836, Lecture xiii. vol. ii. p. 130.



When moreover we find Cardinal Bellarmin, on the subject of image-worship, drawing a distinction between what 'may be openly and outwardly expressed in words and what is to be regarded as the very truth and real matter of fact, we are of necessity put upon our guard<sup>1</sup>. We are forced to entertain somewhat of caution and watchfulness, and even suspicion, when we find the declaration of individuals (however eminent in the Church of Rome) to be at direct variance with the teaching, and example, and worship of that Church itself, and with the tenets of her authorized and accredited, and even canonized doctors.

How then does the case actually stand now with regard to image-worship in the Church of Rome? In the first place, while the Second Council of Nicœa (to the history of which attention will be especially drawn in a subsequent Tract) insists upon the religious adoration of images (those who framed its decrees maintaining that any one who should pretend to HONOUR the images, but should refuse to WORSHIP them, convicts himself of hypocrisy), that Council is appealed to with approbation by the Council of Trent, in the sentence which asserts, that the honour shown to the images is passed on to the original beings, and which recognises, as outward signs of such honour, the kissing of the images, the uncovering of the head, and the falling prostrate before them<sup>2</sup>.

In the second place, if it be not the real wish and intention of the Church of Rome at the present day to encourage image-worship, in what light are we to view the circulation of books which expressly vindicate and directly encourage such worship? For example: Is such a supposition compatible with the spreading abroad of the Douay Bible, as their authorized English version of the Holy Scriptures, with such notes<sup>3</sup> and comments, as defend in positive terms the

<sup>1</sup> Tom. ii. lib. ii. c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See Second Nicene Council, Act 4. Council of Trent, Session 25.

<sup>3</sup> Vide note on Heb. xi. 21.

use and adoration of images and crucifixes, and condemn as maintainers of false doctrines those who reject that use and adoration? And how is the supposition that the present authorities of the Church of Rome do not lend their countenance to such use and adoration of images reconcilable with the general circulation of books, bearing the imprimatur of men high in authority, in almost every language, encouraging a belief in the miraculous powers of individual images, and fostering the worship of them?

Again; we have seen that Thomas Aquinas maintains, without any restriction or qualifying language, that the cross and the images of Christ are to be adored with the same adoration and worship with which the faithful adore the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity, namely, with the supreme, the highest adoration of all, called *latria*. Still Thomas Aquinas lived six centuries ago, and it will be said, as it has been said, Is it fair to force upon the Church of Rome at the present day, doctrines which she may have long ago discarded, or at least suffered to remain dormant, and which, at all events, she has ceased to enforce and maintain? To this we must simply reply, that we do not force the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas on the Church of Rome now, against her own mind and will. She herself renews every year, and publishes throughout the whole world, wherever her voice can be heard, her confession of the truth and soundness of his doctrines. He is no ordinary person even among her canonized saints; his festival is raised to an equality with the festivals of the four<sup>4</sup> doctors of the Western Church; and on that festival the Church of Rome now every year not only prays to him for his intercession in heaven, but actually prays to God for grace to enable her members to embrace, with the understanding, what Thomas Aquinas taught, and to fulfil, by their imitation, what he did; confessing, in the same prayer, that the Almighty continues to enlighten the

<sup>4</sup> See p. 6.

Church by the wonderful erudition of this same Thomas, making it fruitful by his operation. This is no antiquated obsolete confession and prayer; it is contained in the Roman Breviary now, and is commanded to be offered annually on the 7th of March, even to this very day.

In the next place, we must observe that Bonaventura<sup>5</sup> is equally clear and positive in maintaining that “the image of Christ is to be adored with the highest divine worship, the worship due to the One Supreme Almighty God, called *latría*, because it represents Him who was crucified for us, and the image presents itself for Him.” He also teaches not less positively, that “every cross is to be adored with the self-same worship.” Here again it will be asked, Is it fair, and that against repeated protestations of many, to bind the present members of the Church of Rome to such doctrines as these, the advocate of which has for so many centuries been removed from the world? We reply,—To those who make such protestations it must be left to show, how they can be reconciled with professions of full and unreserved allegiance to the see of Rome. . We have to say, that though Bonaventura died so many years ago, yet two centuries after his death he was canonized by Pope Sixtus IV., and was then pronounced to have so written on divine subjects as that the Holy Spirit seemed to have spoken in him. Nor only so; a century after his canonization, Pope Sixtus V. pronounced Bonaventura to be an acknowledged doctor of the Church, and directed his authority to be cited and employed in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies; and these decrees of the Church of Rome remain in full force to the present hour.

In England, moreover, we cannot but call to mind in this place (though we must revert to the point in another Tract), that somewhat more than a century before the Reformation, it was enacted by the decrees

<sup>5</sup> Rome, 1596, vol. v. p. 112, lib. iii. Dist. ix. Quest. 2.

of the Council of Oxford, that whoever should either teach or insinuate any thing against the adoration of the cross, or against images being venerated by processions, kneelings, bowings, incensings, kissings, oblations, burning of lights, pilgrimages, or any other accustomed mode, he should be pronounced guilty of heresy, and condemned to suffer the punishment of a relapsed heretic, which in those days was to be burned alive<sup>6</sup>. The laws of our country have since repealed that "statute of burning," as it was called; but those decrees of the Roman Catholic Church in England were still in force at the Reformation; and yet we are now gravely told that, "according to the judgment in which Roman Catholic doctors and divines are agreed, it is to be laid down as a principle, that images are to be reckoned among things indifferent<sup>7</sup>." But from the days of the Reformation to the present time, history and our own experience and knowledge assure us, that what were the doctrines and practices as to image-worship then, the same have they continued throughout. Those doctrines and practices, Naclantus informs us, were even in his day, while the Council of Trent was sitting, denied by some FOR GREATER CAUTION-SAKE; and so they are denied by some now; yet, as then, so now, they are really in existence and operation, and so must continue till Rome change her liturgies and her laws.

And to what conclusion, on the point immediately before us, namely, the real belief, and practice, and working of the system of image-worship in the Church of Rome, do those publications lead us, which since the Reformation have been and continue to be circulated for the guidance and instruction of the members of that Church? The nature of these Treatises on the inquiry, What is Roman-

<sup>6</sup> 2 Hen. IV. c. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Milner's End of Controversy, Letter xxxiv.

ism? neither requires nor admits of any wide enumeration of such works; and we trust, for all practical purposes, what we shall here briefly bring before the reader will be sufficient.

In the first place, volumes have appeared one after another, from time to time, and the press is yet teeming with them, recounting the miracles wrought by images in the several countries of the world; one image being represented as having been set up against another as a rival, and the faithful as flocking for the purpose of paying religious adoration to one image rather than another.

In the years 1657 and 1663 (not to go further back than the last two centuries), Octavius Cajetan, a Jesuit, published two works, one on "The Lives of Sicilian Saints," and another on "Certain Images of Mary the Mother of God." The latter contains much of what appeared in the former, and both abound with evidence of awful superstitions, and are full to the overflow with proofs that the Church of Rome then countenanced, throughout the countries subject to her control, the same belief and practice which she had long before sanctioned in her adoption of the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, a sanction which she still solemnly repeats on the annual return of the festival dedicated to his name. We have room only for one or two specimens, out of a multitude; the miraculous images enumerated being themselves not fewer than forty<sup>8</sup>.

"To this Virgin" (so they call the individual image, not saying "to this image of the Virgin," but "to this Virgin") "the people flocked in 1479; and she relieved the city from a plague; and, consequently, in all their difficulties, especially when in want of rain, they have recourse TO THIS VIRGIN<sup>9</sup>."

<sup>8</sup> Panerme, 1663, vol. ii. p. 292.

<sup>9</sup> The language of these legends coincides in this respect very closely and remarkably with the language of heathen writers, when speaking of the images of their deities. As here and in the legend of Mary of Egypt, the image of the Virgin is called the Virgin: Just so

The following is recorded in each of this author's works:—

“An image of the Virgin was painted on the wall of a Church in Palermo. A gambler, in a fit of madness in consequence of his losses at play, entered the church, and pierced the image with a dagger. Instantly the Virgin's countenance, and the child's, whom she held in her arms, turned from red to white, and continued so. The man had not power to stir from the spot; and being seized, was condemned to instant death. As he was being borne off to execution, a stone of its own accord sprang forth in the wall, and to this stone he was hung. Many miracles followed, while the people flocked to the WORSHIP OF THE IMAGE, and to implore succour.”

We find that accounts of such miracles, which must engender and spread the belief that a living, though unseen being, influenced by human feelings, and miraculously possessed of flesh and blood, inhabits the image, continue to be most industriously published and circulated to this very day.

In 1707, a work<sup>1</sup> was put forth “with all necessary licences,” containing an account of “the miraculous images of the blessed Virgin Mary, venerated in Portugal, and through its dependencies.” This work fills no less than ten octavo volumes, recording innumerable miracles of every kind, said to have been wrought by the Madonna's images, which were in consequence frequented and worshipped, each in proportion to the popularity gained for itself by the number and character of the miracles ascribed to it.

But however many proofs of the same fact we might cite through the intervening years of the last century, the superstitious tales as to the miraculous operations of images, and the doctrine of the worship due to them, and free acknowledgments that such worship is actually paid to them, seem to have been

does Livy tell us that Apollo (not the image of Apollo) wept three days and three nights in Cumæ. Lib. xliii. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Santuario Mariano, Lisbon, 1707.

greatly revived within the last twenty years: and since we are more concerned and interested in ascertaining what is now taught and spread, than we are in reviewing the erroneous teaching of a more distant period, we will confine ourselves to some instances with which we are supplied within the limits of that time.

In the year 1827, a work was published at Rome<sup>2</sup>, with the Pope's licence, intended to be a sort of guide, or hand-book, for strangers visiting Rome and its neighbourhood. In this work we are supplied with the following information with regard to the "Church of St. Mary of Victory." Pope "Paul the Vth erected this Church in 1605, in honour of St. Paul the Apostle, and gave it to the barefooted Carmelite fathers. It afterwards took the title of St. Mary of Victory, in consequence of the divers victories gained by the Catholics over the heretics and Turks, by means of the INTERCESSION OF THE MADONNA'S IMAGE, WHICH IS WORSHIPPED above the great altar, and which is wholly adorned with precious stones<sup>3</sup>."

Here the victories gained over the heretics and Turks are ascribed to the intercession, not even of the Virgin Mary herself, but of that image of her, which is worshipped above the high altar. This work, though otherwise, and in itself, perhaps, of not much authority, becomes of great importance from its having been sent forth, as we find in the commencement, "*with privilege*" in Rome, where was no liberty of the press, and where nothing could be published unauthorized by the Pope: and also from its having obtained authority (as is stated at the close) to be republished.

In a work<sup>4</sup> published at Florence ten years nearer to the present time, of which both the title and the

<sup>2</sup> The title of the work is "Itinerario di Roma, et delle sue vicinanze, compilato secondo il metodo di M. Vasi, da A. Nibby, publico professore di Archæologia nell' Universite di Roma, 1827."

<sup>3</sup> Vol. i. p. 347.

<sup>4</sup> Dottrina Christiana (Firenze, 1837), p. 35; the work referred to in Tract XVII. of this Series.

matter show that its object is to spread and inculcate (especially on the rising generation) the present doctrines of the Church of Rome, we read in plain language the same tenets on image-worship, which Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Naclantus, with many others of her celebrated doctors, have constantly held, namely, that the images of our Saviour, of the Virgin, and of a saint, are to be worshipped with that self-same adoration which is respectively due to the Saviour Himself, to the Virgin Mary, and to the saint whom the image or picture represents. After expressly enumerating those three kinds of religious worship, specifying *latría*, the worship due to Almighty God; *hyperdulía*, peculiar to the Virgin, and *dulía*, common to the saints; this Catechism, called, Christian Doctrine, puts forth the following questions and answers:—

Q. “Ought we to pay any adoration at all to the image of Christ, or the Virgin, or the saints?”

A. “If we consider them only in themselves as a sacred and blessed thing, we show to them that respect only which we feel towards sacred and blessed things; but considered as the representative of a Holy Being, we ought to adore them with the same kind of adoration with which we adore the Holy Being whom they represent.

Q. “Why, in such case, ought they to be adored with the same adoration with which the Holy Being whom they represent is adored?”

A. “Because that adoration is passed on to the Holy Being himself.”

In the middle of the seventeenth century, a work was published by William Gumpfenberg, called “Mary’s Atlas,” professing to be a description “of all her MIRACULOUS images WORSHIPPED in every part of the world.” In 1839<sup>5</sup>, a Veronese priest began to republish it, having added “the latest images which wrought wonders” to the end of the eighteenth century. This work, dedicated to the

<sup>5</sup> Verona, 1839—1842.



Empress of Austria, has at present reached six volumes (the last, in the British Museum, being published in 1842), and already contains an account of one hundred and ninety-three miraculous images. To what extent the work must be carried, it is hard to form any estimate; for, while its title promises to embrace all the miraculous images of the Virgin worshipped through the whole world, and begins with Europe, yet the six volumes have reviewed only a part of Italy, and have not touched upon any other country.

While that work was in the course of publication, another was begun on the same subject in Milan<sup>6</sup>, entitled, "The History of the most sacred Shrines of the most holy Mary, scattered throughout the Christian world." At the close of the third volume, notice is given that the further publication of the work is suspended for the present, from unforeseen causes. This work is filled with the same sort of miracles, the frontispiece representing "the image of our Lady of Ardesio in the act of her appearing." This miraculous appearance of the Madonna through her image (together with as many other image-miracles as the three volumes can contain), is described in the body of the work.

In 1844, a priest of Paris published, "The History of the miraculous image of our Lady of Good Deliverance<sup>7</sup>." A few extracts will show what views the author considers to be already adopted by his readers, and such as he wishes them to entertain. The image is a black statue, and for a motto is quoted in Latin, the passage from the Song of Solomon, "I am black, but comely." In the early part of this work the author speaks thus: "Most of the miraculous statues of Mary are black. This statue represents the Virgin of a black colour, holding the Infant Jesus on her left arm; and it is invoked under the title of Our Lady of Good Deliverance. This image is enriched by many votive offerings—hearts of gold and silver—which are em-

<sup>6</sup> Milan, 1840, 8vo.

<sup>7</sup> Paris, 1844.

blems of the moral cures wrought by the invisible consoler of the afflicted, and which are an authentic pledge of the gratitude of those whose prayers she has heard in the day of trial. What, then, is the origin of that statue? On what is founded the WORSHIP PAID TO IT<sup>8</sup>?"

"This Church was renowned for a pious pilgrimage. There was seen the statue of the Virgin of a black colour, which was honoured under the affecting title of Our Lady of Good Deliverance, and which had become the object of the devotion of the faithful in consequence of the singular graces of which it was the instrument<sup>9</sup>."

Entering upon the history of the image at the commencement of the Revolution, the author says:—

"Mary, on her part, more than once herself admonished her faithful servants to prepare themselves for the time of trial. In various places her images were seen shedding tears, opening and shutting their eyes. In one community of Paris a statue of the Virgin, from old time an object of devotion, announced by its tears the most bloody crisis of the Revolution, and especially the punishment of the unhappy Louis XVI. This supernatural phenomenon showed itself in other countries. At Ancona, at Rome, and in various towns of Italy, at the approach of the revolutionary armies, the images of Mary, which were worshipped in the churches and public places, were seen to shed abundant tears in the presence of the astounded multitudes<sup>1</sup>."

The Pope, in 1805, granted a plenary indulgence to all who should communicate on certain days in that church, provided an altar were decked there in honour of the Virgin<sup>2</sup>. Although the following sentence belongs rather to a former Treatise on the Worship of the Virgin, than to a work on the image-worship of the Church of Rome, it will not be thought out of place if we quote it here. To our ears, though we have become familiar with the im-

<sup>8</sup> Page 6.

<sup>9</sup> Page 8.

<sup>1</sup> Page 57.

<sup>2</sup> Page 83.

pious ascription to the Virgin of the redemption wrought by Christ alone, this passage still sounds awfully:—

“Consider Mary as in reality effecting our deliverance, when she gave her consent to the incarnation of the Word, and completing it, when on Calvary SHE OFFERED her divine Son for the salvation of the human race<sup>3</sup>.” Surely the worshippers of Mary must rest their faith on some other Gospel; and must have forgotten that Gospel which assures us, that God Himself sent HIS Son into the world, that the world, through Him, might be saved; and spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

In the following year, only four years ago, we find a book published in Vienna, giving an account of the images of Mary in Austria, full of the same representations, of which we have too abundant a supply from every quarter<sup>4</sup>. Among other miracles it assures us, that in the year 1665, a man, not in communion with the Church of Rome, came into a church where was an image of the Virgin; that he cut off the head of the image, and that blood flowed. The chapter which recounts this is called, “The Story of the Holy Blood<sup>5</sup>.”

When we find such legends as these in every country, asserting that images are endued with miraculous power, that they effect supernatural cures, turn pale, shed tears, open and shut their eyes, when wounded send forth a gush of blood,—we are induced to ask whether we are treading on Christian ground, or whether we are not reading another version of those fables of Greece and Rome, which record that the image of Juno and of Apollo shed tears, the latter for three days and three nights; and that the altar of Neptune flowed with sweat; when, as the historian remarks, the number of prodigies reported increased in proportion to the in-

<sup>3</sup> Page 82.

<sup>4</sup> Die Mariensagen in Oesterreich, J. P. Kaltenbaeck. Wien. 1845.

<sup>5</sup> Page 104.

creased credulity and eagerness with which the reports were received<sup>6</sup>.

The Council of Trent says, that the honour is to be paid to the image not on account of any intrinsic power or virtue believed to reside in it. But, if the people are encouraged in the belief that prayers before one image will be effectual, which before another would be offered in vain, what must be the practical inference? They may not, indeed, believe that the hand of the sculptor, the painter, the silversmith, or brassfounder, by the act of making the image, imparted to it any power; nor that some occult power of nature endued the image with a new and intrinsic virtue; but it will inevitably be suggested, that the Almighty has deigned to invest one image with an influence and authority which He has withheld from another.

We cannot see how any distinction can be maintained between the miraculous images of the heathen world of which we read in ancient mythology, and in the fabulous histories of pagan Rome on the one hand, and, on the other, those miraculous images of the Virgin Mary, with accounts of which the press abounds at this day, in all countries in communion with Papal Rome. Surely the Romanists, when they pray to the Blessed Virgin, or to her husband, do not so pray on the idea that those children of Adam possess any intrinsic virtue or excellence beyond what their Creator has been pleased to bestow on them; and yet they do pray to Mary and Joseph, as persons having ears to hear, and a will to grant or refuse the request. We do not see how the assertion, that no intrinsic excellence or merits of its own reside in the image, can affect the question of worshipping it; and we cannot admit the attempted distinction (a fuller examination of which is reserved for another chapter) urged by the Council of Trent, between the worship of idols by the heathen, and the worship of images

<sup>6</sup> See Livy, xl. 19; xliii. 13; xxviii. 11.

in the Church of Rome. Had the heathen believed not only that all the sanctity of the image, before which they worshipped, was imparted to it by the Supreme Divinity, but even that the unseen Being represented by the image, originally derived its divine essence from the same source, that belief would not have changed the idolatrous character of their worship. The images of the Virgin and other saints, reported to have exercised miraculous powers, may be believed by their worshippers to have no intrinsic virtue, or power, or excellence in themselves, but only what the Almighty has been pleased to impart to them; and yet that belief does not render the worship of them one whit less unscriptural, unapostolical, unchristian.

If we turn our thoughts from the mass of testimony supplied by the press, and either call to mind our own observations, as to what we have ourselves seen and heard; or if we inquire of our contemporaries what is the result of their experience in various parts of Christendom, we arrive at no other conclusion than that to which the written evidence has brought us. If what we witnessed were contrary to the decrees, and public acts, and religious services of Rome, we might indeed have lamented that greater vigilance was not exerted in repressing and discountenancing such superstitions as we see and know, but yet we should in fairness have acknowledged the Roman Church itself to be not answerable for them. When, on the contrary, we find the decrees, doctrines, liturgies, and public acts of that Church, all conspiring to sanction and foster the principle of image-worship, then in common justice we hold that Church itself responsible to God and man for those excesses of superstition in this department which meet our eyes and ears on every side. We have room only for one or two instances of the practices to which we are alluding:

At the west end of the cathedral of Munich is an image of the Virgin (at least there it was in 1842) with this prayer inscribed under it: "Thou who ALONE hast the power to bend the wrath of the eternal Deity, cover us, O Goddess, [or thou Divine Being,] in thy Virgin bosom."

"Tu quæ sola potes æterni numinis iram  
Flectere, virgineo nos tege, Diva, sinu."

Our present subject does not invite us to dwell on the awful impiety of this prayer, even were it addressed to the spirit of the Virgin herself; but to put the prayer before the eyes of every one who looks up to her image, is a perilous approach in the extreme (to say the least) to the encouragement of idolatry.

In Rome again, the very citadel of the Roman faith, in the streets and highways of the town, images of the Virgin are erected, with this prayer inscribed under them, "O Lady, save thy people" ("*Salvum fac populum tuum, Domina*"), a sad parody on the Church's prayer to God, "O Lord, save thy people" ("*Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine*").

In these and similar instances, abounding through all those parts of the world in which Romanism is dominant and unrestrained, we perceive merely a continuance of that system, which in the fabulous story of "St. Mary of Egypt<sup>7</sup>" would have us believe, that on finding herself unable to enter into the church of Jerusalem, and worship the cross, she discovered an image of the Virgin Mary in the corner of an adjoining building, and offered this prayer, keeping her eyes fixed stedfastly on the image, "Lady Virgin, I know myself unworthy to look on an image of thee, most pure one. Help me who am in distress and without assistance, and command that an entrance be given me, that I may adore the holy Cross."

<sup>7</sup> That this is a fabulous story, see "Romish Worship of the Virgin," Appendix, p. 387.

28 *Image-worship—Enjoined in the Church of Rome.*

Upon which, the legend says, all difficulty was removed, and coming from the church, she knelt before "the mother of God, ever virgin," *i. e.*, says Dr. Wiseman, "before her image<sup>8</sup>."

But were we for mere argument's sake to dismiss from our thoughts all these considerations, still as long as the Roman Pontifical, the Roman Breviary, and the Roman Missal, remain as they are to this very day, how can we give credence to those who say, that the Roman Church does not require or sanction the worship of images?

As long as her decrees and acts of prayer and praise in public worship remain, as they now remain, authorized, sanctioned, enjoined, and commanded by a ritual binding on all members of the Church of Rome, clerical and lay alike, we do not understand how any one can profess himself to be a real and consistent member of that communion, and at the same time either refuse to worship and adore images, or deny that the adoration of material objects is sanctioned and required by his Church. If on days when the adoration of the cross is prescribed and ordered, such an one refuses to assist and join in that service, he disobeys the laws of his Church, and sets her authority at defiance; and if he outwardly complies with the ordinances of his Church, he must either join in a service of which his conscience disapproves; or else he must be conscious that he is a member of a Church, one of whose terms of communion is a participation in the worship and adoration of images.

<sup>8</sup> Remarks on a Letter from Mr. Palmer, p. 27. See note, p. 18 of this Tract.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XIX.

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART III.

IDOL-WORSHIP AMONG THE HEATHEN,  
AND IMAGE-WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF ROME,  
THE SAME IN KIND AND NATURE.



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# AMERICAN WOMEN IN TAIWAN

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART III.

*Idol-worship among the Heathen, and Image-worship in the Church of Rome, the same in kind and nature.*

THE Decrees of the Council of Trent being considered by Roman Catholics as their own charter (securing their privileges, defining their faith, and prescribing their duties), while at the same time some extraordinary representations of those decrees have been circulated of late years by persons high in authority in the Church of Rome, it will be necessary on the subject of image-worship to ascertain their true intent and meaning. But some other points of much importance seem to offer themselves first to our consideration in this stage of our inquiry.

In answer to the serious and fundamental charges of doctrinal and practical error in the matter of image-worship brought against the Church of Rome, the supporters and advocates of that Church have recourse to every variety of plea. Some boldly deny the charge as a matter of fact, asserting that no reli-

#### 4 *Image-worship—the same among the Heathen,*

gious worship is offered by them to any image, nor is any such worship enjoined by their Church; others openly profess that religious worship is paid, and must be paid by every consistent member of that Church, to the sacred images; of these latter again, some maintain that only a secondary veneration is to be offered to them; while others insist upon the doctrine of the self-same worship being due to the image as belongs to the spiritual Being which the image represents.

On the contradictory and irreconcilable doctrines maintained on the subject of image-worship within the Church of Rome itself, we have already spoken at some length in a previous Treatise. It is a subject of great moment, and its discussion must open the eyes of every one, who will not resolve to close them against the truth, to this important fact; that, contrary to what has been industriously circulated by the advocates of the Church of Rome, there is, as on other points, so on this of image-worship, among the members of that Church no oneness of faith, no unity of doctrine and discipline, no uniformity of practice.

At present, however, we must direct our attention to another specific defence, in which (following here also the example of the Second Nicene Council, appealed to on this very point by the Council of Trent) the defenders of image-worship allege, that it matters not what sort of worship is paid to an image of Christ, of the Virgin, or of a saint, provided only it be a worship belonging to each spiritual Being respectively to whose image or picture it is paid; because, they say, the worship does not rest in the image, but passes through the image on to the original. And in this they maintain, rests the essential difference between the pagan worship of idols, and their own worship of images—a distinction which we must now carefully examine. The reader may have anticipated, from the

very heading of this Treatise, that we regard that attempted distinction as resting on no foundation such as unprejudiced reason, plain common sense, and pure Christian faith can admit; and that we consider idol-worship among the heathen of old, or among the pagans of the present time, and image-worship in the Church of Rome, as identical; the same in their origin, their nature, and their results.

From the very first introduction of image-worship into the Church of Christ, its advocates have ever laboured with especial anxiety to establish a distinction between the worship of images in the Christian Church, and the worship of idols by the heathen. This anxiety has been naturally felt, in order to escape from the comprehensive grasp of the prohibitions and denunciations of Holy Scripture against the making of any image, the likeness of any being in heaven or earth, for the purpose of worshipping it; and to evade also the force of the strong and decisive language which the earliest Fathers of the Church uniformly employed against idol or image-worship. Various have been the subtle and refined distinctions by which it has been attempted to establish the difference; and of these abundant specimens may be seen in Cardinal Bellarmin's treatises on the subject.

But the distinction chiefly relied on from the Second Synod of Nicæa down to the Council of Trent (which Council, as we have said above, appeals to that Synod by name) is this: That the heathen worshipped the material idols of wood, or stone, or brass, not as being the representatives of unseen deities, but as being themselves gods; and that, placing their trust in those visible and tangible idols, they did not refer their worship of the idol to the unseen deity whom it represented;—whereas, in the Christian Church, the worshipper regards the image as the representative of a saint, of the Virgin, or of God, and offers

his worship beyond and through the image to the divine or holy Being whom it represents.

Now this is a most palpable fallacy. It is grounded on a gratuitous assumption, not only without foundation, but absolutely contradictory to the most sure evidence of Holy Scripture and of heathen times. The result of a patient and fair investigation, we are assured, will be a conviction, that the worship of idols by the heathen, and the worship of images by Christians, are not in this respect different; that no such distinction can reasonably be maintained between them—both being equally contrary to God's Word, and both equally condemned by the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church of Christ; in a word, that they are the same.

Now that multitudes in the pagan world were so ignorant and blinded as to look only to their idols, without further reference to any unseen spiritual being, whom those visible images represented, there can be no doubt; but just so does Polydore Vergil<sup>1</sup> (who wrote only a few years before the Reformation, and whose testimony we must quote hereafter at large) in recording a state of things of which he was an eye-witness when the Church of Rome was in full power and uncontrolled dominion, declare, that multitudes of Christians who frequented the images in his time did actually place their trust in the images themselves, more than in the spiritual Beings whom those images represented; and just so likewise does the prophet Isaiah most powerfully and graphically describe the perversion and blindness of a pagan, who could fall down to a block of his own workmanship, hewn from the stock of a tree of his own planting<sup>2</sup>. But that the priests and the people

<sup>1</sup> Polydor. Vergil, *De Invent. rerum*, lib. vi. c. 13 (Ed. Basilicæ) p. 425. The first edition of his work seems to have been published in the year 1500.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah xlv. 14.

in the heathen world generally regarded the idol as the visible representation of an absent and unseen divinity, whose anger they must deprecate, and whose favour they must propitiate, is made evident by all we learn, not only from the records of the ancient heathen world, but also from what we read even in the Holy Scriptures themselves, and in the Fathers of the Primitive Church.

If, for example, we look to that wonderful display of omnipotence, when the Most High vindicated his own honour, and exalted his glorious name above the fabled deities of paganism, by the instrumentality, and at the prayer of his faithful servant Elijah, we find that, so far from the worshippers of Baal addressing their prayers to his idol without intending them to pass on through that outward form to the invisible Power represented by it, they had not at that moment any visible idol before them at all<sup>3</sup>. The image of Baal, together with other statues, was in the temple of Baal, and was not removed till eighteen years afterwards, when Jehu destroyed it<sup>4</sup>. The people came together to meet Elijah at Mount Carmel, and there built an altar in an open space, and there they prayed, as they thought, to an invisible and absent deity. Even were they praying before an image, the irony of the Prophet is unintelligible, if we for a moment suppose that they were addressing their cries to an image. That irony refers to a sensible, rational being, actively engaged in his own pursuits. Instead of pointing to the object of their prayer, as a deaf and dumb, a motionless and insensible, material object (having eyes, yet seeing not; having ears, yet hearing not; having a mouth, yet speaking not; having feet, yet walking not; with all of which defects in their idol, Elijah might naturally and with power have upbraided the worshippers of Baal, had they then been calling upon

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xviii.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings x.

an image of wood or stone); instead of this, the Prophet bids them renew and repeat louder their appeals and cries to their fabled god, because he was in some distant place, too much engaged with mental and bodily employment, or too much wearied, to listen to their prayers already offered. The prophets of Baal “called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered.—And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.”

This false god, to whom, in the open air on Mount Carmel, they offered their supplications and prayers aloud, cutting themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them, was worshipped before his idol in the temple subsequently destroyed by Jehu; and to say that these idolaters looked habitually to no invisible being beyond the wooden or stone image, is to contradict the most palpable evidence of this whole transaction. The heathen worshipped before the idol, believing the deity to be more immediately present there; but, certainly, there is no reason for saying that the heathen, more than the Roman Catholics, looked not beyond the visible image.

If, again, we direct our attention to the brief but interesting and instructive account of what took place at Lystra immediately on the miraculous restoration of the lame man, the same inference must follow. The people, convinced that nothing short of divine power could, by a word, effect so wonderful and instantaneous a cure, shouted in the speech of Lycaonia<sup>5</sup>, “The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury.” The statue of Jupiter was set up before their city; and what did the priest of that

<sup>5</sup> Acts xiv.

image, and the people do? They did not hurry to offer sacrifice to the image, now that they believed the original and hitherto unseen deity, of which that image was the visible representative, to be within their city, and before their eyes. The image, as the memorial of its absent and invisible prototype, they no longer regarded; but they hastened to the gates of the house where Paul and Barnabas were, with oxen and garlands, to offer sacrifice to them as those original Powers, the image of one of whom was especially worshipped before their city. Had they habitually regarded the image itself as the god whom they worshipped, and in whom they trusted, their conduct was strange and unaccountable; if they habitually intended their worship to pass beyond the image to the original—the prototype—the living Being represented by it, then their behaviour was plain and intelligible, consistent and natural.

Another example we find in the case of the opposition to the Apostles, raised in Ephesus by Demetrius the silversmith, who wrought the silver chapels or shrines for the images of Diana. The people of Ephesus boasted that they were worshippers of the great goddess Diana, and especially of that image of her, which, as their mythology fabled, fell down from Jupiter. But with the same voice they showed, that all Asia and the world worshipped the same Diana—not the image that fell down from Jupiter, and was kept in her temple at Ephesus—but that Diana, for whose images Demetrius made shrines, and whose images were to be found in every city around<sup>6</sup>. The divinity was one, though they worshipped her before and through unnumbered images; just as the advocates of image-worship now adore the same Virgin, whether the image before which they fall prostrate is at Rome, or Einsiedlin, or Loretto, or any other favourite place of her worship.

<sup>6</sup> Acts xix.



This, moreover, is the precise view presented to us by those Christian writers who argued with the heathen of their own times against their idol-worship. Lactantius<sup>7</sup>, for example, in his elaborate work against false religion and every species of idolatry, having summed up an argument thus, “What madness, then, is it for men to make things which they must after fear!” [he is speaking of images made by the hands of those very men who, after they have made them, worship them,] “or to fear what they have made!” quotes the defence, or explanation, usually made by idolaters in his time, when charged with worshipping and adoring insensible and lifeless images, in order to expose the worthlessness of such absurd pleas. This defence and explanation of those ancient heathen coincides entirely with the defence and explanation made throughout the Second Council of Nicæa, and by the Council of Trent, and from that time to our own days. That plea or defence is this, “We do not fear the things which we form and fashion, but those Beings to whose image and likeness they are formed and fashioned, and to whose names they are consecrated<sup>8</sup>.”

The arguments with which Lactantius presses them on this their explanation and defence, are closely applicable to the immediate subject of our present inquiry:—

“That is to say, the reason of your fear is, that you think those beings to be in heaven; and, surely, if they are gods, it cannot be otherwise. Why, then,

<sup>7</sup> Lact. Divin. Instit. lib. ii. c. 2.

<sup>8</sup> The explanations of the Council of Trent and of these ancient idolaters, when placed side by side, are remarkably identical:

*Idolaters in the Fourth Century.*

Non ista [quæ finximus] time-  
mus, sed eos ad quorum imaginem  
ficta et quorum nominibus sunt  
consecrata.

*The Council of Trent, 1563.*

Honos qui eis [imaginibus] ex-  
hibetur refertur ad prototypa, quæ  
illæ representant.

do you not raise your eyes to heaven? and, calling on them by name, offer your sacrifices in the open air? Why do you look chiefly to your walls and blocks of wood and stone, rather than to that place where you believe them to be? What mean the temples and the altars? What, in a word, mean the images, which are memorials of beings either absent or present? Undoubtedly the idea of forming likenesses was for this reason adopted by men, that the memory might be preserved of those who were either withdrawn by death, or separated by absence. In which class, then, shall we reckon the gods? If in the class of the dead, who is so great a fool as to worship them? If in the class of the absent, they are not to be worshipped, since they neither see what we do, nor hear what we pray. But, if the gods cannot be absent (who since they are divine, in whatever part of the world they be, see and hear all things, as they are every where present), images are evidently superfluous; for, unquestionably, it is enough to call in prayer on the names of those who hear. 'Yet [you will say], though present, they are not at hand except at their images.' Exactly so; just as the common people suppose that the souls of the dead hover about the tombs and relics of their bodies. Nevertheless, as soon as the god begins to be present, there is no longer any need of his image."

Much more to the same effect might be added. Lactantius says, without any reservation, "Beyond doubt, wherever an image is, there is no religion".<sup>9</sup> Could he have said this without any qualifying explanation, if images had any place in his day in the worship of Christians? Neither he, nor any Christian writer of his time, seems to have been at all conscious of any image being admitted into the Christian churches, or being made an object of religious honour.

Lactantius was himself the pupil of Arnobius<sup>10</sup>, the African, who wrote a voluminous treatise against the

<sup>9</sup> Lib. ii. c. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Leipsic, 1816. Lib. vi. c. 9.

12. *Image-worship—the same among the Heathen,*

superstitions of heathenism. On the subject before us, the expressions of Arnobius are strong and clear, and are as utterly irreconcilable with any idea of images being employed by Christians in their worship, as they are with the vainly attempted distinction between the worship of images by Christians, and of idols by the heathen. We shall here only quote a small portion of two passages, which may be cited more at length hereafter, in which he remonstrates with the heathen idolaters on their absurd plea.

“You say, ‘We worship the gods through the images.’ What then? If these images did not exist, would the gods not know that they were worshipped, nor be aware of any honour being paid to them by you? . . . What can be done more unjust, more disrespectful, more cruel, than to recognize one as a god, and offer your supplication to another thing—to hope for help from a divine being, and pray to an image which has no sense?”

Again, he proceeds, “But ye say, ‘You are mistaken; we do not consider materials of brass, or silver, or gold, or other things of which the statues are made to be OF THEMSELVES gods and sacred divinities; but in these materials we worship and venerate those gods whom the holy dedication brings in, and causes to dwell in the images wrought by the craftsman<sup>1</sup>.’” The very language of the Council of Trent, in defence of image-worship!

A passage of Origen<sup>2</sup>, which also we must hereafter quote more at length, bears point-blank on the question before us:—

“What sensible person would not laugh at a man who . . . looks to images, and either offers up his prayer to them, or, BEHOLDING THEM, REFERS IT TO THE BEING CONTEMPLATED IN HIS MIND, to whom he fancies that he ought to ascend from the visible object, which is the symbol of him [the unseen deity]?”

<sup>1</sup> c. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cont. Cels. lib. vii. c. 44.

The words of St. Ambrose, in his Epistle to Valentinian, can convey no other than the same notion of the professed views of the heathen:—

“This gold, if carefully handled, has an outward value; but inwardly it is mere ordinary metal. Examine, I pray you, and sift thoroughly the class of Gentiles. The words they utter are rich and grand; the things they defend are utterly devoid of truth. **THEY TALK OF GOD—THEY ADORE AN IMAGE.**”

But were all other proofs of the utter hollowness of this attempted distinction between idol-worship and image-worship wanting, St. Augustine himself would supply abundant evidence on the point, to satisfy any unprejudiced mind. Words cannot speak more clearly than his, and they prove, that precisely the same argument which the decrees of the Council of Trent, and more recent writers plead in behalf of image-worship now, as contradistinguished from the worship of their idols by the heathen, the same did those very heathen (against whose folly Augustine wrote) plead in behalf of their own worship of idols. “We do not put our trust in the material image,” say both equally, “but we look beyond the image to that unseen Being of whom the image is the visible representative.” It is moreover remarkable that as the decrees of Trent and the supporters of image-worship now urge this attempted distinction, in proof that their religion is free from the folly and impiety of idolatry, so the idolaters in St. Augustine’s time urged the same distinction in proof that theirs was a more pure and refined religion than the superstition of those who placed their trust in the material idols, and looked to no Being beyond or through them. The passage to which we refer here we must quote at greater length, when we examine the general evidence of St. Augustine; a few sentences will suffice on the point before us. Having dwelt on the preposterous folly of men worshipping the works of

14 *Image-worship—the same among the Heathen,*

their own hands, and having urged against them arguments equally applicable to image-worship in the Church of Rome, he proceeds:—

“ But those persons seem to themselves to belong to a more purified religion who say, ‘ I worship neither the image nor a demon ; but I regard the bodily figure as the representation of that Being whom I ought to worship. . . . And when, again, with regard to these, they begin to be pressed hard on the point, that they worship bodies . . . they are bold enough to answer, that they do not worship the bodies themselves, but the divinities which preside over and rule them <sup>3</sup>.’ ” These excuses seem to have been constantly made, and to have been familiarly known to St. Augustine. Thus on Psalm xcvi. he says: “ But some disputant comes forward, and, very wise in his own conceit, says, ‘ I do not worship that stone, nor that insensible image. Your prophet could not know that they have eyes and see not, and I be ignorant that that image neither hath a soul, nor sees with his eyes, nor hears with his ears. I do not worship that ; but I adore what I see, and serve him whom I do not see.’ And who is he ? a certain invisible divinity which presides over that image <sup>4</sup>. ”

In another place Augustine says, “ And lest any one should say, ‘ I do not worship the image, but that which the images signify <sup>5</sup>,’ it is immediately added, ‘ And they worshipped and served the creature more

<sup>3</sup> Vol. iv. p. 1261, on Ps. cxiii. part ii.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. iv. p. 1047.

<sup>5</sup> It is curious to observe how entirely identical are the excuses of the heathen here exposed by St. Augustine, with the excuses and refinements of the promoters of image-worship now. In a street at Antwerp, for example, under an image of our blessed Saviour we read these words :—

“ Fall down, as you pass, and adore the image of Christ,  
But adore not the image, but whom it signifies.”

“ Effigiem Christi, dum transis, pronus adora ;  
Sed non effigiem, sed quem designat, adora.”

than the Creator.' Now understand this well; they either worship the image or a creature: he who worships the image converts the truth of God into a lie<sup>6</sup>."

Thus, whether we reason from the nature of the things themselves, the evidence borne on the subject by Holy Scripture, or the clear and decided sentiments of the earliest Fathers of the Church, we are compelled to pronounce, that the distinction attempted to be made between idol-worship and image-worship utterly breaks down; and that they are in very truth, under different circumstances, the self-same things.

<sup>6</sup> Serm. cxcvii. vol. v. p. 905.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The first part of the history of the world is the history of the human race. It is a history of progress, of discovery, and of conquest. It is a history of the human mind, of the human heart, and of the human hand. It is a history of the human spirit, of the human soul, and of the human body. It is a history of the human race, of the human world, and of the human future.

The second part of the history of the world is the history of the human mind. It is a history of thought, of knowledge, and of wisdom. It is a history of the human intellect, of the human imagination, and of the human will. It is a history of the human mind, of the human heart, and of the human hand. It is a history of the human spirit, of the human soul, and of the human body. It is a history of the human race, of the human world, and of the human future.

The third part of the history of the world is the history of the human heart. It is a history of love, of compassion, and of mercy. It is a history of the human emotions, of the human passions, and of the human desires. It is a history of the human mind, of the human heart, and of the human hand. It is a history of the human spirit, of the human soul, and of the human body. It is a history of the human race, of the human world, and of the human future.

The fourth part of the history of the world is the history of the human hand. It is a history of labor, of industry, and of art. It is a history of the human skills, of the human talents, and of the human abilities. It is a history of the human mind, of the human heart, and of the human hand. It is a history of the human spirit, of the human soul, and of the human body. It is a history of the human race, of the human world, and of the human future.

THE HISTORY OF THE

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XX.

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART IV.

COUNCIL OF TRENT. DECREE ENFORCING THE USE  
AND VENERATION OF IMAGES.



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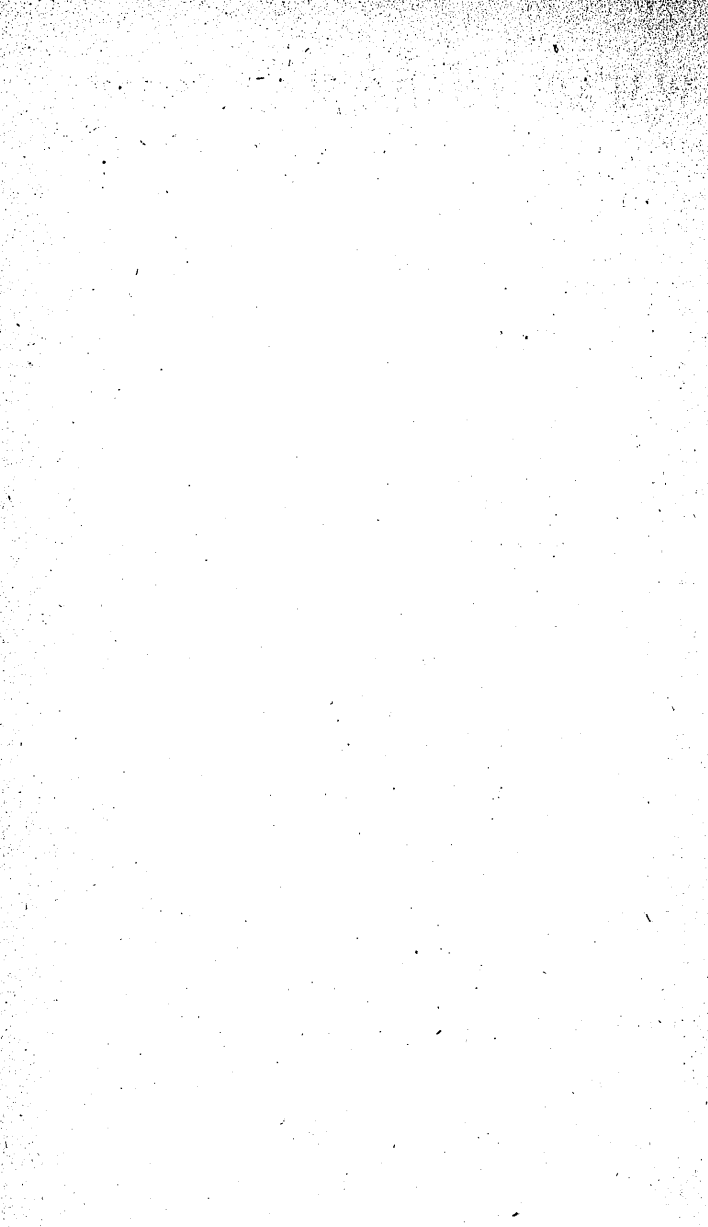
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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART IV.

*Council of Trent. Decree enforcing the use and veneration of Images.*

WE have already intimated the necessity of our ascertaining the true intent and meaning of the decrees of the Council of Trent, having in the preceding Tract demonstrated that the distinction authoritatively enjoined by that Council between idol-worship among the heathen, and image-worship among Christians, is utterly unfounded and fallacious. It becomes the more requisite that we examine the nature of these decrees thoroughly, in consequence of the strange and unaccountable misrepresentation of them, made of late by men of high dignity and authority in the Church of Rome, exercising their religious functions in England.

It is well known that the Council of Trent continued its sittings through many years. In its 25th session, which began on the 3rd, and closed on the 4th of December, A.D. 1563, the following decree was enacted:—

“Concerning the Sacred Images.

“Moreover, the images of Christ, of the Virgin

Mother of God, and of other saints, are most especially to be had and retained in churches, and due honour and veneration must be rendered to them, not because any divinity is believed to be in them, or virtue for which they ought to be worshipped; or because any thing is to be asked from them, or because trust is to be placed in them, *as formerly was done by the Gentiles, who placed their hope in idols*; but because the honour shown to them is referred to the prototypes, which they represent; so that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our head and fall prostrate, we adore Christ, and venerate the saints whose likenesses they bear—the same thing which is sanctioned by the decrees of councils, especially of the second Nicene Council against the oppugners of images.”

This is now the Statute Law of the Church of Rome. On the first part of this decree no doubt, one should have supposed, could arise. The Churches in communion with Rome (however contrary to the faith and practice of the Primitive Church the command may be) must have images; and to those images due honour and veneration must be rendered. On the latter clause a question of no small moment must be sifted before we can adequately understand the subject of image-worship; the question, namely, In what does that due honour and veneration consist?

The Bull of Pius IV., published the year after the Council, and which is of equal authority with the decrees of the Council itself, contributes no additional light on this subject, its words merely being—“I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, and of the Mother of God always a Virgin, and of other saints, are to be had and retained, and that to them the honour and veneration due must be rendered.”

In the Catechism<sup>1</sup>, moreover, composed in obedience to the Council of Trent, and published under the

<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1671, p. 319.

sanction of Pius V., there is nothing to remove any doubt or difficulty on the point before us.

Here, however, we are compelled to observe, as we have already observed, that, by an oversight and confusion, which in such a case one should scarcely have expected, Dr. Wiseman, Bishop of Melipotamus, asserts<sup>2</sup>: "The Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use them [the images]; it only says, that it is wholesome to have them; and that they are to be treated with respect—with a relative respect, that is, such as is shown to the portrait of a father, or of any one whom we esteem and reverence."

How very far, how immeasurably this "relative respect," or filial reverence shown to a father's portrait, falls short of the reverence and worship and adoration taught by the saints and doctors of the Roman Church, even among those who took a prominent lead in the Council of Trent, and enjoyed the greatest confidence of its members, we shall presently see; as we have already seen how utterly at variance it is with the adoration prescribed and actually offered in the Breviary, the Missal, and the Pontifical of that Church: but how totally mistaken a representation of the decree of that Council is here put forth in so unqualified a manner by Dr. Wiseman, appears by the very words of the decree, which, as to the point before us, are these:—

"The Council commands all bishops and others, discharging the office and cure of instruction . . . . diligently to instruct the faithful; teaching them . . . . that the holy bodies of the holy martyrs and of others living with Christ, which were living members of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Ghost, to be by Him raised up to eternal life, and glorified, are to be venerated by the faithful, by which<sup>3</sup> [bodies] many benefits are conferred on mankind; so that they who

<sup>2</sup> London, 1836, Lecture xiii. vol. ii. p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Per quæ.*

affirm that veneration and honour is not owed to the relics of the saints, or that they [the<sup>4</sup> relics], and other sacred monuments, are uselessly honoured by the faithful, and that the tombs or<sup>5</sup> shrines of the saints are in vain frequented for the purpose of obtaining their help, are altogether to be accursed, as the Church long ago has cursed them, and now also curses them: moreover, that the images of Christ and the Virgin Mother of God, and of other saints, are to be most especially had and retained in churches, and the honour and veneration due must be given to them."

The words of the decree are as imperative in the latter as in the former clause, to which a curse on all who hold a contrary doctrine is appended. The sentence of Dr. Wiseman, to be correct, requires in the second clause a negative, which he has omitted, and in the first the absence of the negative which he has inserted. "The Council DOES decree that we are obliged to use them: it does NOT only say, that it is wholesome to have them."

The most celebrated commentator and casuist, and one close upon the publication of the Trent-decrees, to whom we should naturally apply for information as to their true intent and meaning, is Cardinal Bellarmin, the preface to whose controversial works was publicly read at Rome, A.D. 1576, only thirteen years after the close of the Council. But in Cardinal Bellarmin a mind anxious to be guided to the truth can find no satisfaction. He discusses, indeed, at great length in what consists the honour due to images; and he maintains that images are to be worshipped and adored; he states also the many varying and contradictory doctrines maintained within the Church of Rome on the nature of that worship and adoration. Still he adopts such subtle distinctions on the nature of worship; and in refining on those

<sup>4</sup> *Eas.*

<sup>5</sup> *Memorias.*

distinctions he seems so entirely to lose sight of the broad principles of sound common sense, and of divine revelation, that we are driven to adopt the sentiment concerning him, which one of his continental readers uttered many years ago in this annotation—"He is at child's-play<sup>6</sup>."

Referring the reader, then, who wishes to become better acquainted with the most prominent of these subtleties, to the volume on the Society's catalogue, entitled, "Image-worship of the Church of Rome<sup>7</sup>," we shall here advert only to the principal opinions stated by Bellarmin, as being held by persons of note in his Church, and which he either rejects, or adopts, or modifies.

First, he states the doctrine held by some, "That the faithful ought to do no more with regard to images than to worship before them; not to worship the image but the prototype, the exemplar, the original, the Being of which the image is the representation."

This opinion Bellarmin rejects, and in its stead substitutes the following:—"Images of Christ and the saints are to be venerated . . . so as that the reverence shall rest in the images themselves, and not only as the representatives of some other Being."

The second opinion he cites is, "That the honour due to the image is the same with the honour due to the original Being, of which it is the image; so that to the image of Christ, the supreme religious worship is due; to the image of the Virgin, *her own peculiar* worship is to be paid; and to the image of a saint, the honour<sup>8</sup> due to the saint."

Against this opinion Bellarmin objects only so far as to withhold the highest worship of God Almighty from being *directly* given to images *on their own account*. One of the chief reasons he alleges is this:

<sup>6</sup> Ludit pueriliter.

<sup>7</sup> Page 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Latria, hyperdulia, dulia.*

“To say that the image of Christ on the cross is to be adored with the highest and supreme worship, is very dangerous; for the advocates of that doctrine are driven to employ most subtle distinctions, which they can scarcely understand themselves, much less the unlearned people.” But in the very next sentence Bellarmin maintains: “That though not both in itself and on account of itself, yet that either accidentally or with reference to the original Being represented, the image of Christ may be honoured, worshipped, and adored, with the very self-same worship with which we adore Christ.”

The third opinion quoted by Bellarmin, and which he seems disposed to adopt as his own, but in stating which he employs such strange refinements as leave the reader in doubt as to his real meaning, appears to be a doctrine about midway between the two former, and is this: “That images are to be worshipped both in themselves and on their own account, but yet with a worship inferior to what is due to the original Being, and proportionate to the relation which the image bears to that original, and in some limited sense they [the original Being and the image] are identifiable.”

In making such a review of Cardinal Bellarmin and others, not only is it distressing to witness so much unsound argument involved in the mysticism of so much apparent learning; but a fear also is felt that persons may, in disgust, be deterred by such subtleties from pursuing this important subject to the end. Still, however, even from such abortive struggles to support a cause rotten to the core, by men who might have employed their talents and attainments efficiently in the cause of truth, we may derive some useful practical lessons.

First: we are here taught that there are irreconcilable differences on the subject of image-worship among Romanists themselves—a point of so great importance to be fully established as a matter of fact,

and to be traced in its practical results, that we have already devoted a separate chapter to the especial consideration of it<sup>o</sup>.

Secondly: we are here assured, that when once men suffer themselves to be captivated by a theory inconsistent with the teaching of God's word, and the belief and practice of the Primitive Church, and to be wedded to that theory, they must betake themselves to means of defending their position equally at variance with the common sense of mankind, and with the simple faith of a sincere Christian. And,

Thirdly: we are here confirmed in the assurance that, let image-worship be guarded by whatever rules, and be fenced by whatever distinctions casuistry may invent, it must at last come to the self-same worship of the material figure as the pagans offered to their idols. By the testimony of Scripture and of the primitive Church, it is proved to be a heathen branch grafted on Christian worship; and, like its parent stock, it will bring forth the fruits of idolatry and paganism<sup>1</sup>.

But to proceed in another direction with our inquiry into the real sense in which the Council of Trent intended its decree to be binding, as to the use and veneration of images. Towards forming, then, a correct view of the meaning of any positive enactment, a knowledge of the laws in operation before the passing of the new law is of great importance. If the new law, in its preamble, declares it to be expedient to repeal the previous laws, we must interpret the enacting clauses agreeably to that intention of the legislature; if, on the contrary, the preamble of the new law approves and affirms the previous laws and their practical enforcement by the decisions of the courts, and expresses the intention of the legislature to be only to ratify and strengthen them, and to give greater

<sup>o</sup> "What is Romanism?" Tract XVIII.

<sup>1</sup> See Tract XIX.



force to them, then we must interpret the enacting clauses after taking a review of what were the judgments and rulings of the most approved judges in the preceding times. The latter of these two suppositions is exactly the case before us. The Council of Trent was only repeating and re-enacting, with additional guards and penalties on gainsayers, what the Church of Rome had declared to be the ancient faith and discipline of Christendom. It becomes, therefore, necessary for us to see how her most approved teachers had taught the people to use and worship images. We might, with equal ease, refer to others, but it will be here enough to quote the judgments of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Lyndwode.

Thomas Aquinas, to whom we have already referred, distinctly maintains, that the images are to be worshipped with the self-same adoration with which the original Being whom the image, in each case, represents, is adored; and as distinctly he teaches, that the image of Christ is to be worshipped with that supreme adoration, that highest and holiest of all spiritual veneration, which is exclusively appropriated to God only. This doctor, the reader will remember, is no ordinary authority; he is a canonized saint, and is now himself prayed to in the public worship of the Church; and solemn acts of confession and prayer are annually offered to God, in acknowledgment of the light shed upon the Church by the wonderful wisdom of this great doctor, and in supplication for grace to enable the people to embrace with their understanding what he taught<sup>2</sup>.

But perhaps even the sanction given to his name and works is surpassed by the terms in which another canonized saint has been extolled. It is hard to conceive any human being, or any body of men, to have given more unequivocally or more unreservedly the full weight of their authority to the work of any man, than the Church of Rome has given

<sup>2</sup> See Tract XVIII.

hers to Bonaventura, as a teacher, and to his works, as containing her own authoritative teaching. He was canonized by Pope Sixtus IV., A. D. 1482, about two centuries after his death; and that Pope declares him "to have written so on divine subjects, that the Holy Spirit seems to have spoken in him." More than a century after his canonization, A. D. 1588, Pope Sixtus V. ordered his works to be "most carefully emended." This Pope's decretal letters pronounce Bonaventura to be an acknowledged doctor of Holy Church, and directs his authority to be cited and employed in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies; at the same time, plenary indulgence (a full pardon in this world and in the next from all their sins), on certain conditions appended, is offered to all who are present at the mass on his festival. And what, on the subject of image-worship, does this saint of the Church of Rome teach all Christians to regard as the doctrine of that Church? We quote the words of Bonaventura from the very edition of his works published in Rome at the close of the sixteenth century, in the very printing-house of the Vatican, prepared and, "with few exceptions, printed in the time of Sixtus V., but not published till the time of Clement VIII.;" and these are the words of Bonaventura on the question before us:—

"Is the worship of *LATRIA* to be given to the image of Christ? Conclusion: The image of Christ is to be adored with the adoration of *LATRIA*, because it represents Him who was crucified for us, and the image presents itself for Him."

We must ever bear in mind that *LATRIA* is the highest conceivable worship, to be paid to the One only God, the Creator and Governor of the world; the preceding question is, "Must that worship and service be offered to the image of Christ?" and the next question is, "Must that same worship be offered to the cross?"

“Question: Is the worship of *LATRIA* to be given to the Cross of Christ? Conclusion: Every Cross is to be adored with the adoration of *latria*; but to that on which Christ hung another reverence also is to be shown.”

To prove, in answer to supposed objections, that this highest of all acts of divine worship is of right due to the image of Christ, Bonaventura uses this reasoning:—

“A man speaks to the image in his petitions; therefore he speaks to the image as to a rational creature; therefore he speaks to the image as to Christ; and just as he speaks, so he worships and adores; and therefore he ought to adore the image of Christ as he does Christ.”

Again, he thus argues with the same view:—

“We pay the same reverence, and we ought to pay the same reverence, to the image of the blessed Virgin as we pay to the Virgin herself; and so of other saints; therefore the same reverence is to be paid to the image of Christ as to Christ himself: but the honour of *latria* (supreme divine worship) is paid to Christ; therefore it ought to be paid to his image<sup>3</sup>.”

Thus this canonized man, whom the pope who made him a saint declares to have spoken as though the Holy Spirit spoke in him, maintains it to be the unquestionable doctrine of the Church of Rome, that the self-same worship and adoration which Christians are bound to pay to Christ the Lord, they are equally bound to pay to his image, and to the representation of his cross.

That this was the generally received doctrine in England, as well as in other countries, between the days of Bonaventura and the Reformation, we draw abundant proof from various sources. Among other writers, our own countryman Lyndwode, in his work called “*Provinciale*,” deserves especial notice, because

<sup>3</sup> Rome, 1596, vol. v. p. 112. lib. iii. Dist. ix. Quæst. 2.

he is writing a comment on the ecclesiastical statutes and laws as they were interpreted and observed in his day; and he has always been appealed to as one of highest authority. He lived in the time of our Henry V., in whose service he was an ambassador when that king died at the castle of the Bois de Vincennes. After his royal master's decease, A.D. 1422, he resumed his duties as official in the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the year following he began his celebrated work. And on the subject under consideration, what evidence do we derive illustrative of the practical state of image-worship in his day?

He begins by quoting the ordinance of Robert Winchelsey, binding all rectors and parishioners in the province of Canterbury to provide certain things for the use of their churches; and among other things specified are a cross for processions, a cross for the dead, images in the body of the church, and a principal image in the chancel. On the word "images," the comment of Lyndwode, among other observations and interpretations, contains the following<sup>4</sup>:—

"The images of the saints are not to be despised but revered; yet the picture of the images themselves is not to be adored, but the thing represented by it. Know that according to John [de Athona?] it is lawful to adore images, not with the adoration of latria, but with the adoration of dulia; for latria is a worship due to God alone, but dulia is a service due to a creature. We adore God by loving Him above all things, by believing in Him, by offering Him sacrifice, and paying Him reverence above all things. But we adore the cross and images by paying them reverence, not by believing in them, or loving them above all things, or offering them sacrifice; this would be idolatry."

And yet this same writer, after an unprofitable

<sup>4</sup> Oxon. 1679, pp. 252. 298.

inquiry whether the flesh of Christ is to be adored with the worship of *latria*, thus proceeds:—

“But is the image of Christ to be adored with the worship of *latria*? If the image is regarded merely as a certain thing, no honour is due to it, as neither to wood nor stone; but if it be regarded as an image, then . . . one and the same honour is due to the image and to the Being represented by it; and therefore since Christ is adored with *latria*, his image ought likewise to be adored with *latria*. Nor does Exodus xx. stand in the way of this, where it is said, *Thou shalt not make to thyself an image, nor any graven similitude*, because that was forbidden for the time when God had not taken upon Him human nature; for then since God was altogether spirit, He was incapable of being represented by any figure. But it is otherwise after He assumed human nature.

“Now concerning the cross of Christ, it has been usually questioned, whether it is to be worshipped with *latria*. To which do you answer, ‘That honour or reverence is not due except to a rational creature; for to an insensible thing it is not due, except in relation to a rational nature or creature, and that in two ways. . . . If then the question is concerning that cross itself on which Christ was crucified, that cross is to be venerated by us in two ways: namely, in one way inasmuch as it represents the figure of Christ stretched upon it; in another way, from its having touched Christ’s limbs, and because it was sprinkled with his blood. Wherefore it is in both ways to be adored with the same adoration as Christ is, namely, with the adoration of *latria*; and thus it is that WE SPEAK TO THE CROSS, and PRAY TO THE CROSS, as to Christ Himself. But if men speak of the effigy of the cross of Christ, made of any material, wood or stone, then we venerate the cross just as we do the image of Christ, which we venerate with the worship of *latria*. Still some say, that the very cross of Christ itself, on which He hung, inasmuch as it is

a certain thing, is not to be adored with the same adoration of *latria* as is the WORD, since it does not pertain to the person of the WORD as a part of Him; but with the adoration of *hyperdulia*, inasmuch as it is a certain thing belonging to Christ."

Unintelligible as may be these refinements, contradictory as had been the sentiments of different writers, still it was by no means left open for Christians to use images or not, as their judgment might lead them. On the contrary, to hold opinions against the use and veneration of images, either openly or secretly, or even by a mere insinuation (and Lyndwode says, to insinuate even by a sign or a nod would be sufficient), subjected a person to the name of heretic, and to the pains and penalties of heresy. In the Council of Oxford, under Archbishop Arundel, one of the decrees contains the following strong clauses:—"Let no one presume to dispute, publicly or secretly, on articles determined by the Church, and especially about the adoration of the glorious cross, the veneration of the images of the saints, or pilgrimages to their places and relics; but by all henceforth let it be generally taught and preached, that the cross and the image of the Crucified, and other images of the saints, to the memory and honour of those whom they represent, and their places and relics, ought to be venerated by processions, kneelings, bowings, incensings, kissings, oblations, burnings of lights, pilgrimages, and by any other modes and forms whatever, which have been customary in our own, or in our predecessors' times. Any one who asserts, teaches, preaches, or obstinately insinuates the contrary, unless he repent in the mode and form elsewhere ordained by us, and abjure as is there provided, let him incur the penalties of heresy and of a relapse, and such let him be declared to be for all purposes of law;" *i. e.* says Lyndwode, "that he be punished with the punishment of a heretic and a relapse."

And yet we are told, that "it has been laid down as a principle that images are to be reckoned among things indifferent<sup>5</sup>;" we are told, that "precisely all which the Roman Church teaches her children regarding images and pictures set up in churches is to pay them the same veneration and affectionate observance as any one of filial feeling would entertain on coming before the picture or image of a father whom he had loved and had lost<sup>6</sup>." When this Council of Oxford was held, and down to the Reformation, the punishment of a heretic and a relapse was to be burned alive<sup>7</sup>.

There can be no doubt of the meaning of the Church of Rome in the fifteenth century; but we must refer to another and a closer test, as to the sense to be affixed to the decrees of Trent.

In the interpretation of a law, contemporaneous opinions and practice have always been considered useful and safe guides; and such a guide we have in the case before us. Whether we look to the station and character of life of an individual witness personally, or to the peculiar circumstances under which his work was sent out into the world at the first, and after ten years and more republished, we may find a difficulty in fixing upon any person whose evidence as to the meaning of a legislative enactment could be more unobjectionable and conclusive than is the testimony of Naclantus, Bishop of Clugium, on the true intent and meaning of the decree of the Council of Trent, as to the nature of the honour and worship required to be paid to images by all who profess allegiance to the see of Rome.

James Nacchianti (for this was his Italian name) seems from his infancy to have been closely united with the most influential personages in the Roman Church. When a boy, he was schoolfellow of Pius

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Milner, 1842, p. 348.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Wiseman, vol. ii. p. 130.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Hen. IV. c. 16.

V. at Bononia; and afterwards, as a writer, he secured the countenance and support of the several Roman Pontiffs from Julius III. down to his former fellow-student, Pius V. He was advanced to the bishopric of Clugium, the place anciently called Fossa Claudina, and in modern times Chiozza. He is represented as a man most renowned for the monuments of his learning which he bequeathed to posterity, and as a member of the Council of Trent, "there shining with no small lustre among his brethren, the fathers of that synod, who entrusted to him affairs of great moment, the soundness of his faith being the subject of admiration and eulogy in the same assembly." One remarkable circumstance renders this last record far more important and striking than it otherwise would have been. In the course of their proceedings, attention was especially fixed upon him as a theological writer, in consequence of a charge alleged against him of unsoundness of doctrine in the matter of tradition. But after discussion, "his faith, hitherto unassailed," was approved and applauded; and certainly the correctness of his views, as to the worship and adoration due to images, was never called in question.

His doctrines on image-worship are especially stated in his "Enarrations on the Epistle to the Romans;" and for us to set a right value on the importance of those opinions, it is necessary to bear in mind the circumstances and time of their being first separately published, and also of their being afterwards edited with the rest of his works. The "Commentary or Enarrations on the Romans" was first published when Lawrence Prioli was Doge of Venice; for to him, as his prince, and to the Venetian senate, he inscribed that work; that was some time between 1556 and 1559; so that the work was in the hands of the public at least fourteen years before the decree on the use of images was passed at Trent. Bishop Jewel tells us it was published in



1557, and cites it as containing doctrine utterly at variance with what the Romanist, Mr. Harding, was representing as the doctrine of his Church. The work, moreover, had been commented upon throughout Christendom; and had been taken notice of by name, and its real drift and meaning in this particular had been prominently brought forward in the second Book of the Homilies of the Church of England. Nevertheless, seven years after these homilies had been published, and four years after the decree for venerating images had been enacted at Trent, Naclantus dedicated the new edition of his works to the reigning pope, Pius V., in the year 1567.

Immediately after the dedication, his editor, Petrus Fratinus; a Florentine of the Order of Preachers (out of which order Naclantus himself had been taken into the episcopate), among many other declarations of his learning, and fame, and successful victories over heretics, says, "Of the erudition, the doctrine, and the talents of so great a father, there is nothing left for us to say, since it has already become known, more bright than the sun, to the whole Christian Church, not to say the world. For who knows not that in the Council of Trent, among so many most illustrious fathers and most learned doctors, and most holy prelates and lights of the world, he through so many years shone out as the day-star among the twinkling stars? He may have many equals in learning and piety; but he, superior to many, has no superior." We can scarcely conceive one whose sentiments will carry with them more authority as an accredited teacher of the Church of Rome, or as one better acquainted with the real meaning attached to the decree on the use and veneration of images by the very Council itself which enacted it, and of which he was an active member.

Naclantus begins his Dissertation on Image-worship by opening to us his view as to the opposition made to the use and worship of images in the

Christian Church<sup>8</sup>, from the time when, as the second Council of Nicæa declares, the Manichees and the Marcions rejected them, to the time when in his unmeasured language "the heresy after it had been exploded by doctors and councils was brought up again from hell by the Waldenses, and afterwards espoused by Wickliff and others," whom he calls heretics. He then asserts, on the authority of the second Nicene Council, as an undisputed fact, that images were used in the Church from the time of the Apostles, citing as evidence the testimony of Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, and other fathers.

And here we cannot but observe, that whereas Naclantus and the second Nicene Council roundly assert that the religious use of images prevailed in the Church from the very time of the Apostles, other writers, equally strenuous advocates for retaining them and their worship, acknowledge that from the first it was not so; even accounting for the delay in admitting them by the fear entertained among the early Christians either of offending the lately-converted Jews, or else of tempting the converted Gentiles to idolatry; each consideration surely supplying an unanswerable argument for prohibiting image-worship altogether through every age of the Church<sup>9</sup>.

Naclantus then affirms, that the images of the most Holy Trinity, of our blessed Saviour, of the glorious cross, of the most holy mother, of angels, and of all saints, are of use in the Church; and moreover (what he confesses to be the whole point of his dissertation), that due honour and worship must be paid to them.

He proceeds to state that the subject must be considered under three distinct points of view:—

1. The image may be regarded in the light merely

<sup>8</sup> Rom. i. 23.

<sup>9</sup> See Life of Gregory the Great. Opera, vol. iv. p. 285.

of a material figure, metal, wood, stone, colour, and painting; and in this light the image, however beautiful, cannot be honoured or worshipped.

2. Images may be regarded as things blessed and consecrated to God; and as soon as they are placed in a church (even without a blessing or any further dedication), to deprive them of their own honour is a crime to be accursed. Being placed in the church, they are not only images of those beings whom they represent, but are moreover in a peculiar manner joined to them, yea, and erected in their stead.

3. In the third place they must be regarded in a strict sense as images, or similitudes and representations; and there being a mutual relation between the image and the original . . . it follows that, when the question of adoration is entertained, the image is to be regarded not merely in its reference to the original, but more especially in itself as containing that original: "Wherefore it is wisely said, that the image is truly adored," &c. "And since the one thing is not separated from the other, so neither is the worship or adoration of the two divided, but the worship and adoration of both is one and the same.

"Wherefore, not only must it be confessed that the faithful in the Church do adore BEFORE the image (*as some perhaps FOR CAUTION-SAKE express themselves*), but also that they do WORSHIP THE IMAGE, without any manner of scruple you may suggest: nay, moreover, they venerate the image with that worship with which they venerate its original; so that, if that original has to be adored with latria [supreme divine worship, due to God only], the image also is to be worshipped with latria; if that is to be adored with dulia, or hyperdulia, this [the image] is equally to be adored with that kind of worship."

Words cannot be selected to express more plainly the practical result of the whole. This great authority in the Roman Church not only asserts that the faithful

adore the image of Christ with the self-same worship with which they adore Christ Himself, but that this must be done. This is, indeed, a most awful statement ; but when made it was not new ; it had been held by doctors and canonized saints ; and whatever refinements may be invented, and however some, "for caution-sake," may try to fence the worship of the Almighty against such gross encroachments, the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Naclantus, and that school, will be the practical tenet of the people at large who are taught to worship images. They may be instructed to intend to worship the spiritual Being represented by the image ; but they will be led stealthily and unwarily to adore the image itself, at least quite as much as the pagans were ever led to worship and adore their idols. Image-worship has ever been, and must ever be, an offence, a stumbling-block, a snare, and a temptation. It is an offence and stumbling-block which, if suffered to remain, can never be avoided or surmounted ; it is a snare from which, when once the soul is entangled in it, there is no escape ; it is a temptation, to dally and parley with which, will end in irretrievable seduction. The only safe course dictated by sound reason and the word of God, by experience, and the testimony of all ages, is to remove the thing itself once and for ever, and to allow it in the Church of Christ neither place nor name.

Naclantus having declared that the faithful adore, and must adore, the image of Christ with the self-same worship with which they adore Christ Himself, answers an objection which he supposes some may draw from the case of the Brazen Serpent ; and he pronounces this startling doctrine :—If the Israelites had looked to the Brazen Serpent with the eye of religion, "even if in the desert they had offered incense to it, that would clearly have been done without any idolatry." The reason he assigns is, that doubtless God explained to Moses and the elders its

typical character, as an emblem of our Saviour; and even the rest of the people who, though perhaps they did not understand its sacramental character, yet still looked to it and worshipped it, were nevertheless not guilty of idolatry, because they were guided, in their own belief, by the faith of Moses, and other chosen servants of God, and reposing on them as their patterns, did as they saw them do. He adds, that the Brazen Serpent was with reason destroyed subsequently, because the people worshipped it after its typical character had been forgotten.

Can a stronger argument be conceived for the utter annihilation of image-worship? Naclantus says, the mass of the Israelites worshipped the Brazen Serpent without any better reason than that their rulers and guides worshipped it; and that afterwards, when the faith which justified those rulers and guides in their worship was forgotten, the same serpent was worshipped, and it was then idolatry. Human nature is the same, and under the changed circumstances of ourselves and of our dispensation, a similar progress must follow any adoption and worship of images in the Christian Church.

Suppose an image to be set up (as Dr. Baines assures us) merely to remind us of what Christ has done for us; the Council of Trent requires that image to be revered with due honour—the head is to be uncovered, the body is to be prostrated, the knee is to be bent before it; and then the following stages (which Cardinal Bellarmin, in his enumeration of the different and opposite views taken of the subject by members of his own, the Roman, Church clearly indicates) will inevitably follow:—

1. Some will worship (or honestly say they worship) merely before the image. This Naclantus informs us is said by some *for caution-sake*.
2. Then some will worship the image, but solely (as far as they can and intend) with an adoration to

- be passed on, and through the image to the spiritual object of their worship.
3. Then others will worship the image with an inferior or secondary adoration, purposing to reserve their full veneration for the prototype.
  4. And then, others (with the example and precept of Naclantus, that "day-star" of the Council of Trent, and of the canonized saints Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventura, and other accredited teachers before them) will worship the image, and adore it with the self-same adoration with which they worship and adore the Being of which that image is the figure, and representative; and they will "teach men so."

And thus, were the question now put to us, which, as we have seen, was put in 1826, by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Siga (Dr. Baines), to the mixed congregation of Roman Catholics, and Churchmen, and Dissenters, at the consecration of the Chapel at Bradford, in Yorkshire, "Is it possible that any of you should persuade yourselves that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of adoring the ivory image which you see on that altar?" our reply must be, "We know not the persons who are present; but this we know, that your saints, and bishops, and doctors, have declared and taught that the faithful in your Church must worship the image of Christ, and also the cross; and, moreover, that they must adore them with the self-same adoration with which they worship our blessed Saviour Himself. We are not careful or competent to reconcile these contradictions in your doctrines and worship; we leave that to you; by us they are irreconcilable. We speak only of what we have heard with our ears and seen with our eyes; and we thank the God of Truth for his grace in rescuing us from such degrading superstitions."

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XXI.

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

PART V.

RISE, PROGRESS, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF  
IMAGE-WORSHIP.



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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART V.

#### *Rise, Progress, and Establishment of Image-worship.*

HAVING ascertained the real doctrine and discipline of the Church of Rome, on the subject of image-worship; having witnessed the Council of Trent enacting that images are to be used in the Church, and to be held in due veneration; having found that in the Missal, the Breviary, and the Pontifical of the Church of Rome, the supreme religious worship due to Almighty God alone is to be paid to the cross as the image of Christ; having seen that canonized saints and doctors of that Church hold, as an indisputable doctrine, that the sacred images are to be worshipped with the self-same adoration that is to be paid to the original Being which the image in each case represents; (that the image, for example, of our blessed Saviour, and also the cross, must be worshipped with the self-same adoration which the faithful offer to Almighty God);—a painful, yet interesting and edifying task next awaits us; to trace this dreadful superstition from its first origin out of the stock of paganism, through its several stages, to its ultimate and general, though (blessed be the God of truth!) not universal

triumph over the pure and simple worship of primitive Christianity.

The reader must be here apprised; that the proofs in detail of the absence of all image-worship through the first five centuries will be given in some subsequent Numbers of the present series of Tracts, in which the testimony drawn from the fathers of the Primitive Church will be separately weighed, and every argument from them usually urged in favour of image-worship examined.

## SECTION I.

Through the first three centuries, and more, we find no trace of any image, whether picture or statue, being placed in Christian churches, even for ornament or for instruction. And when memorials of our Lord and his departed servants, together with historical paintings representing events recorded in holy Scripture (such as Abraham offering his son), were at length introduced, the portraits of living members of the Church were at the same time admitted also; so that the existence of images in the churches through the next three centuries or more, bears no testimony to any religious veneration offered to them. This latter point is not more interesting and important in itself, than it is evident beyond question. Proofs of the fact abound every where; here we need only advert to one or two.

When Severus, for example, had attached a baptistery to two churches, among other ornaments in it, he placed, side by side, the images of his friend Paulinus and St. Martin. Paulinus, together with expressions of thankfulness and admiration, protested against this, not because he objected to such ornaments, but because he felt himself unworthy of the distinction. He therefore wrote two separate inscriptions to be set by the images, which might teach men, by the example of St. Martin, to hope and seek for the glory of a saint, and by the

example of Paulinus, to labour for the pardon of a repentant sinner. This Paulinus was the friend and pupil of St. Augustine<sup>1</sup>.

Another striking instance is recorded by Suidas:—Acacius, successor to Gennadius, in the patriarchate of Constantinople, was a most exemplary chief pastor, and gained the admiration of his clergy, “who set up his image in several houses of prayer.” The number of these images gave birth to a suspicion that he was a man of ambition and vainglory, a suspicion, adds Suidas, much confirmed by the following circumstance: “Though the church near the docks was wholly finished by Gennadius, yet in one of its most conspicuous places was seen a picture in mosaic work<sup>2</sup>, representing our blessed Lord as standing between the two patriarchs, and saying to Gennadius, ‘Destroy this temple, and in the time of thy successor I will build it up.’ These pictures caused Acacius, though a liberal man, and well fitted to govern, yet to be regarded as passionately fond of glory<sup>3</sup>.”

Indeed, in those times, so far were pictures in churches from being regarded as objects of religious veneration, that they proved often the cause of jealousy, and were treated as badges of party. A certain patriarch of Constantinople, we are told, would never commence the service in any church till he had turned all the images of his predecessor out of it<sup>4</sup>.

At the very commencement of the fourth century, about A. D. 306, the Council of Eliberis<sup>5</sup> (Elvira, in Spain), looking forward with deep apprehension to the evils which were likely to result from the unrestrained admission of images into the places of

<sup>1</sup> Paulin. Epist. xii. ad Sever. (Lyons, A. D. 1677), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller and very interesting confirmation of these points, see Bingham's *Antiquities*, book viii. chap. viii. sect. 6—8, &c., and the various conclusive testimonies there cited by him.

<sup>3</sup> Suidas (Cambridge, 1705), vol. i. p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Theodorus Lector (Cambridge, 1720), p. 587.

<sup>5</sup> Concil. Gen. tom. i. p. 997, cap. xxxvi.

Christian worship, decreed, "that no images should be in the church, lest what is worshipped and adored should be painted on the walls." This prohibition implies that the practice was commencing; and the inroads of superstition, which then began to invade the pure worship of the Christian Church, paved the way for worse and worse.

Further remarks on the decree of this council, and also on the sentiments of Gregory the Great, as to the use of images, and the sad error of worshipping them, and the full account of his interference in the case of Severus, Bishop of Marseilles, we must reserve for our examination in detail of the evidence of Christian antiquity, where the whole will be found in its chronological order; that Pope having died full three centuries after the date of the Council of Eliberis. Here it will be sufficient to observe, that Severus found that the pictures and images, which had been admitted into the churches (chiefly to make the transition from paganism to Christianity less abrupt and violent, by allowing the converts to retain several of their superstitions, and, among others, that of seeing visible representations of their objects of worship in their places of religious meetings), laid too strong a temptation before the people. Consequently, acting on the principle of St. Augustine, that images set up in holy places would naturally seduce men to convert them into objects of adoration, and finding also, by his own experience, professed Christians in his diocese actually worshipping pictures and images, he ordered them to be taken away and destroyed. Like Phineas of old, zealous for the honour of his God, he resolved at once to cut up the noxious growing evil root and branch; and to this day Christendom has to lament, that instead of being commended for his zeal to the fullest extent, and seconded in it, he was rebuked by the Roman Pontiff. The substance of Gregory's admonition was all couched in these words, "You ought, brother, to preserve the images, and to prevent the

people from worshipping them<sup>6</sup>." Pope Gregory, at the close of the sixth century, strenuously maintained the usefulness of pictures for instruction-sake; but no less strenuously did he insist by all means on the universal and uncompromising prohibition of their worship. In urging that prohibition, he alleged this argument, that Holy Scripture forbids worship being paid to any thing made with hands, citing these very words, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" the very words which, as we shall soon see, were cited at the Council of Nicæa, to prove that the Scripture allowed Christians to *worship* images, provided they did not *serve* them.

Between the death of Gregory the Great, and that fatal second Council of Nicæa, almost two sad and dreary centuries intervened; and, through that whole period, the Christian's eye can find few spots on which to rest with any thing like comfort and satisfaction. Harassed and persecuted from without, by the rising infidel powers of Mahometanism, distracted with internal discords and divisions, hating one another more than the common enemy of the faith, Christians present through much of that interval a melancholy proof of the inefficiency of the name, when disjoined from the spirit of the Gospel. The temporal power of the Pope grew rapidly, and the ecclesiastical dominion of Old Rome was arrayed against the temporal sovereignty of New Rome, as Constantinople was then called. Meanwhile, the leaven of superstition was spreading like a canker through the Church. The worship of God was subjected to new and greater corruptions, all tending towards the principles of heathenism, or rather of our fallen nature, which has throughout a hankering after visible objects of worship, and material representations of the unseen Divinity. And, in this work of

<sup>6</sup> Paris, 1705, lib. ii. Epist. lib. ix. Ep. 105.

corruption, we find the Roman See to be the very centre and the chief promoter of error, perseveringly upholding the supporters of that work, and denouncing its opponents, and that in a more especial manner with regard to the error of image-worship. While the ancient service was strongly maintained in the East and in the West, and the innovation of image-worship was opposed by the Greeks on the one side, and by the Germans, Franks, and Britons on the other, Rome put forth all her might, secular and ecclesiastical, to establish that innovation; condemning, by her most deadly anathemas, all who refused to receive it, and withdrawing her allegiance from the Emperors of Constantinople because they dared to withstand the fatal corruption. This is a sad page of the history of the Church; and we will dwell on it no longer than a brief outline of the history of image-worship may require, with a view to our understanding the entire subject more clearly.

<sup>7</sup> In the year 726, Pope Gregory II. held a council at Rome (called the third), in which he argues thus: "If Moses and Solomon, at the command of God, made cherubim of wood, covered with gold, how much more ought we to worship and adore Christ our God, engraven in a pure heart and mind, and the holy Mary ever Virgin, and the Apostles also, and all the saints of God, through their sacred effigies and images?" &c. But Gregory and his council did not stop here. "A curse was imprecated on the heresy of image-breakers and their followers; and casting off all fellowship with the governor of New Rome, that is to say, Leo the Emperor, and with those who followed him, Gregory bound both the emperor and his followers by the anathema of the council, and he forbade the tribute to be paid which had been paid up to that time, after he had laboured by letters to bring Leo back from the hatred of God, and to the worship of sacred images." Or, as

<sup>7</sup> Sacros. Concil., A. D. 726, (Venice, 1729,) vol. viii. pp. 192. 196.

another account expresses it, "Learning which, the divine Pope of Rome, Gregory, having convened a divine and holy council, nobly subjected the enemies of images to a curse, and urged many vehement arguments to the king Leo."

Probably the fact which Gregory is here said to have learned, but which the extract contained in the history of the council does not specify, was, that Leo had openly denounced image-worship. Here at every step we are reminded of the strange assertions of Romish bishops of the present day, that, since image-worship is a matter only<sup>8</sup> of discipline, it is of little consequence whether images were admitted into the churches in primitive times, or not. If opposition to image-worship was called a heresy, and all those who did not receive and honour images were subject to the curse and malediction pronounced on heretics, it seems trifling to set up a distinction between matters of faith and discipline. Had these men been convicted of the grossest heresy that ever disgraced the Christian name, what more bitter punishment could the Roman Pontiff have had in reserve for them, than excommunications and anathemas?

Gregory II. was succeeded by Gregory III., A. D. 731, who was forced away from the bier of his predecessor to the pontificate, and of whom the very first recorded act after his election was, the sending of letters, written with all the vigour of the Apostolic See, to the Emperors Leo and Constantine, urging them to repent of the errors which they had entertained against image-worship. On the detention of his messengers in Sicily<sup>9</sup>, he convened a council of ninety-three bishops in Rome, and subjected to excommunication from the holy Eucharist, and from the unity and bond of the whole Church, all who dared, against the veneration of the sacred images, to

<sup>8</sup> See Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 130.

<sup>9</sup> Conc. Gen. p. 196.



destroy, pull down, or blaspheme them, and "struck with a dreadful curse those who opposed this decree<sup>1</sup>."

Gregory III. was followed by Pope Zachary, Stephen II., Stephen III., Paul, and Stephen IV.; of all of whom Pope Adrian, in his letter to Charlemagne, declares, that, fervent in the Holy Ghost for the setting up of holy images, they possessed zeal for THE RIGHT FAITH. Adrian, moreover, specifies, that Gregory II., together with seventy-nine bishops, resolved to worship and adore the sacred images; and that his immediate predecessor, Stephen, together with bishops from some parts of France and Italy, confirming the acts of his predecessors, with all the assistant bishops, decreed the adoration and worship "of the sacred images."

It must here be observed, that Pope Adrian, so far from regarding the worship of images as a matter merely of discipline, identifies zeal in the cause of image-worship with zeal for the true faith. It must also be remembered, as a fact of much importance, that Adrian himself records that only from some parts of Italy and France<sup>2</sup> did bishops come to join the Pope in his decrees for the worship of images. We find that the large body of Christians, clergy and laity, in the West, through France, Germany, and Britain, resisted the new superstition, till they were overborne and silenced by the power and machinations of Rome.

While the popes and their partisans in Old Rome employed all their authority and influence to establish image-worship, the emperors at Constantinople, or New Rome, put forth all their energies to suppress and destroy it. The representations of different authors as to the proceedings on both sides are very conflicting; and it is not necessary for us to pronounce on their respective merits. The Romanist writers brand the

<sup>1</sup> P. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Adrian twice limits the bishops to parts of France and Italy. (Conc. vol. viii. pp. 1580. 1584.)

opponents of that superstition with most degrading terms of reproach and obloquy, and employ language utterly unworthy of civilised and Christian men. While some writers say, that the emperors were driven to strong measures for the removal of images, by witnessing the gross idolatry with which they began to be worshipped, and also by the too just reproaches and revilings which this idolatrous service drew upon Christianity itself from the Jews and Mahometans; others say, that these proceedings originated with the Jews and Turks, and were levelled against the Christian faith. While some call these royal opponents of image-worship heretics, enemies to the true faith, and persecutors of Christians, others speak of them as pious, devoted, orthodox servants of God, faithful kings, struggling together with the Apostles, moved by an excellent and divine zeal, and not enduring to see the Church of the faithful made the prey of the wicked one<sup>3</sup>. There is, however, no doubt of the fact, that the emperor Leo III., about A. D. 730, published an edict against image-worship, which led to most disastrous consequences, both in the East and the West; and in Rome it excited so violent a feeling against the Emperor, as led, under the fostering hand of the popes, to the renunciation of their allegiance by the people; and to the treading of the Emperor's statutes under foot.

Leo was succeeded in the empire by his son, Constantine, called, in derision, Copronymus, A. D. 741; who proceeded, with equal zeal, but with more discretion, to carry on the same work which his father had left unfinished. Instead of putting forth decrees, and executing them in his own name, he called a council of Eastern bishops together to Constantinople, who met, to the number of three hundred and thirty-eight. This council, called by its members the Seventh General Council, was stigmatised as an heretical and unauthorised synod by the second

<sup>3</sup> See Second Nicene Council, Act vi.

Council of Nice; and even for our knowledge of what took place in it we are indebted to the last acts of the latter council, in which all the proceedings of the former were rehearsed, passage by passage, in order that they might be set at nought, and held up to contempt. These proceedings deserve a careful examination; and, although we may not be disposed to approve of all that was done and recognised by the bishops assembled at this Council of Constantinople, the preponderance of sound argument, and ancient testimony, and Scripture proof, is decidedly with them, and against the second Nicene Council. We cannot dwell upon their several acts; it will be sufficient for our purpose to quote their decree on the subject under consideration:—

“Confirmed by these writings of God’s inspiration, and the sentiments of the blessed Fathers, and fixing our feet firm on the rock of worshipping God in spirit, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity, we being unanimous and of one sentiment, assembled together, with one voice decree, that every image, of whatever materials made, by the evil art of painters, is to be cast away from the Church as strange and abominable. Let no one, whoever he be, hereafter follow so unholy and impure a practice. And whoever from this day shall dare to procure for himself an image, or to worship it, or to set it up either in the church or in a private house, or to keep it in secret, if he be a bishop or deacon, let him be deposed; if he be a hermit or layman, let him be visited by anathema, and subjected to the imperial laws, as one who sets himself against the divine decrees, and does not observe the ordinances<sup>4</sup>.”

These decrees were violently opposed by a large number through the Eastern empire, so deeply had the deplorable superstition struck its root; but especially did the monastic ecclesiastics rage against it. Constantine, however, persevered in his maintenance

<sup>4</sup> See Second Nicene Council, Act vi.

of the primitive worship to his death, which did not take place for twenty years after this council. He was succeeded by his son, Leo IV., A. D. 775, who followed his father's steps in his opposition to the growing superstition. This unhappy man was carried off by a sudden death, A. D. 780. It is said he died by poison, administered by the machinations of his wife, Irene; but whether this be so or not, we cannot pronounce. His widow, however, and her son, then a boy, reigned conjointly. From the last hour of Leo the cause of image-worship became more and more triumphant. A close alliance was formed between these joint sovereigns and the Pope; and in the year 786 they summoned that second Nicene Council, which decreed for the use, and the honour, and the worship of images, and to the transactions of which our attention must now be directed at some length, because it is on the decisions of that assembly that the Romanists chiefly build their present superstructure of image-worship.

True it is that they are led to refer to earlier authorities cited in that council, and to rest on the arguments and testimonies then employed by its members (arguments, as we shall hereafter see, not bearing at all on the real point at issue, and testimonies drawn from spurious works attributed to the ancient Fathers); yet to the enactments of this council they recur, as an authority from which there is no appeal. The decrees, indeed, of this assembly are sufficiently comprehensive to admit of the most unqualified worship and adoration of images; and yet we find that the restrictions and modifications expressed individually by its members were too full of caution to satisfy subsequent maintainers of image-worship in the Church of Rome; who passed all former bounds, and boldly propagated doctrines on the worship and adoration of images, for which the most zealous advocates and champions of that worship, even at the close of the eighth century, were not yet fully prepared.

## SECTION II.

*Second Council of Nicæa.*

At the close of the eighth century, a Council, called, "The Second Nicene Council," was held at Nicæa, or Nice, in Bithynia, for the express purpose of establishing through Christendom the worship and adoration of images in the Church of Christ. The reader will observe, that the professed object of this Council, to which the Council of Trent refers by name, was not to establish the use of images, or to assert their usefulness, nor to secure respect to them, but to insist upon worship being paid to them; the President Tarasius declaring, that all persons who profess to HONOUR the sacred images, but REFUSE THEIR WORSHIP, are guilty of hypocrisy.

This Council was attended as well by bishops who had before opposed the worship of images, and who now came forward to avow their errors, and to tender their adhesion to the cause which they had before anathematised, as by those who had been before most zealous and uncompromising supporters of the worship of images; Adrian, Archbishop of "Old Rome," the Apostolic See, being represented by two of his own clergy; and Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, or "New Rome," being present in person; the bishops of the "Eastern Diocese," or "Apostolical Sees," as they are equally called, being represented by two of their clergy.

Here it may be well to observe in passing, that no one individual ecclesiastic seems to have been present at this council who held the sentiments to condemn which it was purposely convened. Cardinal Bellarmine, indeed<sup>5</sup>, says that the subject was fully and thoroughly discussed, the disputation being carried on sharply, and the evidence of Scripture, councils,

<sup>5</sup> Vol. ii. book ii. chap. xii.

and Fathers being brought forward. But this is very far from being the case: there was no discussion; no opinion of living divines or of departed Fathers was admitted which at all ran counter to the decrees already resolved upon. Even the testimony of Eusebius against images was not allowed to be read, but was only alluded to, and condemned by an anathema involving his works and all who received them. Every thing was brought to the council ready prepared, just as now the report of a committee presented to an unanimous meeting is read and adopted; every thing proceeded without interruption as a matter of course, except when the president or some member of the council expressed his approbation, or confirmed some statement by his own testimony. From first to last we find no counter-statement or discussion of any kind.

The first Act or Session of the council begins with a motion made by the Bishops of Sicily, That it is right and becoming for him who presides, the most holy Archbishop and Chief Ruler of Royal Constantinople, New Rome, to open the council by delivering his sentiments. This being carried, Tarasius addressed the assembly; and at the close of his speech, Constantine, Bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus, moved that the bishops who lay under a charge of heresy, and were present desiring forgiveness and reconciliation, be called in. This was agreed to; and after some inquiry as to the canonical reconciliation of those who had been in error and had returned to the true faith, these bishops were permitted to declare their errors, and read the confession of their present creed. Our subject requires that specimens of these retractions and professions should be laid before the reader:

Immediately on the motion of Constantine being carried, Basil, bishop of Ancyra, Theodorus, bishop of Myra, and Theodosius, bishop of Ammorium, were called in. Basil first read his own recantation at great length; and Theodorus read as his own a copy

of the same paper, on hearing which some of the council thanked God; and then Theodosius was brought forward, and spake thus:—

“My all-holy masters, honoured of God, and all this holy assembly! I, too, a miserable and deceived sinner, who have spoken many evil words against the sacred images, now comprehending the truth, have changed my views and condemned myself, and have plainly cursed and do curse what I have evilly said and taught in this world; and I pray and beseech your holy assembly, that, with all Christians, you will receive me, your unworthy servant.”

“Tarasius, the most holy Patriarch, said, ‘The most reverend Theodosius has shown great contrition of heart, and is worthy to be received.’”

After this, Theodosius read his own statement, as follows:—

“To the holy and œcumenical council, Theodosius, the least of Christians.—I confess and agree, and receive and salute and *worship*<sup>6</sup>, first of all, the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, and the holy image of her who bare Him, the holy theotocos; and her help and protection, and her mediation, every day and night, I, as a sinner, invoke for my help, she having freedom of speech with Him who was born of her, Christ our God: and also the images of the holy and celebrated apostles, prophets, martyrs, fathers, and ascetics of the desert, I receive and worship—not as Gods (may that not be!); but even now, showing the temper and desire of my soul which I originally entertained towards them, I call upon them all, with my whole soul, to mediate for me with God, that He would grant me, through their mediations, to find mercy with Him at the day of judgment. Likewise, also, I worship, honour, and salute the relics of the saints, as those who have struggled for Christ, and received grace from Him

<sup>6</sup> It may be well to observe, that throughout the records of this council the word we translate *worship* (προσκυνεῖν) is translated in the Latin by “adorare.”

to effect cures and heal diseases, and cast out devils, as the Church of the Christians has received from the holy Apostles and Fathers to our own times. And I am well pleased that in the churches also of the saints there should be exhibited chiefly the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the holy one who bare God, formed of all kinds of materials, gold and silver, and colours of every kind, that the dispensation of his incarnation might be known to all men; and likewise, that there be exhibited the manner of life of the holy and celebrated apostles, prophets, and martyrs, that their struggles and contests may be made known for a brief description, and for stirring up and teaching the people, especially the simple sort."

Then, having piteously implored the council to receive him back, he thus ends his address:—

"On those who do not worship the holy and sacred images, anathema! On those who blaspheme the holy and sacred images, anathema! On those who dare to utter blasphemy and accusation against the sacred images, or to call them idols, anathema! On the accusers of Christians, I mean the Iconoclasts, anathema! On those who do not carefully teach all the people who love Christ to worship and salute the sacred, holy, and honourable images of all the saints who have pleased God from the beginning of the world, anathema! On those who have a doubtful mind, and do not from their soul confess that they worship the sacred images, anathema!"

After these full confessions of their own conversion, and these bitter maledictions on all who even entertained in their minds doubts on the subject, had greatly affected the audience, Tarasius, who acted throughout as president of the council<sup>7</sup>, put the question as to the reconciliation of these offending bishops thus:—"Is it your pleasure that they take their seats?" To this the monks (representa-

<sup>7</sup> When the members sign their consent, the locum-tenens of Adrian, "Pope of the older Rome," signs first.



tives of the Eastern Apostolical Sees) expressed their assent; and the three bishops "were ordered to sit, each on his proper bench and seat."

In the second Session, the letter of Pope Adrian to Tarasius was read, urging him to persevere in his resolution to receive, uphold, and worship the sacred images, and to be united with filial affection to the Apostolic See of Old Rome, which he was very careful to declare to be the head of all the churches.

In the third Session, to a letter addressed to Tarasius, "Archbishop of Constantinople, and Patriarch of the whole world" [*œcumenical*], the Eastern bishops append a confession ascribed to Theodorus, sometime Patriarch of Jerusalem, which contains much matter worthy of notice. This document, while it lays open and bare before us the futile and ungrounded arguments purporting to be drawn from Scripture and the Fathers, by which image-worship was then, as it is now, defended, shows (the defenders of image-worship themselves being our witnesses) that, whenever attempts were made from the first to introduce images as objects of religious worship in the Church, there were always men, imbued with the principles of primitive times, ready to oppose and denounce them.

Having said, "the holy images we worshipping embrace," and having specified first of all the picture and figure of our blessed Lord, Theodorus proceeds:—"We, moreover, honour and adore the image of his unpolluted mother, the holy theotocos, our immaculate Lady. We must also honour the images of the apostles, prophets, and gloriously victorious martyrs, holy and just, as friends of God; not presenting our reverence to the matter and colour, but led through these by the eyes of our mind to the original, referring the honour to him; knowing, according to the great St. Basil, that the honour of the image passes through to the original. But to those who contentiously argue and say that we ought not to worship the images of the saints, being made with

hands, foolishly, or rather impiously, calling them idols, we say, 'Let such know that the cherubim and the mercy-seat, and the ark and table, which the divine Moses prepared at the command of God, were made with hands and were worshipped.'"

On the misinterpretation of Scripture, and the reference here made to St. Basil (which, however, has not the most remote bearing on image-worship), we must speak under another head of our inquiry; at present we need only observe, that, while the bishops then assembled, in number three hundred and eighteen, impose "terrible cursings on all those who do not agree with them in honouring, reverencing, and worshipping images," and especially condemn "the assembly unlawfully called the Seventh Council" (the Council of Constantinople above referred to, which denounced the worship of images, and forbade their admission into the churches), Constantius, the reconciled Bishop of Constantia, expressly reserves the worship of *latria* to the Holy Trinity, a reservation which we shall find rejected both before and after the Council of Trent.

In the fourth Session of this assembly, we meet with lamentable examples of such an eagerness to uphold a theory, as can wrest passages of Holy Scripture to prove a doctrine on which they have no bearing; and can cite as the testimony of ancient Fathers what they never wrote; and quote their real sentiments on one subject, to establish another utterly at variance with them:

For example:—

Moses made the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim, for the people to worship; therefore Christians ought to have the images of Christ, and his saints, and the Virgin, to worship.<sup>8</sup>

Again, St. Chrysostom, in his encomium on a holy man named Meletius, addressing his audience as

<sup>8</sup> Under a subsequent head we shall examine the passages strangely alleged from Holy Scripture as countenancing the religious worship of images.

persons acquainted with the merits of his subject, says, that so entirely had Meletius won the affections of the people, and so deeply had he impressed them with the sacredness of his character, "that the very remembrance of his name was sufficient to dispel from their minds every inordinate feeling and desire." "And not only was his name heard in all their paths, their fields, their market-places, but many had his likeness engraven on the medallions of their rings, their cups, and goblets, and on the walls of their chambers; so that not only did they hear his holy name, but saw the form of his person every where, and thus derived a twofold consolation for his departure." And this is cited as a proof that John Chrysostom approved of images, and set the example of receiving them as "reverend, sacred, and holy!" "If John of the golden mouth spake thus of images, who will any longer dare to speak a word against them?" The question at issue was, not whether Christians might have the portraits of their friends and of holy men hanging on their walls, or engraved on their seals; but whether images should be set up in churches, and be worshipped.

The rest of this fourth Act is chiefly taken up with legends of miracles wrought by images. This is a dark portion of Christian history, and informs us only too plainly how firm a grasp superstition had then taken of the minds of those who should have been the lights of the world. To such instances as are alleged on the authority of any Father of the first five centuries we shall advert hereafter; at present we must leave this Act of the council, with only one or two remarks.

After a very long account (quoted as from the great St. Athanasius, but beyond question not his) of an image of our Saviour working miracles, the Patriarch of Constantinople, anticipating the doubt which might offer itself to some present on hearing the account of so many miracles wrought by images in former times, conscious that no such miracles were wrought

by the images in their possession then, interposes thus:—"But lest any should say, 'What is the cause why the images with us now do not work miracles?' we answer him, 'Because, as the Apostle says, signs are for those who believe not, and not for those who believe;' and those who used to approach the image were unbelievers. So God wrought the miracles through the image to draw them to the faith of us Christians."

Here we have a clear acknowledgment, as far as the President's testimony goes, that miracles by images had then ceased to be wrought; and the principle recognised, that, when they were wrought, it was for the conversion of unbelievers: and yet, in the self-same session, one named Manzon, himself a member of the council and a bishop, gets up and declares, that the year before, on his returning home from Constantinople, he fell so grievously ill, that he called his friends together to make his will. "Meanwhile, the disorder continuing, I took the image of Jesus Christ, and said, 'Lord, who givest grace to Thy saints, look upon me!' and on my putting the same revered image upon the limb affected, immediately the disease was driven away, and I was made well." Upon which Theodorus, Bishop of Seleucia, rose and said, "This was known to us also, for it is in our neighbourhood."

At every stage of our inquiry into the origin, progress, and present state of image-worship, we are struck with the palpable contradictions and inconsistencies into which its supporters are constantly falling. Here we have one bishop making to his fellow-councillors an apology for the non-appearance of miracles wrought by images in their times; and another declaring that a few months only before the council a miracle was wrought on himself by an image, to which another bishop adds his hearsay confirmation. But another contradiction is forced upon us here between Tarasius, president of this council, on one side, and that other bishop and Car-

dinal Bellarmin, on the other. The Patriarch of Constantinople, at the end of the eighth century, says distinctly, that the miracles which were wont to be wrought by images were wrought on unbelievers for their conversion: that other bishop declares the miracle was wrought on himself, already a believer and a minister even of the Church: and Cardinal Bellarmin maintains that miracles were wrought by images on purpose to establish their right to veneration and worship; and that the benefits resulting therefrom were conferred<sup>9</sup> solely and exclusively on those who honoured images, and believed that the worship of them pleases God; consequently he concludes, that, if image-worship is idolatry, God proves Himself to be the chief promoter of idolatry.

It is also remarkable, that a similar apology which Tarasius here makes for the cessation of miracles by images in his time, his predecessor, Germanus, who was Patriarch of Constantinople when Gregory was Bishop of Rome, nearly two hundred years before, makes for the same thing. The instance he specifies, and which he says was beyond gainsaying and doubt, and of all the most evident, was the miracle wrought by the image of the Virgin Mary (a picture in Sozopolis of Pisidia), which sent forth from its painted hand a springing stream of ointment, of which there were many witnesses. "But if," he adds, "such a miraculous act is not seen now, not on that account should former acts be disbelieved, lest also what is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles should be judged incredible." This is contained in a treatise purporting to be an epistle from Germanus to Thomas, Bishop of Claudiopolis, and cited in the fourth Act of this council. And, unhappily, this is the view urged upon Christians now,—Either Rome or infidelity,—either believe what Rome now holds, or be at once open and professed infidels: an inference from which those who are from their hearts and

<sup>9</sup> Lib. ii. cap. xii.

inmost consciences Christians, but who cannot subscribe to the doctrines of Rome, shrink with mingled feelings of indignation and horror.

Another remark of no small importance here suggests itself, arising from the comment of Anastasius on the words, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," and also the observations of the council and its president on that comment.

"And let no one," he says, "stumble at the intimation of worship. For we worship holy men and angels; but we do not *serve* them. For, says Moses, 'Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and Him ONLY shalt thou SERVE.' Observe how to the words 'thou shalt serve' is added 'only;' not so to 'thou shalt worship.' So that we may lawfully worship; for worship is a sign of honour; but by no means may we serve: consequently, neither must we pray to them."

The council having on this observed, that what they called<sup>1</sup> the false council had impiously quoted this passage in their defence, the President Tarasius said, "See how the most learned Father interprets it. What he has brought forward induces all of us to receive and to worship images; for worship is a sign of honour. All persons, then, WHO PROFESS TO HONOUR THE SACRED IMAGES, BUT REFUSE THEIR WORSHIP, will be convicted by the holy Father as speaking with hypocrisy; for, in reality, those who do not receive their worship, which is the sign of honour, show that they are working the contrary, their dishonour."

Here is a most clear and explicit declaration, that, according to this council, to honour the images is not enough; on the contrary, it is pronounced to be mere hypocrisy, unless that honour be the honour of worship; and although Anastasius makes an excep-

<sup>1</sup> The council at Constantinople, which had condemned image-worship about thirty-two years before.

tion of prayer, yet no worship is alluded to in the passage of Scripture, except that same worship, whatever it be, with which the Almighty commands Himself to be honoured, when He says, "Thou shalt WORSHIP the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." In conformity with this decision, the council declare, that they honour and salute, and with honour worship the sacred images; and having pronounced curses on all who hold any opposite doctrine, especially those who call the images idols, or "apply to the sacred images the words uttered in Scripture against idols," close the fourth Act by subscribing their names to it.

It is worthy of remark, that the very passage of Holy Scripture which, in this council, is cited to prove that images may be worshipped with the same worship which the Almighty commands his people to pay to Himself, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," though they are not to be SERVED, had been appealed to by Gregory the Great, to show that images are not to be worshipped:—"You must show by proof of Holy Scripture, that it is not lawful to WORSHIP any thing made with hands, since it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve'.<sup>2</sup>"

The fifth Act abounds with numerous legends cited to prove that God wrought miracles by the images, and, therefore, that the images were to be honoured and worshipped. The two last of these testimonies (by no means the worst) are thus cited word for word:—

"A certain woman in the region of Apamiæ dug a well; and after she had been to much expense, and gone to a great depth, she found no water, and was sadly dejected, both on account of the labour and of the cost. On one occasion, in her sleep, she saw a person, who said to her, 'Send and bring the image of the Abbot Theodosius, and God gives thee water

<sup>2</sup> Epist. lib. xi. Epist. xiii. vol. i. p. 1100.

through him.' The woman sent two of her men, and received the image of the saint, and it being let down into the well, forthwith and immediately the water came out, so as to fill half the well. They then brought to us of the same water, and we drank and glorified God."

"Dionysius, the elder of the Church of Ascalon, gave us this account of the Abbot John, the anchorite:—"This man was great in his generation, and this wonder is a confirmation of his acceptance with God. The old man lay in a cave in the parts about Socchus, somewhat less than twenty miles from Jerusalem. Now, he had in the cave an image of our holy unpolluted Lady Mary, theotocos, and ever Virgin, holding Christ, our God, in her arms. Whenever, then, he wished to go into distant deserts, or to Jerusalem to worship the holy cross or the holy places, or to Mount Sion to pray, or to the martyrs who were far distant from Jerusalem, (for he was particularly fond of the martyrs; and at one time he would go to the holy John at Ephesus, at another to the holy Theodorus of Euchais, or the holy Thecla of Seleucia, or the holy Sergius at Arapha,) he prepared his candle, and lighted it, as was his custom, and standing and praying that his journey might be directed aright, he said to the Lady, looking at her image, "Holy Lady, theotocos, since I have a long way to go, having before me the journey of many days, take care of your own candle, and keep it from going out, according to my purpose, for I make my journey, having your help for my companion." Having said this to the image, he went his way, and having completed his intended journey, he returned, sometimes after a month, now and then after two or three, and sometimes after five or six, and so he found his candle prepared and lighted, as he had left it when he went on his journey; and he never saw it extinguished of itself, neither when he rose up from sleep, nor when he returned from the desert to his cave.'"



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On this Tarasius exclaimed, "We are now satiated with testimonies from the Fathers; and we know that the setting up of the sacred images is an ancient tradition. We therefore are followers of the holy Fathers." On this Stephen the Monk observes, "We have other volumes in the cause of the holy images, to the number of fifteen. But as you order." "We are full," rejoins the Patriarch, "and are satisfied."

It is surprising to find an assembly, consisting of nearly four hundred Christian bishops and doctors, listening to such trifling fables with eagerness and satisfaction, and grounding on them the truth of the dogmas which they enact, and which they impose on all their fellow-Christians, on pain of incurring "frightful anathemas." Yet on such a foundation rests the doctrine of the worship and adoration of images in the Roman Catholic Church at the present day.

However great our regret to find that decrees, intended to rule the faith and practical religion of Christendom, should be built on such a foundation as that on which the Second Nicene Council raised its superstructure of image-worship, our surprise cannot be less, when we witness the reckless and contemptuous manner in which the same assembly threw overboard, without examination of its merits and weight, any testimony from whatever quarter, alleged as militating against the conclusion to which they had already come before they entered the council-chamber, and which they were resolved to uphold and maintain. If there were any of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, whose evidence on subjects involving the early practice of Christians we should have beforehand expected a council, at the close of the eighth century, to have weighed with more than ordinary patience, and candour, and reverence, Eusebius would certainly be among that number. Instead of this, we find the evidence of that celebrated Father of the Antenicene Church summarily,

and scornfully, and despitefully cast aside, as not only unworthy of consideration, but as unfit to be read, and deserving only the hatred and cursings of the council.

Having speedily despatched some books which pretended to have the superscriptions of the Apostles, the president Tarasius said, "Those who have babbled against the sacred images have brought forward Eusebius for a testimony, in his letter written to Constantia, the wife of Licinius; and let us see of what opinion Eusebius is." Immediately a monk read an extract, all prepared and ready, from a work "of Eusebius to Euphratium," (the Latin translation calls it the eighth book,) in which the words, as they are quoted, deny the co-existence of the Father and the Son. On this, Tarasius asks, "Do we admit this man?"—"God forbid, my Lord!" replied the Council; "let this man be held in greater hatred than the others." The two representatives of the Roman Pontiff Adrian then observed, "This passage shows that he held an Arian view." The narrative adds, "The book of Eusebius thus brought forward contained other blasphemies, which the council would not endure to hear." Tarasius said, "We cast away his writings;" the Council responding, "We both reject them and curse them." The Monk Stephen then read a passage from Antipater, bishop of Bostra, allowing that Eusebius was a most learned man, and had left many writings behind him, some of which were worthy of all acceptation; but charging both him, as the supporter of Origen, and Origen also—the defender and the defended—with heresy, and ending by addressing him as if he were present: "O thou clever advocate of the absurdities of Origen!" On this, Tarasius exclaimed, "The works of Eusebius are proved, even by the voice of a Father, to be foreign from the Catholic Church." Not another word was said, and the Council went on to the next business.

We may, however, observe, that the cause of Christian truth gained this great advantage from the

unjustifiable suppression of the testimony of Eusebius. That Father is here recorded, beyond all gainsaying, to have borne his testimony, clear and irrefutable, against the worship of images in the Church. The Council could not venture to entertain or suggest a suspicion that the testimony was not genuine; and so conclusive was it against them, that they preferred to brand with infamy and to curse as a heretic one of the renowned Fathers of the Christian Church, rather than admit his evidence against their cause, or even suffer it to be read.

For a knowledge, moreover, of this testimony of Eusebius against image-worship, we are indebted to this very Council. In its sixth Act, a book is read, containing the statements, and arguments, and doctrines of the previous Council of Constantinople, together with a running comment on the part of this Second Nicene Council by way of refutation; and among the testimonies cited at Constantinople and rejected here, is this passage of Eusebius. We shall therefore quote it when we examine that Father's evidence.

That this Nicene Council was convened chiefly by the management of the court of Rome, and that all its proceedings were conducted with the view of meeting the wishes of that see, is evident by what we know from its history, and is proved by internal testimony through all its stages; and at the last, as the practical issue, and as if to set a final seal to the whole affair, one of the Pope's representatives proposed to the Council, that "on the morrow a venerable image should be set up, for all the Council to salute it," which was decreed.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XXII.

## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SECOND NICENE COUNCIL.

ITS DECREES RESISTED.



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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VI.

#### *Consequences of the Second Nicene Council. Its Decrees resisted.*

FROM this second Council of Nicæa must be dated the successful triumph of image-worship over the simple, pure, and spiritual service of primitive Christianity. Armed with the authority and the anathemas of this council and with their own, the Bishops of Rome, who had long fostered and headed the party in favour of image-worship against their antagonists, found nothing that could effectually resist the spread of this novelty over Christendom. True it is, that letters ascribed to Charlemagne (denied indeed by some to have been his, yet certainly published in his days) advocated the old religion; and these were thought worthy of being answered by the Pope himself, and were overborne. True it is, that councils and assemblies (whether they be called provincial or national) were assembled at Paris<sup>1</sup>, Frankfort, May-

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Bellarmin (Appendix De Cult. Imag. vol. ii. p. 522) denies to the assembly at Paris, held under Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, the name of a council; and attacks the proceedings of the French divines at that time, chiefly on account of their audacity in examining and judging the acts of him who was the judge of them-



ence, and elsewhere, for the purpose of opposing the prevalence of the new decrees. But the scattered and unorganised maintainers of primitive worship could not long make head in opposition to the phalanx arrayed against them. That phalanx was marshalled and swollen by all the strength of the Roman hierarchy; and, wherever image-worship had already gained a footing, was moreover supported by those establishments to which the miracles said to be wrought by their images brought yearly increasing revenues. And thus the superstition became dominant, with few exceptions, throughout all Christendom.

This innovation having thus struck its roots into almost every portion of the Lord's vineyard, its fruits were soon abundant every where. Our fallen and frail nature, ever inclined to lean and rest on the accommodating but treacherous helps of superstition, rather than on the blessed promises of the "everlasting Gospel," not only received this will-worship of images with acquiescence, but hailed it as a boon. And thus the authority of the Pope, and of the subordinate rulers of the Church, the secular interests of religious bodies and of different Churches, and the ever-recurring inclinations of the unenlightened and unconverted human mind, formed a triple cord too strong for any thing but the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to sever. In our branch of the Catholic Church, it pleased the great Bishop of souls, in His own good time, to effect that blessed work, by restoring in all essentials the pure and simple worship of the primitive Church, by our great Reformation; and we are thankful. But our thankfulness must show itself in un-

selves and of *the whole world!* (that is, Pope Adrian); and concludes a long argument against it by asserting, that, whether the book containing the records of this assembly be true or false, or partly true and partly false, it is not worth the time spent in reading it; and that had the editor looked more to the public good than his own profit, it would not have been published!

remitting vigilance and honest exertions to prevent any return of the superstitions from which we have been rescued; and a recollection of the state of worship, and of the practices among us during the uncurbed prevalence of Romanism, would seem well fitted to keep awake that vigilance, and stimulate us to those exertions.

In these days, however, when not only has the necessity of our Reformation been denied, but its whole nature, and character, and effects have been, with more than usual industry and bitterness, held up to the hatred or contempt and scorn of the world, as unjustifiable, uncharitable, and sinful; and when attempts are unremittingly made to shake the confidence of our own people in the soundness of our creed, and the scriptural and primitive purity and excellence of our worship, it seems necessary to review that state of religion in Christendom at the time of the Reformation, for purifying our branch of the Church Catholic from which those men whose names we have been accustomed to hold in reverential and grateful remembrance, have been branded as heretics, and enemies to the cross of Christ.

Here, therefore, it will not be out of place, if we refer somewhat more at large to the resistance made in our own country to the introduction of image-worship consequent upon the propagation of the decrees of the second Nicene Council. Over various points in the history of those days of gloom and falling back from the pure light of the Gospel towards the practices of paganism, much of doubt and obscurity hangs. The original records, whatever they were, appear to have been destroyed; and it is much more easy for persons of opposite sentiments on the subject before us to make contradictory statements, than to establish their own views by evidence. Still, as to the sorrow, and alarm, and dismay which the enforcement of the doctrine of

image-worship, as an article of faith and discipline, excited in England, the testimony yet preserved leaves no place for reasonable doubt.

Through the first ages of Christianity in these islands, as in the Churches throughout all Christendom, there is no trace to be found of images set up in the churches or elsewhere for adoration. And when, in after days, Augustine the Monk was sent hither from Rome, though he and his companions carried for their banner a silver cross and a picture of Christ, yet there is no mention of any image or picture to be worshipped.

No trace of such worship at that time is found in the books of Bede, though he dwells much on the miraculous workings of the cross. His words are: "But they [Augustine and his companions], endued not with demoniacal but with divine virtue, came bearing a silver cross for their standard, and the image of our Saviour painted on a board; and, singing Litanies, prayed to the Lord for the salvation of themselves and of those on whose account they came<sup>2</sup>." And the same author, when arguing in behalf of the admission of images and pictures, expressly applies their use to the instruction of the more unlearned in those doctrines which others might derive from books.

The reasoning of Spelman<sup>3</sup> seems unanswerable:—"Most sure it is, that, if those first propagators of religion among the Anglo-Saxons had adored the cross and images, and had taught that they were to be worshipped, some mention of it would be found in some contemporary author. But not even Bede himself, among so many miracles of the cross of which he tells, and diversified and fervent devotions of the pious, as far as I know, mentions any one individual who either adored the cross, or an image, or put forth either the one or the other to be worshipped."

<sup>2</sup> See Lib. de temp. Salam. c. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Concil. Brit. A. D. 792.

Roger Hoveden's words are very clear, and are found, with some unimportant variations, in Matthew of Westminster, and others:—

“A. D. 792. Charles, King of the Franks, sent into Britain a synodal book directed to him from Constantinople; in which book (alas, to our grief!) many things were found unbecoming and contrary to the true faith; chiefly that it had been established by the unanimous consent of almost all the Eastern doctors, not less than three hundred bishops, or even more, that images ought to be adored; a thing on which the Church of God looks utterly with execration. Against which Albinus [Aleuin] wrote a letter, wonderfully confirmed by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and carried it, together with the same book, in the name of our bishops and chief men, to the King of the Franks<sup>4</sup>.”

Although there is considerable difficulty in reconciling the dates assigned to the events of this period by different authors, the following seems to be the order least liable to objections, and most consistent with the insulated statements which have been delivered down to us as to the proceedings in England, with regard to images, at the close of the eighth century.

Charlemagne, at that time King of France<sup>5</sup>, had formed a friendship and alliance with Offa, the English King of Mercia; and, on receiving from the East a copy of the decrees of the Second Nicene Council, which he seems at first to have regarded with favour, forwarded them, as a most acceptable present, to Offa, for the instruction and guidance of himself, and his bishops and people. But the royal present met with a very different reception here from what Charlemagne had anticipated. The nobles and

<sup>4</sup> Ed. 1696, p. 233.

<sup>5</sup> See Conc. Mag. Brit. London, 1737, p. 158.

bishops expressed their utter abhorrence of image-worship—this outlandish innovation, as it was called—as a thing to be detested by the Church of God. And the greatest scholar of the age, and most learned in the Scriptures, being no other than Charlemagne's own tutor and preceptor, the renowned Alcuin, wrote a letter himself to his royal master, condemning the decrees of that council, and grounding his condemnation of it on most sure warrant of Holy Scripture; and this letter he presented to Charlemagne in the name of the bishops and nobles of England. Charlemagne, it is said, was so moved by the reasons thus laid before him, that he called the Council of Frankfort, to deliberate on the question; and that assembly, consisting of more than three hundred bishops, condemned the decision of the second Council of Nice, and rejected the worship of images as an unchristian and heathenish innovation. Whatever be the real state of the case as to the councils of Frankfort, Mayence, and Paris (said to have condemned image-worship when first pressed on the Western Churches), it seems quite clear that the tidings of the new decrees filled the nobles and clergy of England with dismay, and met with that resistance which we have above mentioned. But the united and unwearied efforts of the Court of Rome, backed by the temporal accession of wealth which the new doctrine brought to the religious orders, and by the superstitious tendency of unenlightened human nature, prevailed, and bore down all opposition. No arguments from Scripture, or from primitive antiquity, could make head against it; and not long after, in our own land, no less than through the East, images were erected as objects of veneration and worship, not in the churches only and monasteries, but on every high hill, and under every green tree; among the smooth stones of the brook, and on the barren heath; in the solitude, and by the wayside, and in the market, and every place of con-

course. Of the consequences of this foreign innovation, we have, as it has been before intimated, too plain and multiplied proofs in contemporary records.

We have seen, that even in the second Council of Nice, A. D. 787, the admission and the worship of images was sought to be maintained by establishing a belief in the miraculous powers with which the images had been endowed; and this assurance was every where interwoven with the propagation of the doctrine of image-worship, not only by the preaching of monks and the circulation of legends, but by the direct teaching of the Church itself in its authorised services and ordinances.

Instead, then, of images being at that time represented as merely mementos of our Saviour's mercy and our own consequent duty, the very terms employed in consecrating them encouraged and implied the belief that they were thereafter to be endued with power miraculously imparted to them, to ward off or mitigate temporal evils, and to procure or augment temporal good things; to drive away the spiritual enemy of mankind, and promote the salvation of those who were possessed of them. Storm and tempest, floods and scarcity, civil discord and foreign invasion; domestic calamities and personal distress,—in a word, every evil which can befall us in this vale of misery, or as pilgrims in our way to God, were to be either escaped altogether, or at least diminished or more speedily remedied by the intervention of the image, to those who possessed and worshipped it. Of this the records of our own country supply abundant evidence from every quarter. It may be well in this place to bring before our minds a few instances, by way of example.

In the Pontifical Book<sup>6</sup> of Exeter Cathedral, lately

<sup>6</sup> "Liber Pontificalis" of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter, a manuscript of the fourteenth century. Edited by Ralph Barnes, Esq. Exeter, 1847, pp. 224, &c.

published, among many other ordinances of the Church, we find various prescribed forms of consecration. The following passages are extracted from the rites to be observed in dedicating a new cross and a new image of the Virgin Mary:—

“ Let the Bishop bless the water, and with it sprinkle the cross.” Then follow these prayers:—  
 “ We beseech Thee, O Lord, Holy Father Almighty, everlasting God, that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to bless this wood of Thy cross, that it may be a saving remedy to mankind, the confirmation of the faith, the perfecting of good works, and the redemption of souls; a comfort, and safeguard, and defence against the cruel darts of our foes. . . . Let this royal cross be the confirming of faith, the promotion of hope, our defence in adversity, victory against the enemy, concord in the state, our defence in the field, our stay in the house. By the virtue of this cross preserve Thy flock safe, O Lord!” . . . . Then the cross is anointed with chrism, and afterwards fumed with incense, after which the bishop says, “ We humbly beseech Thee, O Lord, that this sign of Thy holy cross may in the Church be a saving remedy, to be continually **ADORED** by all the faithful. . . . Show Thy marvellous loving-kindness by virtue of the holy cross, and grant that, in the places and houses of the faithful where this cross shall be, devils and unclean spirits may be put to flight, and pestilent diseases banished, and all adverse powers and plots of the enemy be repelled by the presence of this cross,” &c. “ Afterwards let the cross be honourably placed, and let it be **ADORED BY ALL**, and first by the bishop; and, whilst **IT IS BEING ADORED**, let this anthem be sung by the choir: “ O cross! more brilliant than all stars! famous in the world! very lovely to men! more holy than all! who alone wast worthy to bear the weight of the world! sweet wood! bearing the sweet nails and sweet burdens, save thou the present congregation assembled to-day for Thy

praises." Then, among other prayers towards the close of the ordinance, is this blessing: "The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, come down and remain upon this cross, that it may be for ever a saving cure to all who **ADORE IT.**"

We cannot refrain from putting these prayers and adorations of a cross side by side with the indignant remonstrance of Dr. Baines, in 1826, to which we have before adverted: "Is it possible," he says, "that any of you" (the mixed congregation in the Roman Catholic chapel at Bradford) "could persuade yourselves that the most ignorant Catholic here present could be capable of **ADORING** the ivory image which you see on that altar?"

The Roman Pontifical, in the order for blessing the cross (published by command of Clement VIII., 1595; and again so lately as 1818), may be left to answer this question: "The bishop having blessed the frankincense, puts it into the censer, and, sprinkling the cross with holy water, fumes it with incense; and then, kneeling before the cross, he devoutly **ADORES** [*adorat*] and kisses it; and thus do all who are so disposed."

And what sort of adoration is intended to be thus offered to the cross is most plainly declared in the same Pontifical, and that is no other, no less holy and divine a worship and adoration, than is offered to the Almighty God Himself, namely, the worship of **LATRIA**. Thus, in the prescribed order for receiving an emperor into a city, the Pontifical directs, that "The emperor, either on horseback, or, what is more correct, dismounting and kneeling on a carpet, kisses the cross. . . . But if it be the Pope's legate that meets the emperor, or enters the city with him, he who bears the sword before the emperor, and another carrying the legate's cross, ought to go together; the legate's cross (inasmuch as **SUPREME DIVINE WOR-**



SHIP is due to it [*latria*]) will be on the right, the emperor's sword on the left<sup>7</sup>."

In the consecration of an image of the blessed Virgin, the prayers and anthems addressed to the Virgin herself are interspersed with prayers to God; and, as in the case of the cross, the image is to be sprinkled with holy water, anointed with chrism, and fumed with incense; and then among other supplications are these:—

"Confirm, O God, our benediction, and sanctify this form of the blessed Virgin Mary, which carries the figure of thy only incarnate Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, so that it may remain blessed, and bring the succour of saving help to thy faithful; that thunders and lightnings, and destructive blasts, if they prevail, may be more speedily driven away; that the flood of rains also, and the interruption of fine weather, or the tumult of civil wars, or the ravages of infidels, may be suppressed at its presence; that the abundance of peace and all safety, and of the fruits of the earth also, may be multiplied wherever the presence of this image may be at hand; not less that the mortality of animals may at thy bidding cease: and may satisfaction be given to all who shall show it reverence, and utter their prayers to Thee before it; and to them, after the course of this life is finished, may the entrance of the heavenly paradise be opened! . . . . Grant that, by the prayers of the same most holy [Virgin], whosoever shall take diligent heed suppliantly to honour the same Queen of Mercy and our most glorious Lady BEFORE THE FACE OF THIS IMAGE, may be rescued from present dangers, and, in the sight of thy Divine Majesty, obtain pardon for what they have committed, and what they have left undone," &c.<sup>8</sup>

When we see such superstitions habitually fostered

<sup>7</sup> Pp. 671, 672.

<sup>8</sup> See also Pontificale Romanum, A. D. 1818, 'part ii. pp. 152, 153.

and propagated, by solemn religious services performed by the chief pastors of the Roman Catholic Church, within the very sanctuary of the house of prayer, we cannot wonder at finding the same superstitions, multiplied and increased in magnitude, possessing themselves of every part of the Lord's heritage; keeping down, and concealing, and choking the pure word of God and the precious doctrines of salvation, and establishing themselves in their place. That word struggled for a time, but was ultimately borne down, till it pleased the Lord of the vineyard, in his own good time, to restore it; when at length He rescued us and our branch of the Holy Catholic Church from the thralldom of Rome. But for ages the results of this superstition were severely felt.

Among the many testimonies, with which our histories abound to the overflow, of the tendencies of this superstition to check and stifle true religion and pure piety, and to take its place, the remarks of Polydore Vergil, who lived in the end of the fifteenth, and the early part of the sixteenth century, deserve much consideration. The work here quoted seems to have been first published A. D. 1499. He is not a person who had taken part against the introduction and worship of images; on the contrary, he speaks in no measured terms of those who would dare to act or even think against the decrees of the Roman Church on that point; and yet, speaking of what took place in his own time—what he witnessed himself, and what was going on when he wrote,—he uses the expressions which we shall now quote. His introductory passages, indeed, would scarcely have prepared us for the practical conclusion: in one half-page he seems to embody and concentrate all the heads of argument that can be urged with Romanists against the worship of images. His opening words are these<sup>9</sup>:—

<sup>9</sup> Polydor. Vergil, *De Invent. Rerum*, lib. vi. c. xiii. (ed. Basiliæ, 1546) p. 425.

“Of the origin of images we have spoken in our second book: here let us speak of their worship; which worship not only persons ignorant of our religion, but, as Jerome beareth witness, almost all the old holy Fathers have condemned, through fear of idolatry, than which there can be no more execrable crime; for since, as John says, ‘no one has seen God at any time,’ what form shall we give to Him? though Moses says, ‘God made man; in the image of God made he him.’ This does Eusebius<sup>1</sup> wisely refer to the soul; while John of Damascus strives to distort the same to the form of the body, when he is pleading the cause of worshipping images of this sort. Yet Moses inculcates nothing more strongly (as is evident from many passages as well of Exodus as Leviticus) than that the people should venerate nothing made with hands. And the prophet says, ‘Confounded be all who adore graven things and boast in their images.’ Saint Gregory, too, reproves Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, (as we read in the Canonical Decrees, and as he himself, in the ninth epistle of the ninth book, testifies,) because he had broken the images; and praises him because he had forbidden them to be worshipped.”

We have said that we should scarcely expect Polydore Vergil’s chapter on images to close as it does. For in his conclusion he says that the worship of them is against Holy Scripture and almost all the Fathers of the Church, and a dangerous step towards idolatry; and yet he asks, “Who is so bold, after the decree of the Church, to refuse compliance with her decrees?” however gross may be the abuses which he himself describes in such strong colours as would be rejected for an exaggeration, or even a fable, had it been stated by one of our own Church. This only adds another to the unnumbered proofs, that, if once a man gives himself over implicitly to the Church of

<sup>1</sup> De Præpar. Evang. lib. ii.

Rome, the Holy Scriptures and the voice of Christian antiquity will plead with him in vain against her most novel or most perilous decrees. The closing portions of this writer (too honest not to confess that Rome now is not what Rome was when the doctrine of Scripture and of the Fathers prevailed, and yet too weak to hold to Scripture and the Fathers against the decrees of a degenerate Church) we must now cite.

Having, as all others do, rested the justification and obligation of the worship of images chiefly on the second Council of Nice, he says:—"Who, then, is so abandoned and possessed of such rashness, as positively to doubt or to dream, not to say entertain a sentiment or a thought on the worship of images different from what has been long ago established by the decree of so many most holy Fathers? Nevertheless, this may most especially be desired, that the priests should more frequently teach the people in what way they ought both to venerate such sort of images and offer their gifts before them; for because they are silent on this point, and are thought to be silent for their own interest, to such a pass of madness have things come, that this part of piety differs little from impiety. For there are very many of the ruder and more stupid class, who worship images of stone, or wood, or marble, or brass, or painted on the walls, and drawn in various colours, not as being signs, but just as though the images themselves had some feeling; and they place more trust in them than in Christ, or in those saints to whom the images are dedicated. Whence it arises, that, heaping folly on folly, they offer to them gold, silver, rings with precious stones, and all kinds of gems, destined to perish there by age. And, in order that so many more may be allured to do so, they who reap such a harvest pierce the pieces of money, and by a thread suspend them hanging on the neck or the hands of the images themselves, and place the donations

honourably in conspicuous places, and affix notifications by which the names of those who offer them may be the more known to gods and men. Thus a good portion of men are induced by these means to be the more foolish; and, moreover, sometimes to complete long journeys for the purpose of visiting one petty image, there leaving their donations, neglecting every other duty, whether of piety or of charity; concluding that they have entirely made a sufficiently bountiful expenditure, and have repented enough, if, for living more luxuriously on their journey, they offer gold, into whatever person's pocket it was afterwards to go. How much more wise, how much more religious would it be, for one to go on his travels with a view to bring the body into subjection by labour, so that it might be compelled to obey reason; and to venerate images, so as that the mind might forthwith be directed to God; and to make presents which might be of service to the poor; since, beyond doubt, those gifts are acceptable to God!"

Such was the melancholy condition of our country, as to the religion of the God of our salvation, who will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, when He was graciously pleased of His mercy, in His own good time, to rescue His Church in this island from such degrading superstitions. We are here told, by a writer in full communion with the Church of Rome, himself a supporter of the decrees for image-worship, what bitter fruits of superstition and impiety these foreign doctrines produced throughout the country; how direct a tendency they had to countenance an undevotional, an uncharitable, and an uncontrite spirit; how vast was the additional peril they introduced of substituting outward acts and prescribed forms, and offerings of temporal goods, in place of obedience, piety, and charity. And if we inquire into what remedies the Council of Trent,

which the Reformation forced upon the court of Rome to convene, prescribed for such monstrous pollutions of primitive truth, we find them trifling, unsubstantial, and unavailing, leaving the real evil in all its strength.

And here it cannot fail to strike any one, even on a cursory view of the rules, and orders, and modifications, restrictions, and cautions, and prohibitions, specifically appended to those decrees, that the evils which we have already contemplated (as the natural fruits of such a superstition) were become crying evils, known to the Council as having given scandal through Christendom, and which no longer admitted of being passed over in silence. Polydore Vergil, for example, tells us, as we have seen, that the priests were negligent in teaching their flocks the true worship of images; that their silence was attributed to the harvest which they reaped from the ignorance and superstition of the people; and that for lucre they condescended to unworthy and base expedients for alluring people to flock to the shrines and bring their offerings. He tells us that the deluded worshippers addressed the images as beings possessed of sense, and put greater trust in the images than in God; that they thought the liberality of their gifts a sufficient satisfaction for self-indulgence and luxurious living even on their pilgrimages, without further thought of penitence and charity; and all this he attributes to the culpable and self-interested silence of the priests, who ought to teach the people better. And what confirmation, or contradiction, or palliation is given to these statements at Trent? To meet these crying evils, the Council prescribes, that, in the worship of images<sup>2</sup>,

“All disgraceful gains be banished.

<sup>2</sup> Session xxv., which began on the 3rd and ended on the 4th of December, 1563.

“That all lascivious wantonness in the forms and ornaments of the images be forbidden.

“That men do not abuse the celebrations of the saints, and the visiting of their relics, for purposes of revellings and drunkenness, as though the feast-days in honour of the saints were to be passed in luxury and lasciviousness.

“That no unwonted image be admitted into any church without the permission of the bishop; nor without the same consent ANY NEW MIRACLES ALLOWED, or any new relics to be received.”

We have had sufficient evidence in what we have seen in the proceedings of the Church of Rome since the days of the Reformation, to show how utterly inoperative, futile, and puerile these enactments were. Even had they been practically and rigidly put into execution, they would have left the original evil untouched; they would have no more conduced to the restoration of the Church of Christ to a sound state in faith and practice, than would the prescriptions of a physician tend to restore his patients to health, who should devote himself to the hiding from the sight some outward marks in the skin, while he left the deadly wound, under which his patients were languishing, unprobed and unhealed. Image-worship is a canker still preying on the very vitals of the Church of Rome; and the body can never be restored to primitive soundness till that canker shall be entirely and utterly eradicated.

We cannot leave this point without adverting to the very unwise, unsound, and unchristian arguments by which Cardinal Bellarmin would persuade us that the supporters of image-worship were approved by Heaven, while its adversaries incurred God's heavy displeasure; and hence, that images were, on Divine authority, to be retained and worshipped in Christian churches. We may first observe, that the last

three of his ten arguments in behalf of images are these:—

8. That the opponents of images were either Jews or Samaritans, or Mahometans, or heretics; whereas those who worshipped images were pious men, such as Popes Gregory and Adrian.

9. That the devil hates images; which Bellarmin proves by telling us, that once, on a hermit's complaining that his evil propensities continued with him to his old age, the devil appeared to him, and pledged himself to depart from him, if the hermit would promise him never to worship the image of the Virgin Mary, which he had in his cell!

This story, quoted in evidence and with approval by Bellarmin, but most deservedly censured by Charlemagne, is twice cited at length in the second Council of Nice. Bellarmin does not refer to his authority; and certainly the records of that Council, in relating the story, abound with sentiments disgusting and shocking, not only to a Christian mind, but to every one who has any regard for the commonest principles of decency and morality. The members of that Council set their seal here to this monstrous tenet, that it is far better for a Christian to give himself to habits of the grossest sensuality, and to be guilty of perjury, than to neglect the worship of images. The story, with very slight variations, is repeated both in the 4th and 5th Acts of that Council, and is ascribed to "the holy Father Sophronius<sup>3</sup>."

"The Abbot Theodorus said:—There was a certain recluse in the Mount of Olives, who struggled much, the devil attacking him by means of fornication. One day, when he pressed him very hard, the old man began to lament and say to the devil, 'How long will you not give up to me? depart from me henceforth; you are growing old with me.' The

<sup>3</sup> Tom. viii. pp. 902. 1031.



devil appeared to him visibly before his eyes, saying, 'Swear to me that you will tell no one what I am about to say, and I will no longer fight with you;' and the old man swore to him thus: 'I swear by Him who dwelleth in the highest, I will not tell any one what you say.' Then said the devil, 'Do not worship this image, and I will no longer fight with you.' Now the image had the likeness of our lady the holy Mary, mother of God, carrying our Lord Jesus Christ. The recluse said to the devil, 'Let be, let me consider of it.' On the following day he communicated with the Abbot Theodorus, and when he came, he related the whole to him. And the old man said to the recluse, 'Verily, father, you were cheated in swearing to the devil; nevertheless, you have done well in telling it. It were better for you not to leave one brothel in this city unfrequented, than refuse to worship our Lord Jesus Christ with his own mother IN THE IMAGE.' The devil then appeared again to the recluse, and said to him, 'What is this, you wicked old man? Did you not swear to me that you would tell no one? and how could you tell it all to him who came to you? I tell you, wicked old man, you will have to be judged as a perjurer in the day of doom.' The recluse answered him, 'What I swore, I swore; and that I forswore myself, I know: but I perjured myself by my Master and Maker; but thee I do not hear.'"

The satisfaction and welcome with which the tale was heard by the members of the Council would probably not prepare the reader to concur in the assertion of Bellarmin, that the supporters of image-worship were good and pious men, and their opponents vile and worthless.

"The most holy Constantine, Bishop of Constantia, in Cyprus, said, 'As golden necklaces, so are godly fathers, agreeing in the worship of images.'"

"John, the reverend monk, a priest, and repre-

sentative of the eastern pontiffs, said, 'The passage of our Father Sophronius intimates another thing, that it is expedient for one who has sworn to forswear himself, rather than keep his oath at all for the destruction of the sacred images.' And this we say since some at this day take refuge in their oath."

Tarasius and others confirm this view. We certainly are not led by these records to form any exalted estimate of the moral and religious standard of these supporters of image-worship. Such, however, are the excesses to which the corruption of the pure worship of the Almighty exposes the promoters of that corruption.

10. The tenth argument urged by Bellarmin in behalf of images, is founded on the misfortunes attending the opponents of images, and the prosperity of those who worshipped them, which he proceeds to establish thus:—

"In the time of Leo, after the images were burnt in Constantinople, a pestilence arose, which carried off three hundred thousand persons in that city. At the same time, Leo lost his imperial power in Italy; and Ezides, king of the Arabians, who had ordered the images of the Christians to be broken, did not survive one year, though thirty years had been promised him by one who incited him to destroy them."

"In the time of Constantine Copronymus unheard-of calamities befel the East. Earthquakes overturned great cities, and killed many thousands. So terrible a pestilence arose, that vineyards, orchards, wells, and other places, were not sufficient for the burial of the dead. And, to take away all doubt as to the cause of these evils, every where, at the same time, there were miraculously imprinted, as if with oil, little crosses on the people's dresses, the sacred veils, and priests' garments; for God willed to show that

He desired the image of the cross to be seen every where, which Constantine desired at that time to obliterate every where. Besides this, so horrible a cold followed, that the Pontus was frozen for a hundred miles, and the ice was thirty cubits thick, on which fell snow twenty cubits high; and then came a thaw, and immense masses of ice, like great mountains or islands, were borne along with great force, and some struck against Constantinople, and overturned part of the walls and the neighbouring houses. And the same year such a drought followed, that the rivers, fountains, and wells were almost all dry; so that all understood and said that all these things took place because of the impiety which the enemies of images showed towards God and his saints. Besides, the Emperor Constantine died in such a manner, as that he exclaimed that, while living, he was delivered to the burning of an inextinguishable fire; whereas Pepin, and his son Charles, who joined the Roman pontiff in defending images, when advanced to their kingdom, lived and reigned most happily<sup>4</sup>."

Such are the statements with which Cardinal Belarmin finishes his defence of image-worship. We cannot but wonder how a man of his reputation could put forward such arguments, which, besides their intrinsic worthlessness, and want of charity, may so easily be retorted on his own Church by those who renounce it, and on Christianity itself by infidels. The ravaging of Christian Italy and the sacking of Christian Rome by the Goths, the taking of Jerusalem by the Saracens, and their victories over the fairest parts of Christendom, the conquest of the Christian Britons by the pagan Saxons, the miseries to which the converted Saxons were subjected by the cruelties of the victorious and pagan Danes, with unnumbered

<sup>4</sup> De Imag. Sanct. vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. xii.

other instances of the triumphs of infidels over Christian states, besides the visitations of earthquakes, and pestilences, and storms, laying waste lands and towns in Christian countries, ought to have taught Bellarmin himself the impiety, and rashness, and uncharitableness, of interpreting the temporal visitations of Providence as denunciations of Heaven against Heaven's enemies, or temporal prosperity and success as proofs of a righteous cause, and of the Almighty's approbation.

Nay, even while this work<sup>5</sup> was in preparation for the press, in the spring of 1847, a circumstance occurred at Bruges far more strikingly connected with image-worship than any of those calamities which Bellarmin and others cite as evidences of God's wrath against individuals who opposed image-worship. The author took much pains to ascertain the facts, and the case was this:—"The Abbé A. Margeedt, curé of the church of the Madelaine at Bruges, born at Haugleden in 1791, was in the very act of elevating the host in the mass, when the head of a statue of the infant Jesus, in the Virgin Mary's arms, being of stone, fell off and struck the head of the priest, who died in consequence three days after."

Now, could any thing be more unwise, unjust, or uncharitable, than for us who condemn image-worship as against the Scriptures and primitive belief and practice, to point to this event as a judicial interposition of Providence, exercised for the very purpose of making known the Divine condemnation of image-worship? But would such a reference of the death of this priest to the Almighty's displeasure be one whit more unwise, more unjust, or more uncharitable, than these wholesale ascriptions by Bellarmin of public and private calamities to the anger of God manifesting itself against the

<sup>5</sup> "Image-worship of the Church of Rome."

opponents of image-worship, by such visitations as the freezing of the Pontus, the subsequent drought, and the painful death of Constantine? Unnumbered instances both of prosperity attending the undeserving, and adversity pressing the most exemplary Christians, all the days of their life, forbid us to take upon ourselves the office of judge, which belongs to Omniscience.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XXIII.

## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VII.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

#### SECTION I.

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE FIRST NICENE  
COUNCIL.



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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VII.

#### *Evidence of the Primitive Church.*

#### SECTION I.

#### *From the Earliest Times to the First Nicene Council.*

It has ever been, and must always continue to be a source of incalculable satisfaction, and strengthening in the faith, and comfort to us, collectively as a Church, and individually to each as one of Christ's fold, to be assured that the principles on which we frame and regulate our own worship of Almighty God are the same with those which, in the ages next to the Apostolic, guided the saints and martyrs and confessors, and the faithful at large as a body, in their devotions; that, when we worship the God of our fathers, though it be after the way which the Church of Rome calls heresy, yet, in very deed and truth, we are treading the path along which the footsteps of the Apostles and of their successors also are visible throughout. It is indeed our satisfaction, and a constant well-spring of thankfulness to the Divine Founder of our faith and hope, to trace those marks of pure and primitive worship in any department of the doctrines and practice of our Church. But in no



one point does the voice of antiquity speak with a more certain sound, than on the subject of our present inquiry; in no one point does it bear more unequivocal witness to the fact, that we of the Church of England have retained the precious trust of the old religion, and that the Church of Rome has embraced an innovation—not a development, as their innovations have of late been called, but a dangerous and unhallowed novelty—never heard of in the Primitive Church except to be condemned, and never suffered to obtain a footing among Christians till the corruptions of Paganism (finding too ready and willing a response in fallen human nature) succeeded in mingling themselves stealthily with the pure and simple institutions of the Gospel, and in bringing down again its spiritual worship to a level with the associations of heathenism.

The transition of heathen converts from a religion in which they had worshipped the fabled gods of their country represented by their idols, to a religion in which, though the objects were changed, the mode of worship was the same (the images of Christ and the Virgin Mother and the saints being substituted for the material forms of their “gods many and lords many”), was a much more easy transition, far less disturbing to their prejudices and habits, than an entire change from the outward adoration of various visible and material objects, to the spiritual worship of one only and invisible God. On the ever fatal principle of doing evil that good may come, instead of persevering in the right course with uncompromising firmness and patience, waiting for God’s good time to bring about his merciful designs in his own way, Christian teachers at length began to yield, and gradually to accommodate the worship of the Church to the wishes of those who were on those terms more ready to adopt it. But these innovations were no sooner attempted in any of the churches, than solemn protests arose against them

on every side; and voices loud and clear were heard in the East and re-echoed from the West, recalling those who had already been misled back to the ancient and primitive worship, and warning the rest of the faithful to resist the temptation, and to remain unshaken in their adherence to the service of Almighty God, as it had been delivered down from the first.

At length, after image-worship had been again and again forbidden and condemned by saints and bishops and councils, it was (as we have already seen) established by the Second Council of Nice, which was opened by the Patriarch of Constantinople in person, and attended by the Roman Pontiff through his two representatives. But even the very Emperor (Constantine V.) in whose name, conjointly with his mother Irene's (who held the reins of government during his minority), the council was held, no sooner came to man's estate, than he professed his adherence to the ancient worship, and set at nought the decrees of that council<sup>1</sup>. We have already adverted to the repeated struggles by which Christian nobles and bishops and kings, in Germany, France, and England, strove to protect their own churches against the enforcement of the papal decrees on this subject. But they were unavailing. The fatal innovation prevailed through the dark ages, gaining strength more and more, till the era of the Reformation.

These observations, however, are only prefatory to our examination of the evidence of the earliest records of the Church, through the first five centuries and more, on the subject of image-worship.

That evidence seems to offer itself to our consideration under three points of view:—

First, The total absence of any intimation that

<sup>1</sup> See Naclantus, vol. i. p. 203.

images were admitted into churches as objects of religious veneration.

Secondly, The full, free, unguarded, and unreserved condemnation of the worship paid by the heathen to images, couched in such universally comprehensive language, together with such reasonings and illustrations, as must have required exceptions to be made, and distinctions and illustrations to be appended, had the writers been aware that images of our Saviour, of the Virgin, of angels, and saints, existed in the churches, or were worshipped by their fellow-Christians.

Thirdly, The positive condemnation of images, as soon as they began to appear, by contemporary teachers and writers, and by councils, as well in the East as in the West.

It now remains for us to state the testimony, whether negative or positive, borne by those writers to whom an appeal must be made when we would ascertain the views, either in doctrine or discipline, of the Primitive Church. For a brief account of each of those witnesses in succession, their character, station, and age, their writings and circumstances, the reader is referred to the volumes entitled "Primitive Christian Worship," and "The Romish Worship of the Virgin;" and to the former Tracts of this Series called "What is Romanism?" As far, however, as relates to the first and purest ages of the Church, the only question will be, whether Christians admitted images of CHRIST, and representations of the BLESSED TRINITY, into their churches, for the purposes of religious veneration and worship; since, saints and angels themselves not being then addressed with any kind of worship or invocation, it would be preposterous to suppose that their images would be set up and worshipped.

<sup>2</sup> See Nos. 6, 7, 12—16; also in the separate volumes, "Primitive Christian Worship," chap. iv.; "Romish Worship of the Virgin," parts iii. and iv.

*Evidence of the Apostolic Fathers.*

In the works of the Apostolic Fathers, Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, we are refreshed with many glowing and elevating passages of instruction, exhortation, and encouragement on the subject of prayer, and of our drawing nigh unto God in full assurance of faith through the mediation of our crucified Redeemer. But there is no allusion to any visible and material representation of that Saviour on earth, before which, as his likeness, we should kneel and offer our supplications and praises, as honouring the image for the sake of the heavenly Original. The following passage from Clement, Bishop of Rome, in his first epistle to the Church at Corinth, will convey a fair notion of the spirit and tone, with regard to Christian worship, which pervades the literary remains of the five apostolic Fathers<sup>3</sup>:—

“This is the way, beloved, in which we find Jesus Christ our salvation, the Chief Priest of our offerings, our protector, and the succourer of our weakness. By Him let us look stedfastly to the heights of heaven; by Him let us behold the most high and spotless face; by Him the eyes of our heart are opened; by Him our ignorant and darkened minds shoot forth into his marvellous light; by Him the Supreme Governor willed that we should taste immortality; who being the brightness of his magnificence, is so much greater than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

Such pure and apostolical and scriptural views contrast strongly and brightly, but yet painfully, with the sentiments of Clement's later successors in the See of Rome; especially with the profession and declaration of Adrian, in his letter to Constantine and Irene, at

<sup>3</sup> Clement, 1st Epist. to Corinth. chap. xxxvi.

the close of the eighth century, just before the Second Nicene Council. That letter abounds with doctrines which Clement could not have recognised as belonging to the faith once delivered to the saints; and on the subject before us, among other sentences, we read these, which Adrian adopts as his own, and which he quotes as the words of St. Basil—words which no more came from the pen of that holy man, than from Clement himself:—

“I confess the holy Mary, who gave Him birth according to the flesh, to be Mother of God; I receive also the holy Apostles, prophets, and martyrs, who offer supplications to God, that, through their mediation, God, who loves man, might be merciful to me, and grant remission of sins. Wherefore also I honour and openly worship the forms, or representations, or spectacles of their images; for this has been delivered down from the holy Apostles, and must not be forbidden; but in all our churches we raise representations of them.”

It is not agreed among learned men, at what precise time the several apostolic Fathers lived; some critics maintaining that they were contemporary with the Apostles, and others assigning to them a considerably later date: all, however, agree that the latest of them lived before the commencement of the fourth century.

*Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150.*

Of this holy man, whose praise has been in the churches from his own time to ours, the evidence on the subject before us is far from being either only negative, or unimportant, or equivocal. So far is he from suggesting any idea that the Christians in his time admitted images of Christ into their places of worship as objects of religious reverence, that, had images then been used, his arguments often would not only have naturally led to some notice of them,

but would have necessarily required an explanation of their use, and a distinction between them and those idols the worship of which he condemns. Whether we examine the noble defences which he made before the emperors and senate of Rome, or his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, we feel it next to an impossibility, either that he should not have anticipated the objection of heathen and Jewish auditors, or that they should not have objected to image-worship as an inconsistency in men, who were ever denouncing it as having originated either in man's ignorance and depravity, or in the suggestion of wicked spirits.

Take, for example, the ninth section of what is now classed as his first defence<sup>4</sup> :—

“ We do not with many sacrifices and wreaths of flowers honour those whom men, bringing into form, and placing in temples, call gods; since we know them to be without spirit and dead, and not to have the form of God (for we do not believe God to have such a form as some say they imitate for his honour), but to have the forms and names of those who have appeared to be evil demons. Why need we say to you who know it, how the artificers dispose of the material, scraping, and cutting, and melting, and beating it? And out of it, and often out of vile vessels, only by their art changing the shape, and giving them a form, they call them gods; which we think not only an unreasonable thing, but done to the insult of God, whose name, though He has a glory and a form unutterable, is thus placed on things corruptible and requiring protection<sup>5</sup>.”

How easily and triumphantly would such a statement and reasoning have been turned against himself by his heathen audience, had Christians then placed the Saviour's name on images of wood or stone, either carved or painted, or of ivory, or metal, and

<sup>4</sup> Paris, 1742, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Apol. i. c. 9.

set them up, and burned incense to them, and fallen down before them!

If we examine Justin's dialogue with Trypho the Jew, our inference from the whole is no less certain, that neither he nor they knew any thing at all of images being used by Christians. How easy and natural, for example, would it have been for Trypho and his companions to reproach Justin (at the close of his dissertation on the brazen serpent) with making images of their own accord without God's special suspension of his own prohibition, by which alone Justin represents Moses as justified in making the brazen serpent!

"Tell me," he says, "was it not God who commanded, through Moses, to make neither image nor likeness of any thing in heaven above, or in the earth beneath? and yet He Himself, in the wilderness, through Moses, caused the brazen serpent to be made; and He fixed it for a sign, by which sign those who were bitten by the serpents were cured, and He was not guilty of iniquity. For by this, as I said, He proclaimed a mystery, by which He preached that He destroyed the power of the serpent which caused Adam's transgression: and He preached to those who believe on Him who by this sign (that is, Him who was about to be crucified,) should save them from the bites of the serpent, namely, evil deeds, idolatries, and other iniquities. Now, if this be not so understood, give me some reason why Moses should set up the brazen serpent for a sign, and bid those who were bitten look upon it, and those who were bitten were cured; and this though he himself had commanded that they should altogether make no likeness of any thing whatever<sup>6</sup>."

We have seen how, in after ages, as soon as image-worship began to grow, the formation of the brazen serpent was alleged in justification both of the

<sup>6</sup> Dial. c. 94.

making and the worshipping of images in the Christian Church. Justin alludes to no religious honour paid to this serpent, and says that the formation of it was only justified by the direct suspension by God Himself of his own universal prohibition.

*Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus.*

Precisely to the same result will a careful study of these three Christian writers lead, who lived towards the latter part of the second century. Their writings chiefly consist of defences of the Christian religion, and exposures of the fallacies and follies of heathenism. They are naturally led to speak much of the fabled deities of the pagan world, and of the images by which they were represented; and, had Christians then made use of images of our Saviour, or worshipped any representations of the Divinity, they would inevitably have been driven to distinguish between heathen worship and their own. In Tatian there are many passages bearing more or less directly on our subject<sup>7</sup>, but we need not dwell on them.

In Athenagoras, among much of similar tendency, these passages deserve to be well weighed<sup>8</sup>.

“In a word we say, Not one of them” (he has enumerated many famous images, such as Venus, the work of Praxiteles, and Æsculapius, from the hand of Phidias) “has escaped being the production of a man. If these are gods, why were they not from the first? Why are they younger than those who made them? What need have they of men and art for their existence? These are stones, and matter, and cunning device.”

“Since then, some say, These indeed are images, but those whose images they are, are gods; and that the supplications with which they approach them,

<sup>7</sup> See chaps. iv. v. vi., &c.

<sup>8</sup> Chaps. xvii. xviii.



and their sacrifices, are referred to those, and are made to those; and that there is no other mode of approaching the gods than this (for the gods are very difficult to be seen openly), and since to prove that this is so, they urge the effectual energies shown by some images; come, let us enquire what power they can have from the names assigned to them."

How strikingly are we here reminded of the arguments put forth by the advocates of image-worship among Christians! From the Second Council of Nice to the Council of Trent, and thence to the present day, the argument has been the same: "We do not worship the image, but the divine Being which the image represents, the original, the prototype." And how solemnly are we assured that the miracles<sup>9</sup> done by the images (merely another word for the "effectual energies" urged by the heathen on Christians in the time of Athenagoras) prove that their worship is sanctioned by heaven! If Athenagoras had been familiar with the use of images in Christian churches, could he, without any exceptions or explanations, have employed such language as this?

If we compare also this passage with a subsequent chapter in the same book, a clear proof is afforded of the futility of the distinction made, both at Nice and at Trent, between the worship given by heathens to their idols, and by Christians to their images—inasmuch as (they say) Christians make their worship pass on to the prototype, and the heathen make theirs rest in the idols. "How comes it (you will say) that some images put forth effectual energies, if they to whom we erect them are not gods; for it is not probable that lifeless and motionless images can have any power of themselves without some one to move them<sup>1</sup>?"

So true is it, that, when Christians leave the sim-

<sup>9</sup> See Bellarmin, vol. ii. book ii. chap. xii.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxiii.

plicity of the Gospel, there is, if any, only a narrow and shallow stream between them and idolatry.

*St. Irenæus, about A.D. 180.*

In the works of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, there appears very little that bears on our immediate subject; but, certainly, whatever reflections may be suggested by his sentiments, not a shadow of any thing like image-worship, or the admission of images into the Christian churches in his time, can be found. On the contrary, if compared with the assertions and doctrines of the advocates of such worship in later times, several passages show that they did not draw their ideas of the image of God, and the cross, and the present reign of the saints with Christ in heaven, from the same fountain with himself. His works are chiefly devoted to the exposure and refutation of errors which had then crept into the Church; and he especially and repeatedly condemns the errors of Marcion and his followers. Now Naclantus and others tell us, that Marcion and his followers were among the first heretics who opposed image-worship in the Church; but we find in Irenæus no allusion to the practice of setting up and venerating images, or to the errors of those who discountenanced such practice. This could scarcely have been so, had the practice been in existence when Irenæus lived.

Instead of arguing that Christians may make images to represent the Almighty, as Cardinal Bellarmine and others argue, Irenæus speaks only of man as made in the image of God, and of that image having been made visible and permanent when the Word of God became flesh<sup>2</sup>. But of any image to represent that Saviour now, he speaks not a word, except to number the possession of such images among the faults of heretics. He speaks again and again of the

<sup>2</sup> Cont. Hæres. lib. v. cap. xvi.

cross of Christ as the instrument by which He saved man from death; but of any visible and material cross, to be set up for the purpose of being worshipped, he says not a word.

Instead of maintaining, as the Council of Trent (condemning those who hold the contrary) maintains, that the souls of the saints are already reigning with Christ, and that their bodies are to be venerated, and their sepulchres and shrines to be frequented for the purpose of obtaining their good offices with the Almighty, Irenæus holds that "the souls of Christ's disciples go to the place assigned to them by God, and there dwell till the resurrection, waiting for the resurrection; then taking again their bodies, and rising wholly, that is, bodily, as also the Lord arose; so will they come into the presence of God."<sup>3</sup>

The passage in which Irenæus speaks of images of Christ as being in the possession of the Carpocratian heretics, and worshipped with the rites of heathenism, is very striking; and it is altogether so identifiable with a passage of Epiphanius to the same effect, that we quote both their testimonies together in this single passage<sup>4</sup> :—

"The Carpocratian heretics (from whom the Gnostics derived their origin) possessed themselves of images representing Christ, some painted in colours, some made of gold or silver, or other materials. These they affirm to be images of our Saviour, made by Pontius Pilate, as resemblances of his person when He lived among men. These images they keep concealed; but they set them up, together with images of philosophers, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and others, and having set them up, they worship them, and perform towards them the heathenish rites of sacrificing to them, and crowning them, with other mysterious ceremonies."

<sup>3</sup> Lib. v. cap. xxxi.

<sup>4</sup> See Irenæus, book i. chap. xxv.; see also Epiphanius, Hær. xxvii. (Cologne, 1682, vol. i. p. 108.)

This we believe to be the earliest mention of any images being possessed, for the purpose of religious worship, by any calling themselves Christians. Both Irenæus and Epiphanius describe the whole affair as the work of heretics. Like the chosen people of old, "they mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay," or "which were a snare unto them." Thus did image-worship derive its origin from heresy; and thus from the first was it inseparably interwoven with the superstitions of heathenism.

*St. Clement of Alexandria, about A. D. 180.*

While Irenæus enables us to infer that in the Western Church, in his day, the use and worship of images was unknown, his contemporary Clement, of Alexandria in Egypt, bears irrefutable testimony, that he knew nothing of such an innovation having corrupted the purity of Christian worship in the Eastern churches. Instead of arguing, with Naclantus, Belarmin, and others, that images of the Deity may lawfully be made and set up and venerated, he maintains, in every varied form of language, that no representation of God can be made, by the art of the carver, the goldsmith, the statuary, the carpenter, or the painter. Passage after passage leaves no room for doubt as to the impossibility of his having written and left these statements without modification, or exceptions, or explanations, had he been aware that, in any part of the Church, his fellow-Christians used the images of saints, or angels, or the Virgin Mother, or our blessed Saviour, or the holy Trinity, in their religious services. A few specimens will be enough.

Having said, "Pythagoras prohibited the practice of engraving images of the gods on rings<sup>5</sup>," he adds,

<sup>5</sup> Strom: lib. v. cap. v.

“just as Moses long before had expressly enacted, that no statue or image must be made, either graven, or molten, or of clay, or painted; that we might not give ourselves to objects of sense, but pass on to objects to be contemplated by the mind. For the familiarity of the sight, always at hand, lessens the majesty of God, and makes it cheap; and to worship the intellectual essence through matter, is to dishonour it through sense<sup>6</sup>.”

In his allegorical interpretation of the cherubim overshadowing the ark of the covenant<sup>7</sup>, so far from supposing, with the advocates of image-worship now, that the people of God were at that time taught to worship those visible objects, he denies that they were intended to represent the forms of holy beings in heaven. In conveying his sentiments on this point, Clement of Alexandria employs these striking expressions:—“Whether by it [the ark] is signified the intellectual world, or God who surrounds and comprehends every thing, and is without form and invisible, let the question be put off for the present; it intimates, however, the repose and rest that is with the glorifying spirits, which spirits the cherubim signify by a figure; for never surely would He who commanded them not to make even a graven image, Himself have shapen an image in the likeness of the holy beings [or the saints].”

*Tertullian, A.D. 190.—Minutius Felix.*

Contemporary with Irenæus in Gaul, and Clement in Alexandria, was Tertullian. We find in his writings no intimation, that the images either of the saints or of Christ, or any representation of the Almighty, were admitted into the Christian Church in his time. And yet it is scarcely possible that, had they been then used, he would have made no

<sup>6</sup> See book vi.

<sup>7</sup> Strom. lib. v. cap. vi.

allusion to it, when he is pursuing the question, as put by the heathen in his time, "If men worship none of these things, what do they worship<sup>8</sup>?"

But he makes no allusion of the kind; nor does he (any more than Clement of Alexandria) make any exceptions or explanations with reference to the veneration of images. Had Tertullian himself used or worshipped images, or had he known of the worship and use of them in the Christian Church, he could not possibly, without any exceptions or reservations, have written passages so condemnatory of the whole system of image-worship as these:—

"Sometime in past ages there was no idol. Before the workers of this monster burst forth, there were only temples and empty buildings, as even to this day in some places the vestiges of antiquity remain. Yet idolatry was carried on, not in the name, but in the deed; for even now it can be carried on outside of a temple, and without an idol. But when the devil introduced into the world framers of statues, and images, and representations of all kind, that rude work of human calamity both derived its name and proceeded from idols; thereafter every act which in any way put forth an idol became the head of idolatry. For it matters not whether the potter forms it, or the engraver cuts it out, or Phrygio weaves it; because it is of no consequence as to its material, whether the idol be formed of gypsum, or by colours, or stone, or brass, or silver, or thread. For since there can be idolatry without an idol, surely, when the idol is present, it matters not of what sort it is, of what material, of what form; let no one think that alone must be considered as an idol which is consecrated in the human form. Here it is necessary to interpret the meaning of the word. *Idos* [εἶδος] in Greek means a figure, from which is drawn the diminutive *idolon* [εἶδωλον], in our lan-

<sup>8</sup> Apologet. chap. xv

guage implying 'a small figure.' Consequently every figure or small figure must be called an idol, and therefore all idolatry is service or servitude about any idol. Hence every maker of an idol is guilty of one and the same crime; unless, forsooth, the people were not guilty of idolatry, because they consecrated for themselves the image of a calf, and not of a man. God forbids an idol to be made, no less than to be worshipped. As much as the making a thing which can be worshipped precedes the worship of it, so much, if it is not lawful to worship it, must the first prohibition be, not to make it. Wherefore, in order to tear up by the roots the matter of idolatry, the divine law proclaims, 'Thou shalt not make an idol;' and, by adding, 'nor the likeness of any thing in heaven, in earth, or in the sea, through the whole world,' He forbade these acts to the servants of God.<sup>9</sup>"

One passage from Tertullian, and another from Minutius Felix, (whose name, therefore, though he lived in the following century, we have joined with Tertullian's in this chapter,) are quoted triumphantly by Bellarmin, in proof that at all events the cross was venerated from the first. We have no doubt the sign of the cross was ever held in veneration by Christians, both before and after the great Apostle of the Gentiles exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" while such veneration is as far removed from that worship of the cross in churches which Bellarmin would establish, as the temple of God is removed from idols. But the passage of Tertullian is very far from bearing the testimony which that writer assigns to it, and the language of Minutius Felix, in answer to the calumny, shall speak for itself.

Bellarmin says, "Tertullian, in his 'Apologetic,'

<sup>9</sup> De Idololat. chap. iii. Tertullian (De Pudic. chap. x.) alludes to a picture, drawn on a communion cup, of a shepherd carrying home a lost sheep.

says, that Christians were called 'worshippers of the cross<sup>1</sup>;' nor does he deny that to be true. Minutius Felix, in his 'Octavius,' answers the Gentiles who objected the adoration of the cross. Nor is it at all inconsistent with this that he says, 'We neither adore, nor wish for the cross;' for he is speaking of prayer properly belonging to God, of which they were accused. Meanwhile, it is evident, from the objection, that the cross was in some way honoured by Christians. But certainly it would never have entered the minds of the Gentiles to object to us the adoration of the cross, unless they had seen that the cross was an object of highest veneration to Christians<sup>2</sup>."

Now it is remarkable, that in the very same passage Tertullian tells us as expressly, that the Christians were accused of worshipping an ass's head; and just as fair would be the conclusion, that, unless the heathen had seen Christians paying some marked honour to the head of an ass, they would never have thought of making the charge. The words of Tertullian are full of sarcasm and irony: "You will not deny that all cattle, and the whole tribe of nags, together with their Epona, are worshipped by you. And perhaps we are found fault with for this reason, because, among the worshippers of all beasts and cattle, we alone are devoted to the ass! Moreover, any one who thinks us worshippers of the cross, shall be our fellow-worshipper whenever a block of wood is propitiated<sup>3</sup>."

Tertullian adds that others, with more humanity and probability, thought that the sun was the god of Christians; and he tells us that, just before, a picture had been put forth with this inscription: "The god of Christians, Onocoetes"—a figure, with the ears of an ass, with one foot hoofed, carrying a book, and wearing a toga. "We laughed," he says, "at both

<sup>1</sup> Religiosos crucis.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. ii. lib. ii. c. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Apol. i. 16.



the name and the figure;" and then he begins a passage of much eloquence with this declaration: "What we worship is the one God."

There is a close resemblance between these passages of Tertullian and some of Minutius Felix, in his interesting work called "Octavius." He records the fact that Christians were accused of regarding the head of an ass as a divinity; with worshipping a guilty man and his cross; with being initiated by the murder and the blood of an infant: with adopting other objects of religious worship not to be named. The same reasoning which would argue from these charges, that the Christians must have worshipped the cross, would establish with equal certainty that there was a foundation in fact for the rest. As to the charge more immediately connected with our subject, his words are these: "Whereas you assign for our religion a guilty man and his cross, you wander far from the neighbourhood of truth, who suppose that either a guilty man deserved to be, or an earthly man could be believed to be God;" and then he says distinctly, "Crosses, moreover, we neither worship, nor wish for. You, perhaps [the heathen], who consecrate wooden gods, adore wooden crosses as parts of your gods<sup>4</sup>."

To say that Minutius Felix is here speaking of the supreme worship due only to the Almighty, and not of that relative and transitive worship which is due to images of the Saviour and the cross, is to put forth a groundless and gratuitous assumption. The subtleties and refined distinctions which Cardinal Belarmin attempts to make, had no existence in the time of Minutius Felix, nor for many centuries after. He says, "you charge us with religiously venerating the cross. I answer, we neither worship crosses, nor wish for them."

<sup>4</sup> Octavius, chaps. xxviii. xxix.

*Origen, A.D. 230.*

Before the death of Tertullian, flourished Origen, one of the most celebrated lights of the Primitive Church, bred up in the faith of the Gospel, and, as ancient records say, himself the son of a Christian martyr. In his voluminous works, testimony, clear and abundant, is borne not only against the prevalence of image-worship in his day, but also against the lawfulness of Christians making or using any statues, images, or pictures whatsoever. Origen repeatedly speaks of the mercy-seat, and the cherubim overshadowing it; but he is far from intimating that they were objects of religious worship to the Israelites under the elder covenant.

A passage, to which we have already adverted, not only shows that the sweeping and universal distinction, drawn by the Council of Trent itself, and by the maintainers of image-worship, between the heathen worshipping their idols as gods, and Christians worshipping images as representatives of the original beings whose names they bear, is altogether inconsistent with the facts of the case; but it also proves clearly that, in Origen's time, the most unenlightened among Christians, by abstaining altogether from the use of such works of the craftsman for religious purposes, were, in his opinion, far more advanced in true spiritual wisdom than those heathen who declared that, though they worshipped at or before the image, the image was not the object of their worship, but merely the representation of an unseen being. Could he have ventured on such a statement as the following, when arguing against the impugnors of our holy faith, if Christians had in his day made any religious use whatever of images?

“Celsus says, that others [Christians] are most uninstructed, and slaves, and unlearned; because, I presume, they are not acquainted with his ordinances,

nor educated in the learning of the Greeks: but we say that those are most uninstructed who are not ashamed to address lifeless objects; for health calling upon that which is weak; for life asking that which is dead; for succour imploring that which is most helpless. And though some say, These are not their gods, but imitations of the true [gods], and their symbols; not one whit less are these uninstructed, and slaves, and unlearned, who imagine that there can be in the hands of artificers imitations of the Godhead. The very lowest among us are far removed from such ignorance and want of instruction<sup>5</sup>.”

Again and again Origen says<sup>6</sup>, that the only images of the invisible and eternal God are, first, the Word, his blessed Son: and in a secondary degree, the soul of man filled with truth and holiness, originally created after the likeness of his Creator. Of all other images, whether they be called idols, or images, or statues, or paintings—of whatever materials, and with whatever skill fabricated—whether of the supreme God or of inferior beings, he speaks, without exception, in terms of abhorrence and contempt. Indeed the Roman Catholic editor of his works, Delarue<sup>7</sup>, (the edition, let it be especially observed, being dedicated to the Pope,) confesses that Origen (with others) not only affirms that images are vain, and that no image of God ought to be attempted, but also that the laws prohibiting the Jews from making any images are binding on Christians. No one who reads his works can come to a

<sup>5</sup> Cont. Cels. lib. vi. 14.

<sup>6</sup> *E. g.* Cont. Cels. iv. 85, viii. 66.

<sup>7</sup> See Cont. Cels. lib. viii. cap. xvii. Delarue, in the same note, refers to some authors to show that there was some approved use of images in the first centuries. We shall not omit an examination of the passages to which he points, when we review the authors in which they are said to exist; but for the passage which he quotes from Tertullian, whom we have already examined, we search in vain.

different conclusion: we must here, however, limit our quotations to a very few passages.

“To these [objections of Celsus<sup>8</sup>] we reply, that those persons are sitting and fixed in darkness who look to the vile arts of painters, statuaries, and image-makers, and are not willing to look upwards and to mount in their mind from visible things and all objects of sense to the Creator of all, who is the Light; and that every one is in the light who follows the rays of the Word, which shows from what ignorance and impiety, and want of knowledge as to the Divine nature, those objects are worshipped instead of God, and which leads the mind of one who desires to be saved, to God, who is uncreated and is above all.”

In another passage, referring to those who prided themselves upon their knowledge of divine things derived from philosophy, he speaks thus: “God, seeing the arrogance and the supercilious contempt towards others of those who thought greatly of themselves, their knowledge of God, and their having derived from philosophy an acquaintance with divine things, and yet, equally with the most illiterate, had recourse to images, and their shrines, and their boasted mysteries, chose the small things of the world, the most simple among Christians, (living a more sober and pure life than many philosophers,) in order that He might put the wise to the blush—men who are not ashamed to address lifeless things as gods, or as images of gods. For what sensible person would not laugh at a man, who, after such and so many philosophical dissertations on God or gods, looks to images, and either offers up his prayer to them, or BEHOLDING THEM REFERS IT TO THE BEING CONTEMPLATED IN HIS MIND, to whom he fancies that he ought to ascend from that which is seen, and which is the symbol of him?” “But the Christian, even the unlearned, is persuaded that every place of the

<sup>8</sup> Cont. Cels. lib. vi. cap. lxvi.

world is a part of the whole, the whole world being God's temple; and in every place praying, closing the eyes of sense, and lifting up those of the soul, mounts up beyond the whole world; and does not stop even at the arch of heaven, but in his soul rising into the place above the heavens, led by the Spirit of God, and being as it were beyond the world, sends up his prayers to God; and that, not for every sort of gifts whatever, (for he has learned from Jesus not to seek for any trifling thing, that is, any object of sense,) but only for those great and divine objects which, being given by God, tend to lead to the happiness which is with Him, through his Son, the Word, who is God<sup>9</sup>."

The views professed by the advocates of image-worship in these latter days are identifiable with those which Origen records as the views put forth by his heathen contemporaries in their defence of idol-worship.

His arguments against those who, though they acknowledged their images not to be gods, yet, to the great peril of others, less enlightened, allowed themselves to be seen praying to them, apply, with a force that comes quite home to those who even now, though they declare "an image to be a lifeless lump of matter," yet in the face of the people pray before the images of our Saviour, the Virgin, and saints, and to the outward eye appear at least to be praying to the images. The great scandal and spiritual danger which Origen represents as inseparable from such practices among the heathen, are at least equally interwoven with modern practices in the Church of Rome. Human nature is the same; and the same causes must be expected to work the same effects; and the worship of the Almighty is of too holy and pure and delicate a nature to admit of such risks as those to which the advocates of image-worship ex-

<sup>9</sup> Cont. Cels. lib. vii. cap. xliv.

pose their fellow-worshippers, however subtle and refined the fancied distinctions may be, behind which they would shelter their innovations from the condemnation of God's word, or the voice of the Primitive Church. "It is not only foolish," says Origen, "to pray to images, but also for any one to be carried away by the many to pretend to worship images . . . for there ought to be nothing but what is genuine in the soul of one who is truly pious towards the Divinity. But we also for this reason, do not honour images, that we may not (as far as in us lies) fall into the notion that images are other gods. On this ground we blame Celsus, and all who acknowledge that these are not gods, because the honour shown by them to the image appears to be paid by wise men: and the body of the people follow their example, not only in being carried away to think they ought to worship them, but also in falling into the belief that they are gods, and in not enduring to hear it said that the images are not gods which are worshipped by them<sup>1</sup>."

The passage to which (as we have already observed) M. Delarue, the Roman Catholic editor of Origen, appends his confession that the evidence of Origen is altogether, throughout, and in all points, directly contrary to the worship or use of images in the Christian Church, is very beautiful. In it Origen says that the only images made by a Christian are the imitations framed in his heart of the excellences and virtues of his Saviour, the image of his Creator; images, he says, they are, such as the Supreme God desires<sup>2</sup>.

*St. Cyprian, A.D. 258.*

Referring the reader to our Inquiry as to the Invocation of Saints<sup>3</sup>, for the glowing sentiments of

<sup>1</sup> Cont. Cels. lib. vii. cap. lxxv.

<sup>2</sup> Cont. Cels. lib. viii. cap. xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Primitive Christian Worship, p. 162.

this holy martyr on the subject of a Christian's prayer, and of his hope in death, we have little to add here as to Cyprian's testimony on the worship of images. No advocate for that worship appears to have ever referred to his works as containing one expression in its favour: certainly all his evidence is directly against it. Like those who preceded him from the time of the Apostles, and like those who for three centuries or more followed him, he knew not of such a practice in the Church; and we can expect from such persons no allusion to it. But in his writings many passages assure us, that, had he known and approved of such doctrines and practices, he could never have written as he has done on the worship of heathen images, without any modification or exception in favour of the images used and worshipped by Christians. Had he, for example, regarded it as the doctrine of Christ, that, according to the decree of Trent, the disciple of the Gospel should kneel down and bend himself, as the practice now is, before any image whatever, could St. Cyprian have written thus, even when dissuading a man from worshipping his pagan gods<sup>4</sup>?

“Why do you humble yourself and bow down to false gods? Why do you bend your body, as captive, before foolish images and figments of earth? God made you upright; and whilst other animals look downwards, and are bent down (their formation verging towards the earth), your form is erect, and your countenance is lifted above, up to heaven and to God. Thither look; thither lift up your eyes; seek God in the places on high. That you may be delivered from things below, lift up your breath, raised to high and heavenly things.”

<sup>4</sup> Ad Demetrianum.

*Gregory Thaumaturgus—Methodius—Lactantius—  
Arnobius, A. D. 300.*

We are not aware that any passage in the genuine works of Gregory Thaumaturgus, or Methodius, has been appealed to in proof of the existence and worship of images in their time. The evidence of Lactantius, strong, clear, and conclusive against the supposition that images of any description were regarded as objects of reverence when he lived, has been already quoted, when we showed that the distinction made by the Council of Trent, between the worship offered to idols by the heathen of old, and to images by the Roman Church now, was entirely the creature of the imagination, and not founded in fact. Indeed, so free is Lactantius from any of those superstitions, whether in the adoration of the Virgin Mary and of saints and angels, or in the worship of images, and so strongly do his words tell against them, that some Roman Catholic writers speak of him disparagingly, as one who was more familiarly versed in Cicero than in the Holy Scriptures. He was, indeed, well acquainted with classical literature; but he made all his learning bear upon the religion of Christ—he “drew all his studies this way<sup>5</sup>.” The testimony of Lactantius brings us beyond the close of the third century.

Lactantius was himself the pupil of Arnobius<sup>6</sup>, the African, who wrote a voluminous work against the superstitions of heathenism. On the subject before us the expressions of Arnobius are strong and clear, and

<sup>5</sup> We must observe here, that the poem called “*De Passione Domini*,” in which occurs a line referred to, not by Bellarmin only, but even in the Catechism of the Council of Trent,

“Bend the knee, and adore the venerable wood of the cross”—is confessedly spurious, “the work of an uncertain author, not of Lactantius.”

<sup>6</sup> Leips. 1816.



are as utterly irreconcilable with any idea of images being employed by Christians in their worship in his time, as they are with the vainly attempted distinction between the worship of images by Christians, and of idols by the heathen. We will only cite two passages, each in his sixth book:—

“Ye say, ‘We worship the gods through the images.’ What then? If these images did not exist, would the gods not know that they were worshipped, nor suppose any honour to be paid to them by you? It is then through certain byways, and through certain trusts (as we say), they take and receive your acts of worship; and before those to whom that service is due are sensible of it, you, having first sacrificed to the images, authoritatively send to them what belongs to another, certain leavings as it were. And what can be done more unjust, more disrespectful, more severe, than to recognise one as a god, and offer your supplication to another thing—to hope for help from a divine being, and pray to an image which has no sense? I ask, Is it any thing else, than, according to the common proverb, to beat the carpenter when you would strike the fuller? and when you seek counsel of a man, to ask from asses and pigs their sentiments on what should be done?’”—“But ye say, ‘You are mistaken and are in error; for we do not consider materials of brass, or silver, or gold, or other things of which the statues are made, to be *of themselves* gods and sacred divinities; but in these materials we worship and venerate those gods whom the holy dedication brings in, and causes to dwell in the images wrought by the craftsman.’ No bad or contemptible reason, by which any one, whether dull or most wise, could believe that the gods, leaving their own abode, that is, heaven, do not refuse nor avoid to enter into little earthly habitations! nay, moreover, that by the rite of dedication they are

compelled to acquiesce in an union with images! Do your gods take up their abode and dwell in gypsum and tiles? nay, are your gods the minds, and spirits, and souls of tiles and gypsum? and do they, in order that the vilest things may become more sacred, suffer themselves to be shut up, and lie hidden within the restraint of an obscure dwelling<sup>s</sup>?”

Throughout, Arnobius, in a vein of extraordinary irony, presses home on the heathen the absurdities and inconsistencies involved in the use of images, as channels by which to approach the original super-human being. And almost every sentence bears with equal force against the use of images by Christians. When, for example, we read the following passage, we are irresistibly led to think of the thousands of the fabled miraculous images of the Virgin Mary worshipped throughout the world:

“Let us suppose that there are ten thousand images of Vulcan in the whole world: Is it competent for one person to be in those ten thousand at one time?”

*Eusebius, A. D. 314.*

To the testimony of this ancient and renowned Father, bearing decidedly and confessedly against the worship and use of images in the Christian Church, our attention has been already drawn, in consequence of the scornful and summary condemnation of him on the charge of heresy, by the Second Council of Nice, and the resolution of that Council by acclamation not to allow his opinions on the subject even to be read.

We have already intimated, that for a copy of the letter which contains the chief evidence of Eusebius against image-worship, we are indebted to the records

of the Second Nicene Council; and since, in quoting it, they do not dispute its genuineness, but only cast it unceremoniously aside as the testimony of a learned man who had fallen into great errors, we insert it here, as the indisputable production of that celebrated man.

“In the same manner, also, Eusebius, the son of Pamphilus, speaks thus to Constantia Augusta, who had requested that an image of Christ might be sent by him to her:—‘But since you have written about some image, as it were of Christ, wishing that image to be sent to you by us, what and what sort of an image is that which you call an image of Christ? Is it the True and Unchangeable, bearing his natural characteristic features? or that which He took upon Himself, clothing Himself with the form of a servant? Concerning, however, the form of God, I do not myself think that you are inquiring; since you were once for all taught by Him that no one knoweth the Father but the Son, nor can any one form a worthy knowledge of the Son except the Father only who begat Him.’ And then a little after: ‘But surely you must, at all events, be inquiring for the image of the “Form of a servant,” and of the flesh with which He was clothed for our sakes. But we have learned that this was mingled with the glory of the Godhead, and that the mortal was swallowed up by the life.’ And a little after: ‘Who then would be able to engrave with dead and lifeless colours, and lights and shades, the brilliant and blazing splendours of such dignity and glory, whereas not even the divine disciples could endure to look on Him upon the mount, but fell upon their faces, confessing that what they saw was more than they could bear? If then at that time his incarnate form was changed by the Godhead dwelling in it, what must we say, when having put off this mortality, and washed off the corruption, he changed the appearance of the form of a servant, to the glory of the Lord and God after his victory over death,

after his return to heaven, after his sitting on the royal throne at the right hand of the Father, after his rest in the indescribable and ineffable bosom of his Father? To which when He mounted and was restored, the powers of heaven praised Him, saying, Ye princes, lift up your gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!<sup>9</sup>”

We cannot wonder at men, determined to establish image-worship at any cost, resolving to reject such evidence as this. And here we might have left the evidence of this great father of the Christian Church. The advocates (unhappily for Christian truth, the successful enactors) of the worship of images being judges, the testimony of Eusebius is altogether against them. But since subsequent and modern defenders of that worship have cited him as a witness of the early existence of images in the Church, we must refer to that fact which he records, and for which he is cited. His own comment on that fact would, we should have thought, in the judgment of the large majority of those who think and reason on similar points, have induced the advocates of the veneration of images by CHRISTIANS, instead of triumphantly appealing to it, either, like the Second Council of Nicæa, to reject his evidence altogether, or at least to explain what he says; for, as it sounds to us, he accounts for the image of our Saviour being placed where he says it was seen in his day, on the ground that they were heathens and idolaters who placed it there.

He tells us that there were in Cæsarea two statues in brass, which, they say, were [almost three hundred years before] put up before her door by the woman whom our blessed Lord restored—the one statue representing a man stretching his hand toward the woman, the other a woman on her knees looking

<sup>9</sup> 6th Act, vol. vii. p. 505.

to the man. He says, too, that an herb growing up to the folds of the vestment cured all sorts of diseases. And he undoubtedly seems to think it not improbable, that a Gentile so relieved should have put up such a monument of her recovery. But what support can the Christian worshipper of images derive from that fact, when Eusebius himself adds this reflection? We quote his very words: "And it is no wonder that those of old among the Gentiles, being benefited by our Saviour, made these things. We have heard of likenesses of Paul and Peter, and of Christ Himself, preserved in pictures; the ancients naturally in this way being accustomed to honour them as Saviours, ACCORDING TO THE HEATHEN CUSTOM prevailing among men<sup>1</sup>."

Granting, then, that the words mean (what few scholars will, without hesitation, pronounce them to mean), that Eusebius saw the statues himself, yet he ascribes the very erection of them to principles of heathenism.

The end of these statues is remarkable. That two statues were there in the time of Eusebius, there can be no reasonable question; though that they were (*as they told him*) put up by the woman miraculously cured by Christ three centuries before, we have every reason to doubt. History says, that Julian had them removed to put his own statue in their place, and that the people broke them to pieces; but that the Christians gathered the fragments together, and laid them up in the church. This has been represented as a proof that images were then<sup>2</sup>, at least, admitted into the church; but an equally credible account tells, that these fragments were (not put together and placed in the church as a statue, but) put into the vestry, and preserved with due care, but by no means religiously revered or worshipped<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Hist. vii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Bellarmin, tom. ii. lib. ii. c. ix.

<sup>3</sup> Sozomen, lib. v. cap. xxii. Philostorgius, lib. vii. cap. iii.

We need no further evidence of Eusebius; yet we must remind the reader, that, on the subject before us there is much matter of lively interest to be found in his works. In that part of his "*Præparatio Evangelica*,<sup>4</sup>" where he tells us that for one hundred and seventy years from the foundation of the city, no image, whether of statuary or painting, of any god, was allowed in ancient Rome, there are many facts and sentiments, bearing on our subject, well worthy of the perusal of a Christian classical scholar. In other parts of his labours, much appears which could not have come from the pen of any Christian who was conscious that in the Christian Church images of gold, and silver, and ivory, and painting, were used in the service of the Lord. We would, as a specimen, cite one. Eusebius having quoted a passage of Porphyry setting forth how the gods had been represented by images of gold and ivory, and Parian marble of exquisite workmanship, comments upon the passage thus: "These are the assertions of Porphyry, than which what can be more disgraceful to men, who speak of base things in dignified language? And what can be more forced and violent, than that lifeless materials, gold and silver, and the like, should bear the likeness of the light of the gods, and to say that they are the representations of a heavenly and ethereal nature?" We cannot advert to the next sentence, without feeling how closely applicable to our own judgment on the faith and practice of the Church of Rome, is the sentiment of Eusebius as to those whom he calls the moderns among the idolaters, when he tells us, "These are fallacies of the moderns; the ancients never even thought of such things in their dreams<sup>5</sup>!"

<sup>4</sup> *Præp. Evan.* ix. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Præp. Evan.* iii. 7.

*St. Athanasius, A. D. 340<sup>6</sup>.*

To the evidence also of this renowned champion of the true faith our attention has already been drawn by the proceedings of the Second Council of Nice, though the indignity put upon him was indeed very different from that which was shown to the memory of Eusebius. The members would not suffer the evidence of Eusebius against image-worship to be read, because they charged him with heresy: they cited, as the production of Athanasius, a work which bears on its very forehead the stamp of its spurious origin. Here, as on other occasions, we have the painful task of stating, that though, in his controversial works, Cardinal Bellarmin cites this paper as the genuine work of Athanasius<sup>7</sup>, yet, in his work on ecclesiastical writers<sup>8</sup>, which appeared subsequently, he tells us, that, though this work was cited entire, as the work of Athanasius, in the Second-Nicene Council, yet it was not his, but a work of much more recent date! This view he confirms by citing Sigebert, who says, "This miracle took place A. D. 766; namely, at that time, when the question as to the worship of images was agitated. For God willed by this miracle to confound the heretical Iconoclasts." This criticism of Bellarmin not only reflects on himself for quoting as evidence what he elsewhere pronounces to be spurious, but on the Second Nicene Council, who, within about twenty years of the date of the supposed miracle, fathers on St. Athanasius an offspring which confessedly, according to this statement, could not have existed till at least four centuries after his time. Bellarmin, though he refers in some cases from his later work to the earlier, yet here takes no notice of his former error, but leaves it to remain just as though his views were the same. It

<sup>6</sup> Athanasius, Opera. Patav. 1777. <sup>7</sup> Lib. ii. cap. xii. <sup>8</sup> p. 51.

is also observable, that, though the Pope very lately<sup>9</sup> caused Bellarmin's works to be reprinted from the Vatican press, this work of his, which contradicts his former treatises in many points, is not suffered to appear again. The Benedictine editor's judgment is couched in these strong terms: "That this little work is not the work of Athanasius, but of some unskilful and ineloquent person, there is no learned man who will not decide; consequently we need not spend our time in proving it<sup>1</sup>." The story is told in various ways, scarcely any two versions of it being alike; but the general outline is this:—

In the city of Beryte lived a Christian, in a very small dwelling, where he had a picture of our Saviour hanging against the wall. Wishing to remove into a larger dwelling, he left this chamber, taking all his goods and chattels with him; but, AS PROVIDENCE ORDERED IT, he forgot the portrait of our Lord. Jews abounded in that city, and one of them took the dwelling which the Christian had left; but he never noticed the picture, till one day a brother Jew, whom he had invited to dine with him, in the midst of their dinner saw the picture against the wall, and remonstrated with his host, who declared he had never seen it. But the guest reported the fact to the chief-priests, who, with the elders and a crowd of Jews, rushed into the house, and, having expelled the man from the house and from the synagogue, proceeded to show all the same indignities to the image which their fathers had shown to our Saviour. On their piercing his side with a spear, blood and water gushed out, with which they filled a vessel; and being determined to try whether it could work the same miracles which Christ had wrought, they applied it to multitudes who were diseased, and all were immediately healed. Then they changed their minds, and declared themselves Christians, making the profession

<sup>9</sup> A. D. 1832—1840.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 288.



of their faith in the several articles most minutely; and going to the bishop, implored him to baptize them, to convert their chief synagogue into a Christian church, and the other synagogues into shrines of the martyrs. The bishop then ordained from among them priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and readers; and thus was there great joy in that city.

This is the outline of the story read in the Second Nicene Council as the work of St. Athanasius; at the conclusion of which Constantine, a bishop of Cyprus, exclaimed, "Behold! he who derives his name from immortality<sup>2</sup> has caused this assembly to be affected, and to shed tears, since he has not only acknowledged them [the images] to be venerable, but also to have wrought cures."

It was on this occasion that the Patriarch Tarasius anticipated any such objection to the story as might arise from the fact, that images did not in the time of that Council work miracles. "Should any one ask the reason why images in our time do not work miracles, we answer, that, as the Apostle says, signs are for those who believe not, and not for those who believe. Thus, those who then approached the image were unbelievers<sup>3</sup>."

It is, however, remarkable, that the miracles said in subsequent ages to have been wrought by an image, were almost always in the midst of those who were already believers in its miraculous powers, and not among those who rejected them.

Another work<sup>4</sup> has been cited, as from the pen of Athanasius, in which our Lord is represented to have held a conversation with his mourning Church, as she lamented on account of his image left her by the Apostles, and to have comforted her by an assurance, that, whosoever should deny his unpolluted image, He would deny that man before his Father

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius in Greek means *immortal*.

<sup>3</sup> Act iv.

<sup>4</sup> De Sanctis Patribus et Prophetis.

and the angels<sup>5</sup>. There is no such work from the pen of St. Athanasius. It is evidently one of those very many writings which, as the Benedictine editor tells us, "were falsely, and with impunity, attributed to Athanasius in those ages which were most favourable to fraud; but, on the revival of literature, were discarded<sup>6</sup>."

In the genuine works of St. Athanasius not one word can be found to countenance the idea that images were in use in the Christian Church in his day; while, like the productions of his predecessors, his works contain abundant intimations to the contrary.

The language in which he speaks of the folly and preposterous absurdity of living and rational men falling down before the senseless and lifeless images of their gods, is wonderfully applicable to the practice now observed in the Romish Church, of falling down before senseless and lifeless images of saints and the Holy Virgin and our blessed Lord. Even were the laboured distinction between idols and images as well founded in reality as it is fanciful and vain, Athanasius' words would not on that account be less cogent on the subject before us:—

"In worshipping stones and wood, they do not see that similar things they tread under foot and burn, while parts of these they address as gods; and what a little before they put to common use, that, in their folly, having cut it into shape, they reverence; not seeing nor considering at all that they are worshipping not gods, but the art of the carver. For as long as the stone is unhewn and the material unwrought, so long they tread them under foot, and use them for their own purposes, often of the most dishonourable kind; but as soon as the artist has applied to them the rules of his own science, and given to the material the form of a man or woman, then they acknow-

<sup>5</sup> See Bishop Jewell, Article XIV.

<sup>6</sup> Preface to vol. ii. p. iv.

ledge their obligations to the artist, and thereafter worship as God what they purchased of the statuary. And often, too, the image-maker himself, as if forgetting what he himself made, prays to his own works: things which a little before he was scraping and cutting, after exercising his skill on them, he addresses as gods. But if these things must be admired, the right course would be to praise the skill of the artist, and not to set a higher value on what he fabricated than on the maker himself; for it was not the material that adorned and deified his art, but his art the material. It were then far more reasonable for them to worship the artist rather than his work, as well because he preceded in existence the gods which were produced by his art, as because, just as he willed it, so they came into being. But now, setting justice aside, and dishonouring science and art, they worship what was produced by science and art; and when the mortal who made them is dead, they honour as immortal beings what was made by him,—things which, without meeting with daily attention, in time disappear by their own natural decay. And how can any one refuse to pity such men, because they who themselves enjoy sight, worship things which see not; themselves possessed of hearing, they pray to things that hear not; and men who by nature are endued with life and reason, address as gods those who do not so much as move, and are also lifeless; and what is most marvellous, the beings whom they guard and keep under their control they themselves serve as their masters? And let no one suppose I am saying this at random, or charging them falsely; for the proof of these things meets our very eyes, and whoever will may witness the like<sup>7</sup>.”

In another passage, substituting the saints and the blessed Virgin for the secondary gods or ambassadors, or angels and messengers, invoked by the hea-

then as intercessors and mediators with the Supreme Being, we might apply the reproofs of Athanasius directly to the worshippers of angels and saints and the Virgin, and their images, now. Every sentence reminds us either of those excuses in the Roman Church which apologise for the use of images as being unlearned men's books, or else of those doctrines which encourage the believer who is afraid to present his suit immediately to our heavenly Father, to apply to Him through created intercessors and mediators:—"You were afraid," says the Romanist, "to approach the Father, frightened by only hearing of Him. He gave you Jesus for a Mediator, but perhaps even in Him you fear the Divine Majesty. You wish to have an advocate even with Him; betake yourself to Mary<sup>8</sup>." Identifiable with this, St. Athanasius describes to us a state of feeling among the pagans, with whom he thus remonstrates<sup>9</sup>:—

"With regard to their more profound apology, any one might properly answer them: If it is not for the manifestation of the Deity himself, O Greeks! that these things are fabricated by you, but for the presence of angels [or messengers], then why do you make the images through whom ye invoke those powers superior and above the very powers invoked? For though ye carve the forms, as ye say, for the sake of gaining a notion concerning God, ye invest those very images with the honour and with the address of God himself, and that under the influence of no pious feeling. For while you confess that the power of the Deity far exceeds the insignificance of the images, and, on this account, do not dare through them to call upon God, but only on the inferior powers, you yourselves, passing over them [the inferior powers], apply to stones and wood the address of that Being whose presence ye fear, and

<sup>8</sup> Gabriel Biel, Lect. xxxii. on the Canon of the Mass.

<sup>9</sup> Cont. Gent. cap. xxi.

call them gods, instead of stones and man's device, and you worship them. If, as you falsely pretend, these are as letters teaching you the knowledge of God, it is not fair to honour the sign above the thing signified. . . . . If you possessed sound reason, you would not devolve on matter so important a mark of the Godhead; nay, you would not prefer the sculptured image to the man who sculptured it. For even if, like letters, they did altogether convey the manifestation of God, and thus, as signifying God, were worthy of deification, at all events the man who carved and sculptured them (I repeat it, the artist) ought much more to be deified, as being far more powerful and divine than they, inasmuch as they were put forth and shaped according to his will. If, then, the writings are deserving of admiration, much more does the writer surpass them in admiration, because of his art and the science of his mind. Consequently, if they are not on this account worthy to be regarded as gods, again we may put the question as to the madness of having idols, and call upon men to explain the reason of giving them a form or figure."

The evidence of St. Athanasius brings us down into the middle of the fourth century.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XXIV.

## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VII.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH (*Continued*).

#### SECTION II.

FROM THE TESTIMONY OF ST. ATHANASIUS TO  
ST. AUGUSTINE'S.



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NO. 4, ROYAL EXCHANGE;

AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

In examining the references to the Psalms, the reader will bear in mind that our English version, which strictly follows the original Hebrew, differs from the Roman Catholic version in the numbering of the Psalms from the 9th to the 147th. The Roman Catholic version throws our 9th and 10th Psalms into one; and thus our 11th becomes their 10th, our 12th their 11th, and so on till the 147th, which they divide into two, beginning their 147th at the 12th verse of ours. Between these limits, consequently, the reader, in referring to a passage quoted from the Roman Catholic version, must turn in our version to the Psalm next after that so quoted. Thus, if the quotation is taken from the 50th Psalm in the Roman Catholic version, the reader must refer to the 51st Psalm in ours.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VII.

#### *Evidence of the Primitive Church (Continued).*

#### SECTION II.

#### *From the testimony of St. Athanasius to St. Augustine's.*

BEFORE we proceed in our examination of the testimony borne by individual Christian writers against the existence of image-worship in the primitive Church, we must direct the reader's attention to a most important decree of the Council of Eliberis, or Elvira, in Spain. The precise year of that council is not ascertained; but no authorities assign to it an earlier date than the commencement, nor a more recent date than the first quarter, of the fourth century; it is generally considered to have been held in A. D. 306. The enactment of this council is too plain to admit of doubt; and its meaning would never have been called in question, were it not for the direct and positive evidence which it bears on the views taken of image-worship in the Christian Church at that time:—

“It is agreed that pictures ought not to be in the Church, lest what is worshipped and adored should be painted on the walls<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> “Placuit picturas in ecclesia esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur.” Conc. Gen. tom. i. p. 997, capit. xxxvi.



Few persons, unacquainted with the strange expedients to which men devoted to a system will have recourse in defence of their errors, could imagine the variety of modes by which attempts have been made to evade the force of this decision.

Some say this single decree is a forgery; others, that all the decrees are of the same spurious character; others, that the Council erred in other points, and so too in this. But the majority of Romanist writers, acknowledging the genuineness of the decree, attempt to explain it away.

Some say it was passed only to prevent the pagans from supposing that Christians worshipped idols: others say that pictures were not forbidden to be brought into the churches and hung up there, the prohibition only being against their being painted on the walls; for which some assign as a reason, that they would be liable to be insulted by pagan persecutors, whereas pictures hung up, or statues erected, might be removed and concealed; others, that they would be liable to be injured by the damp and dirt of the walls.

Others, again<sup>2</sup>, maintain that the prohibition was solely to prevent infidels becoming acquainted with the objects of Christian worship; and so it was only forbidden to paint the pictures of the Almighty and of our Saviour on the walls of a church into which infidels might at any moment rush; whereas the same pictures, if hung up, might be removed, or have a curtain drawn before them.

Cardinal Bellarmin, having enumerated several solutions (of which he rejects some, approves of others as good, though quite different from each other, and seems satisfied with none), comforts his readers with the assurance, that "the Council, at all events, makes more for those of the Church of

<sup>2</sup> See Mendoza's Notes on the Council, tom. i. p. 1240. See also Cardinal Bona, *Res Liturg. lib. i. cap. xvi. n. ii.* See also Bingham, book viii. chap. viii.

Rome in other points, than it tells against them in this<sup>3</sup>.”

The plain, unsophisticated meaning of the Council every unprejudiced and disinterested judge must pronounce to be this,—“that no pictures whatsoever should be admitted into the churches, lest, step by step, one innovation following another, at last the practice should reach such a height as to admit even figures representing the divine objects of Christian worship to be painted on the walls—an evil not to be endured.”

*St. Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 380.*

Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem, forms one of the links which connect the testimonies of those primitive writers who wrote before or at the time of the Council of Nice with those who followed it<sup>4</sup>.

The Benedictine editor<sup>5</sup> of his works is anxiously intent on establishing the sameness of Cyril's teaching with the doctrines and practices of the Romish Church. He not only devotes to this a long and elaborate treatise by way of introduction, but, throughout the whole work, omits no single opportunity of arguing in favour of the distinguishing tenets and rites of that Church.

On the subject of our present inquiry he appeals to passages, which, if they have any bearing at all on the point at issue, carry at all events strong negative evidence against image-worship; while he cannot adduce a single passage, which either if naturally interpreted speaks in its favour, or by any ingenuity can be forced so to speak. With regard to the passages which are held by many to be interpolations, relating to the finding of the cross by

<sup>3</sup> Bellarmin, tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. ix.

<sup>4</sup> Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 175. “What is Romanism?” No. xiii.

<sup>5</sup> M. Touttée. Venice, 1763.

Helena, and the distribution of it piecemeal throughout the world, it is not necessary to speak in this place, because they do not at all involve the adoration of a cross in the Christian Church. Neither need we entertain the question as to the genuineness of the letter to Constantius, in which is the account of a miraculous appearance of a cross in the sky over Jerusalem; the only question before us being, what evidence do the works of Cyril of Jerusalem give of images having been admitted into the Church in his day, and made objects of religious worship? The following passage is cited and commented upon by the Second Council of Nice:—

“What notion have you of Nebuchodonosor? Have you not heard out of the Scriptures, that he was blood-thirsty, savage, with the disposition of a lion? Have you not heard that he cast out the bones of the kings from their tombs into the open day? that he led the people captive? that he put out the eyes of the king, who had first seen his children slain with the sword? Have you not heard that he broke the cherubim to pieces? (I do not mean the intellectual ones; far from it; do not entertain such a thought; but the sculptured ones) and the mercy-seat, from the midst of which God spake with a voice<sup>6</sup>? The veil of sanctification he trod under foot; seizing the altar, he carried it away into an idol’s place; he plundered all the offerings; the temple he burnt to the foundations. What punishments did he deserve for destroying the kings, burning the sacred things, taking the people captive, and placing the holy things within the idol’s place? did he not deserve ten thousand deaths<sup>7</sup>? ”

The reader probably may doubt how this passage proves the point for which it was cited, namely, that images are to be received into Christian churches,

<sup>6</sup> The citation by the Second Nicene Council stops here.

<sup>7</sup> Cateches. ii. cap. xvii.

and not only honoured, but worshipped. It is, indeed, strange to find such a passage quoted for such a purpose; the records of the Council, however, supply us with the use to which it was applied: "Let us observe," said the President Tarasius, "how Nebuchodonosor is blamed for overturning the cherubim, and what punishment he suffered."—"After his error," responded the Council, "followed his penalty."—"Therefore," rejoined Tarasius, "every one who turns a sacred thing out of the Church, and overturns it, falls under the same penalty<sup>8</sup>."

On this passage we need make no further comment, except perhaps so far as to observe that, whereas modern Romanists represent the cherubim as having been objects of religious worship, Cyril seems to have had no idea of the kind. But the next passage appears to negative all supposition that Cyril was aware of any use of images in the Church; the only image of God which he, with his contemporaries, habitually contemplated, being man. Quoting the passage literally, and appending the Romanist's comment upon it, we shall leave both to speak for themselves, and proceed. The passage is this<sup>9</sup>:—

"If you inquire into the cause of Christ's coming, betake yourself to the first book of the Scriptures. In six days God created the world; but the world was for the sake of man. The sun shines with brightest beams, but it was made to give light to man; and all living creatures were made in order to serve us; and shrubs and trees were appointed for our enjoyment. All the works of creation were beautiful; yet not one of them was an image of God, but man alone. The sun was created only by a command; but man was formed by the hands of God, 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness.' The wooden image of a king is honoured; how much more the rational image of God? Yet this, the greatest of the

<sup>8</sup> Act v.

<sup>9</sup> Cateches. xii. cap. cv.

works, when dwelling in paradise, the envy of the devil cast out ; and the enemy rejoiced over the fallen object of his enmity. Now would you wish that the enemy should continue to rejoice ? ”

Such is the passage cited, and the Editor's comment, inferring from this that the material images of Christ and his saints are to be worshipped by us now, is as follows :—

“ John of Damascus from this deduces an argument confirming, on the authority of Cyril, the worship of the sacred images ; and it is a sound consequence. For to an image of an emperor we pay the honour due to emperors themselves ; consequently, it is right that the worship due to Christ and his saints should be paid to their images. And if man, on account of the image of God which he bears, is so worthy of honour, that Christ did not disdain to come down from heaven to restore him, are not the images of Christ and the saints worthy of some honour to be paid by us ? ”

Another instance of the same over-eagerness in Romanist authors to enlist any thing whatever that may give some show of antiquity to their present practice, occurs in a passage where Cyril, in contrasting the soldiers who watched our Lord's sepulchre with Christian kings, speaks thus of the church in which he was then delivering his catechetical instruction :—

“ By a bribe they persuade the soldiers ; but they do not persuade our present kings. The soldiers of that time for money betrayed the truth, but our present kings through their piety have built this holy church in which we are, the Church of the Resurrection of God our Saviour, adorned with silver and gold, and enriched with valuables of silver and gold and precious stones.” To make up for what Cyril has omitted, the commentator enumerates a catalogue of what he conceives to be comprised in those general terms which Cyril employs ; “ that is to say, sacred

books, vestments, chalices, veils, candlesticks, and, perhaps, also pictures." Cyril makes no mention of any such picture or statue of saint or angel, or the Virgin, or our blessed Lord.

We have seen how the modern defenders of image-worship maintain that the brazen serpent, being a type of Christ crucified, was to the Jews an object of religious worship. Not so St. Cyril: he thus argues from the type to the divine antitype; but he says nothing of inherent or imputed divinity in the brazen serpent for which it should be worshipped, nor of the cross on which our blessed Lord shed his blood<sup>1</sup>:—

“This type Moses completed by putting the serpent on a cross, in order that one bitten by a living serpent, and looking on the brazen serpent, believing, might be saved. What! does a brazen serpent hung on a cross save, and does the incarnate Son of God being crucified not save? Wood, in the time of Moses, sweetened water, and from the side of Jesus water flowed on the cross.”

We can only advert to another passage, which Cyril could scarcely have written, had the material image of the Supreme Being at that time been an object familiar to his eyes:—

“Sufficient to us, with a view to piety, is this alone, to know that we have a God, one God, ever existing; than whom no one is stronger,—whom no one, as a successor, casts out of his kingdom,—who has many names, and is almighty, and is of one and the same substance. For not because He is called good, and just, and almighty, and of Sabaoth, therefore is He different and diverse; but, being one and the same, He puts forth ten thousand operations of his divinity, not having in one portion more and in another less, but being in all like to Himself; not great in loving-kindness only, and small in wisdom, but having his wisdom and his loving-kindness equal in

<sup>1</sup> Cateches. xiii. cap. xx.

strength; not seeing in part, and in part deprived of sight, but being all eye, and all ear, and all mind; not, like ourselves, in part understanding, and in part ignorant. To say so would be blasphemy, and unworthy of the Divine nature. He has foreknowledge of what is, and He is holy, and omnipotent, and the best of all beings, and greater than all, and wiser than all; of whom we shall never be able to explain either the beginning, or the form, or appearance. For, says the Holy Scripture, ye have never at any time heard his voice, nor seen his shape; and thus Moses says to the Israelites, 'Take diligent heed to your souls, because you saw no similitude.' If it is altogether impossible for his likeness to be made to appear, will our understanding come near his nature?"

*St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, A. D. 360<sup>2</sup>.*

This prelate, one of the brightest ornaments of the Gallican Church in her most uncorrupted state, was born, as his biographers say, at Poitiers, and about A. D. 350 became bishop of his native city. His works abound with marks of pure and exalted piety.

It does not appear that the advocates of image-worship have in any instance referred to his evidence; and we search his remains in vain for any intimation that he either approved, or even was aware, of the admission of images into Christian churches in his time. He repeatedly speaks of the image of God on earth, but it is always that inward new man of the heart, which, after God, in God's likeness, is created in righteousness and true holiness, "renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him," and an image which the Christian, he says, is ever carrying on more and more towards perfection in this

<sup>2</sup> Verona, A. D. 1730.

life; by his religious labours in the Lord, making progress towards eternity, and destined through eternity to remain the image of his Creator<sup>3</sup>.

Hilary tells us that the Apostles were in possession of a perfect image and likeness of our blessed Lord: but that likeness is not in the images and pictures, sculptured or painted, of which legends tell, but in their own resemblance to Him in his Divine powers and excellences:—"After this [their mission to preach the Gospel] the whole power of our Lord's excellence was transferred to the Apostles; and those who in Adam had been formed to the image and likeness of God, now obtain the perfect image and likeness of Christ, differing nothing from the excellences of their Lord; and those who before were earthly, are now made heavenly. . . . . And in order that they may altogether obtain the likeness of God (agreeably to the prophecy in Genesis), they are commanded to give freely what they have freely received, that the ministration of the free gift might itself also be free<sup>4</sup>."

Of any other image, or resemblance, or similitude of Christ, we find no trace in this spiritual Christian Father. The language in which he speaks of the expedients to which the heathen had recourse to add some dignity to their images, is in every respect equally applicable now to the lamentable superstitions which deck the images of the Virgin Mary with silks, and gold, and silver, and pearls, and tinselled ornaments, after the most gaudy fashion of the world. He says:—

"The Psalmist then turns, by the word of prophecy, to banish the error of the Gentiles, that he may, from the very causes of superstition, convict them of their foolish and irreligious superstitions, saying, 'The images of the heathen are silver and

<sup>3</sup> De Trinitate, lib. xi. cap. xlviij.

<sup>4</sup> Comment. in Matth. cap. x. c. iv.



gold, the work of men's hands; they have a mouth, and speak not,' &c. . . . . Frequently in other psalms, too, this same thing is spoken of the images of the heathen; and the whole object of the Divine teaching is, to turn away erring man from these pursuits of irreligion. For most persons add importance to their impieties, seeking, by expensive metals, to invest with honour the gods whom they have made for themselves, by forming them of gold and silver. But by this they impart to them only as much as they can, namely, an image of a mouth, eyes, ears, nose, hands, and feet; adoring their gods in the form of a dead body, the mouth of which, as soon as the spirit is flown, is dumb, the eyes dull, the ears deaf, the nose without spirit, the hands loosened, the feet stiff, the whole body motionless. But to the error of these men is attached what they could never have even hoped for, that they should be like those whom they adore; the worshippers should be on a footing with the worshipped; themselves, after the manner of their images, to be left dead corpses without the breath of life."

*Macarius*, A. D. 350<sup>5</sup>.

It is impossible for any one to read, in a right frame of mind, the remains of this truly spiritually minded Christian, without, under God's grace, making progress in the Christian state. We must always, in studying the works of past ages with a view to their application to our own life and conduct, take into account the different views on matters of faith and practice which circumstances may have forced on the writers. But we find in Macarius a man bent on rightly dividing the word of truth, and on building up the true Christian character towards perfection in those who seek for his help and guid-

<sup>5</sup> Leipsic, 1714.

ance,—a perfection to which, as he says, the holiest saint cannot attain on earth, but which the life of faith, and holiness, and charity on earth will prepare him to receive as the gift of God in heaven. On the subject before us, we find Macarius, like others whom we have already examined, speaking repeatedly of the image, and picture, and similitude of God existing on earth. It is, however, no earthly or material image of which he speaks, but either the Divine Word, God manifest in the flesh, or the image of God in the soul of man,—the image in which man was, as to his spirit, created; which he lost when by transgression he fell, and to restore him to which, He who was from eternity the express image of his Father's person, left the glory of heaven and came down on earth to die. Macarius speaks of the efficacy of the cross, yet it is not to fix the eyes of Christians upon the material cross, but to direct our faith to the One Mediator, who shed his blood on the tree. We have space only for two or three extracts:—

“Every soul made by diligence and faith worthy thenceforth entirely to put on Christ according to the power and fulness of grace, and made one with the heavenly light of the incorruptible image, is even now instructed in the knowledge of all the heavenly mysteries as they exist; but in the great day of the resurrection, its body, also, being glorified with the same heavenly image of his glory, and being, according to what is written, caught up by the Spirit into the heavens, and deemed worthy to be made like to the form of his glorious body, shall receive the eternal kingdom without change, having Christ as his fellow-heir<sup>6</sup>.”

..... “The heavenly image, Jesus Christ, mystically enlightens the soul, and reigns in the souls of the saints; and Christ, hidden from the eyes of men,

<sup>6</sup> De Libertate Mentis, cap. xxiv.

is truly seen only by the eyes of the soul till the day of the resurrection<sup>7</sup>.”

“The rod of Moses bore two similitudes: the foe it met as a serpent, biting and destroying; but to the Israelites it was a staff on which they rested. Thus, also, the true tree of the cross, which is Christ, is death to the enemy, the spirits of wickedness; but of our souls it is the staff, and the safe abiding-place, and the life on which they rest. For what took place before were types and shadows of these realities; for the ancient service was a shadow and image of the present service; and circumcision, and the tabernacle, and the ark, and the urn, and the manna, and the priesthood, and the incense, and the washings, and, in one word, all things which took place in Israel and in the law of Moses or in the prophets; were for the sake of this soul, which was made after the likeness of God, and which fell under the yoke of bondage and the kingdom of bitter darkness. For with this soul God wished to have communion; and this He prepared for Himself to be the bride of the King; and this He purifies from pollution, and, washing it from its own blackness and baseness, makes it shine, and restores it from death to life, and cures it from its bruised state, and secures it peace from its enemies; for though a creature, it was made fit to become the bride of the King’s Son<sup>8</sup>.”

The present Church of Rome makes the Virgin Mary to be the spouse of God and queen of heaven, and bids us worship images of the Virgin and of God and of his ever-blessed Son; Macarius makes Christ the image of God; and represents the human soul, when by grace made his image, to be the celestial bride.

<sup>7</sup> Homil. ii. cap. v.

<sup>8</sup> Homil. xlvii. cap. xvi.

*St. Epiphanius, A. D. 370 °.*

It has been elsewhere shown how direct and irrefutable a testimony this celebrated man bears against the worship of the Virgin Mary; how utterly unknown to him was the legend of her immaculate conception in her mother's womb, her assumption, and her intercession and present power with God<sup>1</sup>. No less direct is the evidence which he bears against not the worship only, but the use of images in the Church. So utterly inconsistent with that use and worship indeed is the testimony borne by him, in his letter to John, Bishop of Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>, that, after recording many attempts to explain away its force, which were utterly ineffectual, Bellarmine declares it to be a forgery—not pronouncing against the genuineness of the whole letter, but only against the single passage, as an interpolation<sup>3</sup>. The original Greek is not extant, and we find the letter only in a translation by St. Jerome. There seems, however, to be no copy of the letter without this passage; and, instead of carrying with it any mark of its having been unnaturally inserted, it corresponds altogether with the drift and object of the whole letter, which was to convince his correspondent that he was prejudiced against him, and had condemned him without reason. That it was not cited by the Second Council of Nice, in order to be answered, forms no ground for objection to it; for whatever told against them, the members of that council either suppressed, or by a summary vote dismissed as spurious. The former council at Constantinople had cited a strong passage from Epiphanius, urging his fellow-Christians not on any account to admit images into the Church. And the deacon, who answers from a pre-

<sup>1</sup> Cologne, 1682.

<sup>2</sup> See "Romish Worship of the Virgin," p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. ix.

pared document all the arguments of the previous council, reads a comment on that quotation denying its genuineness, and declaring that there were found only two or three copies, besides some recently edited. The former council had asserted that any one, who would take the pains, could easily find many testimonies of Epiphanius against the innovation; but the deacon declares them all to be forgeries, invented and circulated by the opponents of image-worship. There was no one present to contradict him, all being on one side; not a bishop being allowed to take his seat till he had purged himself of all suspicion of hostility to images. But on this we need not dwell. Whether this letter to John Bishop of Jerusalem was cited or not at the former council at Constantinople, we cannot tell; for we find only just so much quoted as the deacon rehearsed and answered: certainly at the Second Nicene Council it is not referred to at all by name; but it may be among those many denunciations of Epiphanius against image-worship which the former council declared to be in existence.

The passage, however, of Epiphanius, as we find it in Jerome, who translated it, is as follows. Having requested his correspondent not to indulge in complaints against him, and having prayed that the God of peace would of his clemency grant that Satan might be trodden under foot by Christians, and that the bond of charity and peace might not be broken, nor the preaching of the true faith impeded, he proceeds:—

“Moreover, I have heard that some complain against me, because when we were going together to the holy place called Bethel, and I had come to a village called Anablatha, and had there, in passing by, seen a light burning, and inquired what the place was, and had learned that it was a church, and had gone in for the purpose of praying, I found there a veil, or curtain, hanging at the doors of the church, coloured and painted, and having the image as if of

Christ, or some saint. I have no clear recollection whose image it was. When, therefore, I had seen this, the image of a man hung in the church, contrary to the authority of the Scriptures, I tore it, and, moreover, advised the keepers of the same place to wrap the corpse of a poor man in it, and bury it. And they murmuring against this, said, 'If he determined to rend it, it was right that he should give us another curtain, and change it.' As soon as I heard this, I promised to give another, and to send it immediately. There intervened, however, some little delay, while I was endeavouring to send the best curtain instead of it; for I thought I ought to send one from Cyprus. I have now sent what I could find, and I request you will direct the presbyters of the same place to receive from the bearer the curtain which we have sent; and afterwards to teach that in the Church of Christ, curtains of that sort, which are contrary to our religion, are not to be hung up; for it becomes your dignity to feel such anxiety as would remove all scandal unworthy of Christ, and of the people entrusted to you. Against Palladius, also, the Galatian, who was once dear to us, but now is in need of God's mercy, be on your guard, (because he preaches and teaches the heresy of Origen,) that he may not perchance seduce into his error any of the people entrusted to you. I trust you may fare well in the Lord<sup>4</sup>."

There is one remarkable circumstance, which would seem to carry with it the evidence of an undesigned coincidence. In this letter Epiphanius says, what he did was at the first objected to, and afterwards made a subject of complaint against him: now this remarkably coincides with the sentiment of a letter ascribed to him as written to the Emperor Theodosius, and cited by the deacon in the Second Nicene Council, but scornfully rejected as spurious<sup>5</sup> :—

"In the close of the letter we find a sentence to

<sup>4</sup> Jerom. Epist. li. vol. i. p. 251.

<sup>5</sup> Act vi. Tom. v.

this effect, ' though I have often spoken with my fellow-ministers that images should be removed, I was not received by them, nor would they listen to me in the least.' ” The deacon proceeds to say, “ Let us see who were his fellow-ministers ! They were Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzum, and Gregory of Nyssa, and Chrysostom, and Ambrose, and Amphilochius, and Cyril of Jerusalem. If these men, then, would not endure the removal of images, why should not we preserve them ? ” The deacon was here guilty of a great mistake. If that letter came from Epiphanius, Epiphanius was speaking, not of those great Lights of the Church, but of certain innovators, and careless ministers of the Gospel, who seemed then to be multiplying fast around. For, towards the end of the fourth century, it is evident that the practice of bringing images and paintings into churches was gaining ground in Christendom ; yet certainly not for two centuries afterwards were they set up to be worshipped. But, unhappily, the greater evil follows almost inevitably the footsteps of the less. Habitual reverence of the images of those whom we reverence leads to their worship and invocation. What the sentiments of those great Lights were, it remains for us to examine.

*St. Basil, A. D. 370<sup>o</sup>.*

When we bear in mind the weight which has always been attached to the testimony of Basil the Great, Bishop of Cæsarea, we cannot wonder at the anxiety which has generally manifested itself in the supporters of controverted doctrines to cite his evidence in their own favour. But we do wonder that Romanist bishops, and popes, and canonized saints should let that anxiety induce them, with so little caution and care, to quote, as conveying his testimony, passages which he never wrote ; and distorting pas-

<sup>o</sup> Paris, 1839.

sages, which, though found word for word in his genuine remains, yet in their true meaning have not the slightest bearing on the point to establish which they have been cited. It is, indeed, surprising to see with what pertinacity passages indisputably spurious, continue to be summoned to bear St. Basil's testimony in support of the use and worship of images; and expressions appealed to as conveying his sentiments on that subject, when he evidently had his thoughts on another. The example was set at the Second Council of Nice by two Popes of Rome —by Adrian in his letter to Constantine and his mother Irene, and by Gregory in a letter quoted in the fourth Act of that council as having been written to Germanus, former Patriarch of Constantinople.

The passage quoted as from Basil by Pope Adrian carries its own condemnation on its forehead. Bellarmin, who, as we have seen, is by no means backward or scrupulous in quoting as genuine what he elsewhere pronounces spurious, does not venture to take upon himself the responsibility here: the passage is too strong for him to omit; and yet he quotes it only at second-hand, as a testimony appealed to by Pope Adrian. Others have not been so guarded; and Bishop Jewel's antagonist, Harding, introduces the passage in these words:—"Of all the Fathers, none hath a plainer testimony, both for the use and also for the worshipping of images, than Basil, whose authority for learning, wisdom, and holiness of life, besides antiquity, is so weighty in the judgment of all men, that all our new masters, laid in a balance against him, shall be found lighter than any feather. Touching this matter, making a confession of his faith in an epistle, inveighing against Julian the renegade, he saith thus<sup>7</sup>."

Adrian's words are these<sup>8</sup>:—"In the letter, also,

<sup>7</sup> Bp. Jewel, art. xviii.

<sup>8</sup> Conc. Nic. ii. Act ii. This testimony is also cited in the fourth Act of the same council.



of the holy Basil to Julian the transgressor, it is stated, 'As we have inherited from God our blameless Christian faith, I confess, and follow, and believe in one God Almighty, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost; one God, these three, I worship and glorify. I acknowledge also the dispensation of the Son Incarnate. Then also I confess the Holy Mary Theotocos, who according to the flesh brought Him forth. I receive also the holy Apostles, and prophets, and martyrs (those who implore God), because, through their intercession, the Gracious God becomes merciful to me, and gives me remission of sins: wherefore also I openly honour and worship the representations of their images; for this was delivered down to us from the holy Apostles, and must not be forbidden; and in all our churches we raise representations of them.'"

We scarcely need add, that this is no where found in any of the works in existence<sup>9</sup>, whether spurious or genuine, attributed to St. Basil; even Cardinal Bellarmine, and Coccius, and others, referring us solely to this epistle of Pope Adrian. How totally inconsistent with St. Basil's sentiments is the passage confessing the Virgin Mary, and professing that the writer looks to the mediation of her and other saints for God's mercy on his soul, has been elsewhere shown<sup>10</sup>.

We must next examine a passage which we find alleged (in a letter read in the Second Nicene Council, purporting to be the epistle of Pope Gregory to Germanus) as a proof, that, in St. Basil's mind, the worship paid to the image of a saint passed on to the saint. The words are the words of Basil; but they have no more to do with the worship paid to the image of a saint by Christians, than they have with

<sup>9</sup> It was admitted into the Paris Edition of 1839, as an extract from Basil's Epistle to Julian; but the passage is there evidently copied from Adrian's Letter.

<sup>10</sup> The Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 203.

the worship of Diana by the Ephesians, or of Jugernaut by the Hindoos. The passage does not, in the most remote degree, refer to the subject of our present inquiry; and does not intimate, even by the slightest shadow, that Basil was aware of any religious honour being paid in his time to the images of saints, or of the Virgin, or of our blessed Saviour. The words of Gregory's letter are these:—

“In the next place [besides the cross, you must have], the holy image of the queen of all, who is in truth the holy mother of God, whose countenance the rich of the people supplicate. For truly, as it appears to the Fathers, holy is she who makes you a return for being thus so piously honoured by you; since, according to the great Basil, the honour of the image passes on to the original<sup>1</sup>.”

If, from this application of Basil's words to prove that the honour paid to the image of the Virgin she acknowledged as paid to herself, and therefore made a return for it, we look to the passage in Basil where these words occur, we shall immediately see how unjustifiable a distortion of that Father's meaning is here made to suit the purpose of the writer. Basil is answering the objection made against our worshipping Christ as God, that, by so doing, we are making two Gods. He protests against such a view, and illustrates it by the instance of the honour paid to a king, and to the image of that king. Of the aptness or correctness of the illustration we need form no judgment with reference to the point before us. History tells us that emperors and kings required their subjects to pay respect to their statues or pictures; and Basil illustrates his Christian doctrine by a reference to that practice. We need not quote more than the following extract, though, for the thorough understanding of his argument, which does not bear on ours, more must be read:—

“How, then, if they are one and one [the Father

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Nic. ii. Act iv.

and the Son], are they not two Gods?" "Because even the image of the king is called the king, and they are not called two kings; for neither is the sovereignty divided [between them], nor the glory [ascribed] cleft asunder: for as the sovereignty over us is one, and the authority one, so also is our ascription of glory [in the case of the king and his image] one and not many; because the honour paid to the image passes through to him whom it represents<sup>2</sup>."

Here we have an illustration drawn from the honour paid to the image of an earthly sovereign; and this is distorted to prove that the worship paid to images by Christians (of which, as far as it appears, he never had even heard, at all events had never approved) was sanctioned by the writer, on the ground that it was paid to the original.

The only other passage which seems to have been quoted from this Father in support of image-worship is one appealed to by Bellarmin, Coccius, and others, to prove, that, at a date so early as Basil, pictures were admitted into the Christian churches. Supposing for a moment that it proved so much, what a wide gulf lies between the admission of an historical painting within the walls of a church, and the setting up of an image (whether statue or picture), to be religiously honoured and worshipped! The passage is at the close of a very short rhapsody on the sufferings and inflexible endurance of the martyr Barlaam. Having exhausted his powers of description by words, the orator, adding a climax to the whole, refers his audience to the more affecting sense of sight, and bids them see in the picture representing the martyrdom what his eloquence could not adequately describe. Bellarmin's conclusion, that the picture must have been somewhere in the Church in which Basil spoke, is a perfectly gratuitous assumption, finding not the very slightest countenance in the orator's apostrophe to

<sup>2</sup> Lib. de Spiritu Sanc. cap. xviii.

the painters. On the contrary, his apostrophe to the painters is throughout a sort of graceful challenge, that they would afterwards surpass, by the arts of colouring, his description by eloquence of the martyr's sufferings:—

“But why by childish babblings do I lower the victor? We therefore yield the song on this man to more magnificent tongues: let us summon the louder trumpets of masters to it. Rise up, I pray you, O ye painters-to-the-life of successful struggles! By your arts magnify the mutilated picture. By the colours of your skill brighten up the crowned champion, too darkly painted by me. Let me retire vanquished by your painting of the valorous deeds of the martyr. May I rejoice in being to-day conquered by such superior power of yours! May I see the struggle of the hand with the fire more accurately painted by you! May I see the wrestler more brightly painted in your picture! Let the devils wail; struck down even now through you by the martyr's success. Let the burned and conquering hand be again shown to them: and on the painting let the presider of the contest, Christ, be described; to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen<sup>3</sup>.”

This passage is confidently appealed to by Cardinal Bellarmin and others, nay, it is cited in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, in proof that in St. Basil's time images of saints were admitted into the Christian Church. Not one word falls from the orator's lips as to the place where the picture, were it ever to be painted, would be put; certainly no allusion is made to the Church as its proper place.

But while the defenders of image-worship, from the Second Nicene Council to the present day, have left no expedient untried, to put forth Basil as a witness in their favour, yet all in vain; there are many passages which forcibly assure us, that, had

<sup>3</sup> Hom. xvii. in Barlaam Martyrem.

Basil approved of that worship, or even known of its existence among Christians, he must have alluded to it. He speaks of the image of God, but it is the Lord Christ primarily, and then, in an inferior sense, the soul of man<sup>4</sup>; he speaks of the images of the saints, but it is their spiritual and moral exemplar and likeness, not the visible and material statue or picture of their earthly frame. The manner, too, in which either Basil, or one who about his time wrote the work to which we shall presently refer, speaks with joy and thankfulness of the desuetude into which the making of heathen-images had fallen, and of the more true estimate which had been then formed of material representations of invisible objects, since the light of the Gospel had risen on the earth, leads us directly to the conclusion, that, had the images of saints or of our blessed Lord been substituted for the idols of heathen times, the writer must have alluded to it, as he does allude to the doctrines of the cross, as having banished the ancient superstitions, and taken their place. A very few examples on these points will suffice, though several might be cited to the same purport.

In his refutation of the errors of Eunomius, arguing against a blasphemy which made him shudder (namely, that there was no comparison or fellowship between the Father and the Son), Basil says:—"If this be so, how said He to Philip, 'Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' For how could the Son show in Himself Him who admitted of no comparison, and had no fellowship with Him? What is unknown is not understood through that which is unlike and of another kind; but, by the nature of things, the like is made known by its like. Thus, in a seal, the form of him who set the seal [with his own likeness engraven on it] is perceived; and by an image the knowledge of

<sup>4</sup> See Epist. xxxviii. sect. viii.

the original is conveyed, when, that is, we compare the identity in each. So that by this one blasphemy all the announcements made by the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Only-Begotten are set at nought: whereas the Gospel teaches us, 'Him hath God the Father sealed;' and the Apostle, 'Who is the image of the invisible God;' not a lifeless image, nor one made with hands, nor the work of art and skill, but a living image, or rather self-existing life, not in the likeness of a form, but ever preserving in its very essence the unchangeable likeness<sup>5</sup>."

A work from ancient time ascribed to Basil the Great, now indeed pronounced not to be his, but allowed nevertheless to have been written either in the fourth, or early in the fifth century, is still published in the appendix of the Benedictine edition. It is scarcely possible to conceive, that, had the writer known of the admission of images into Christian churches, and of any religious worship paid to them, he could have written as follows, without any reference to the practice. In a comment on the second chapter of Isaiah, speaking on the words, "Their land also is full of the abomination of the works of their hands," the writer says:—

"Since it is usual for the Scriptures, in a peculiar manner, to call idols abominations, all the evil phantasies impressed upon the mind, as by the art of painting, are abominations filling the land, that is, the ample space of the rational mind. 'And they worshipped what their fingers had made!' Oh! surpassing madness, to regard what was made by a man's self as a god, and not to see the absurdity of the thing. If it is the matter you admire, why in sooth do you not worship unformed brass or stone? But if it is on account of the skill, worship your own hands that invested it with its form, or the instrument by which you prepared it. How great folly not to catch an idea of the reality, through the long

<sup>5</sup> 1 Eunom. lib. i. cap. xvii. xviii.

space of time while the statue was being chiselled or molten! and this is what is meant by, 'They worshipped what their own fingers made.' The man must of necessity admit one of two things, either that he had not a god before he formed one himself, or that his former one had grown old, now that he wanted another. But 'accursed is every man who shall make a graven or molten thing, the work of the hands of the artificer<sup>6</sup>!'"

Again, with much to the same effect, he says:—"After the coming of Christ the regard of the works of man's hand was thrown away; image-makers were no longer in much esteem; and things which had from ancient time been carefully attended to, no longer met with the same regard, but were cast away in dens and caves and hidden places. What had so long escaped them in the darkness of ignorance, when the light arose they saw,—the wood as wood, the stone as stone; being no longer deceived by the form which invested those things, but estimating them according to their real nature. . . . From the time the cross was named, idols were put to flight<sup>7</sup>."

*St. Gregory of Nazianzum, A. D. 380<sup>8</sup>.*

No appeal seems to have been made to this celebrated writer, either for his sanction of image-worship, or for evidence that the innovation had appeared in Christendom when he lived. And it may confidently be asserted, that no passage of that tendency can be found in his works. He, like his predecessors or contemporaries to whom our attention has already been directed, speaks much, and with eloquence and feeling, of the image of God and of Christ; yet it was no visible and material image to be set up in churches and worshipped; it was the pure image

<sup>6</sup> Sect. 82.

<sup>7</sup> Sect. 96.

<sup>8</sup> Paris, 1778 and 1840.

of God in Christ, and of Christ in the soul of a believing, and loving, and obedient Christian. The manner, too, in which he condemns idol-worship, leaves us in no doubt, that, had he countenanced the worship of the images of saints, of the blessed Virgin, and of our Lord, he must have alluded to it. What he urges against idols of wood and stone applies equally to the images of the holiest prototypes. A few short extracts will establish and illustrate these positions.

Having instanced with much fervour of piety the mercies and wonders of Christ's Incarnation in many other points, Gregory adds:—

“For a while He emptied Himself of his own glory, that I might partake of his fulness. How great the riches of his goodness; how great this mystery towards me! I partook of his image, and did not preserve it; He partook of my flesh, that He might save his image, and make my flesh immortal<sup>9</sup>.”

In the beautiful and affecting description of his sister's happiness, contained in her funeral oration, he says:—“Her nobility consists in the preservation of the image, and the likeness of the original, which the word and virtue effect<sup>1</sup>.”

In his poem, called “The Lamentation,” bewailing his fall from integrity, he says:—

“The image is made void : what word will aid me ?  
The image is made void ; that unpolluted gift of God,  
The image, was insulted ;

. . . O fountain of  
Evil, gush not forth ! Do not so, vain mind !  
And if it be thou, O tongue ! admit of no stain ;  
And if it be thou, O hand ! admit of nothing base :  
Then may the image remain to me uncorrupt<sup>2</sup>.”

In his poem to Nemesius, Gregory, doubtless, is speaking against the worship of idols, as representa-

<sup>9</sup> Hom. xix. vol. i. p. 535.

<sup>1</sup> Sect. vi. vol. i. p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. ii. p. 959, carm. 61.



tives of worthless and immoral personages; but his words apply equally to all images and pictures of unseen objects of worship.

“Attend to my words. It is not lawful nor seemly for man, the creature of God, the fair and imperishable image of the heavenly Word, intellectual, and understanding intellectual things, whose path is upwards, to bow down to vain images of things in the sea, and earth, and in the air; worthless images of a material which is scattered and dispersed, the sport of thy hand, subject to rust and filth; of which one half is worshipped, the other left unrespected. . . . . Would that, exalted high on a watch tower, I could thunder it out to all on the earth, ‘Ye mortal men, framers of things of nought, how long with falsehoods and day-dreams will ye, deceived and deceivers, in vain wander on the earth, senseless worshippers of idols<sup>3</sup>?’”

It is curious to remark that, in his introductory address to this Nemesius, he tells him in a strain of compliment, that the prevailing custom would place his statue or his portrait in the city, since, he says, “the representation of worthy chiefs is a pride to the citizens even in after times.” But of the image of saint, or Virgin, or of our Lord, in the Church, he says not a word. He speaks of the power of the cross of Christ; but he gives no intimation that in his time crosses of wood and stone were set up, to be worshipped and adored.

*Gregory of Nyssa, A. D. 390<sup>4</sup>.*

It is impossible to read the works of this Christian bishop, brother of Gregory of Nazianzum, without seeing that he was a man of great talent and exalted piety; and it is equally impossible not to see, that if (what is very doubtful) the homilies ascribed to him

<sup>3</sup> p. 1072.

<sup>4</sup> Paris, 1638.

came from his tongue or pen, superstitious innovations were in his time making formidable inroads upon the pureness and integrity of Christian faith and worship. On the subject, however, before us, few have ventured to appeal to Gregory of Nyssa for his testimony in favour of image-worship. Still one reference<sup>5</sup> has been made, deserving, as concerns our argument, patient and serious consideration. In the catechism of the Council of Trent this Gregory's eulogy on the martyr Theodorus is cited, among other testimonies, to justify the use and worship of images in the Church of Christ.

Now, were it not for a knowledge of the blindness which the maintenance of a bad cause generally throws on the eyes of its advocates, we should have supposed, that, rather than appeal to that eulogy in defence of the worship of images, the Tridentine catechism would have suggested arguments to neutralise the evidence incidentally and undesignedly, but really and substantially, borne by this very oration against the worship of images. How does the case stand? The orator tells his audience, that, whereas generally persons turn away in disgust from a corpse lying in a sepulchre, here, in the building where the body of Theodorus lay, they were delighted with the spectacle. The house, like a house of God, was so adorned by the skill of the architect, the lapidary, and the painter, that even to its very floor it must call forth the admiration of those who visited it. Gregory does, indeed, speak of a painting which represents the sufferings of the martyr, and also a representation of our Saviour as presiding over his martyr's struggles; and this would prove, that, at whatever time the oration was delivered, pictures were then allowed to hang on the walls of the church. But when we come to the question of the worship of images, a child may see at a glance, that this passage

<sup>5</sup> Vol. iii. p. 579.

might just as well have been cited by a priest of the ancient Egyptian mythology, to prove that the Christians at that time worshipped the different animals, with the figures of which the orator tells us the place was adorned.

The passage is this : having spoken of a man who had passed by a dead body in a sepulchre with disgust, he says :—“ But coming to such a place as this, where our assembly is to-day, where are the monument and the sacred remains of a just man, in the first place his mind is influenced by the magnificence of what is seen, when he beholds a house as a temple of God, splendidly adorned by the extent of the building, and the beauty of the additional ornaments ; where both the carver has shaped the wood into the appearances of animals, and the lapidary has polished his slabs to the smoothness of silver ; and the painter has drawn the flowers of his art, describing in a picture the brave deeds of the martyr, his resistances, his tortures, the savage forms of the tyrants, the reproaches, that fiery furnace, the most happy end of the wrestler, the delineation of the human form of Christ, the presider at the contests ; where the artist, by his skill in colouring, representing all, even as in a book interpreting different languages, has clearly shown to us the struggles of the martyr, and has beautified the church as a fair meadow ; (for a picture silent on a wall knows how to speak, and to be of greatest benefit ;) and where the compositor too of the pebbles has made the pavement, which is trodden upon, like a history.”

Bellarmin also quotes this passage word for word ; but, so far from its implying that the picture either of our blessed Saviour, or of his martyr, was an object of religious veneration, it ranks them precisely on the same footing, as works of art and objects of admiration, with the figures of animals, the burning furnace, the cruel tyrants, and the tessellated pavement.

But while Gregory of Nyssa affords no countenance to those who pay religious veneration or worship to images, his works contain many passages which have a directly opposite tendency. The only image of God to be worshipped, according to him, is Christ our Lord; and the only image of the object of our worship which he suggests to us to form, is the likeness of God in our own soul and heart. The manner in which he speaks of these things is truly edifying. For example, on the duty of our forming, and cultivating, and perfecting the image of God in our soul, he says:—

“ Thus [as St. Paul did] the sons of God must have their conversation. For after grace we are called his children: for which reason it well becomes us to look accurately to the characteristics of our Parent; that, forming and fashioning ourselves after the likeness of our Father, we may prove to be the genuine sons of Him who has called us to adoption through grace. For it is a wretched accusation for a man to be called spurious and supposititious, falsifying by his deeds, the nobleness of his father<sup>6</sup>. ”

Speaking of Christ being the image of the Father, Gregory says:—

“ He who possesses altogether what is the Father’s, and is viewed in all the glory of his Father, as existing in the endless existence of the Father, hath no end of life: so, too, existing in the Father, who had no beginning, He hath no beginning of days, as saith the Apostle. But He is both of the Father, and is viewed in the eternity of the Father; and chiefly in this way is He viewed throughout as the entirely unchangeable image of Him of whom He is the image<sup>7</sup>. ”

In the following passages the reader will observe especially two things: first, that, by whatever name religious honour may be called “*worship*,” “*divine*

<sup>6</sup> In *Baptismum Christi*, vol. iii. p. 379.

<sup>7</sup> *Cont. Eunom. Orat. vii. vol. ii. p. 623.*

service," "veneration," "devotion," or "sacrifice<sup>s</sup>," that religious honour Gregory declares to be lawfully paid only to the one supreme God, and to no other being, however exalted. Instead of employing those nicely drawn and refined and subtle distinctions, which have been invented to give some colour to the offering of secondary and relative worship to images, he uses all these words indiscriminately, as though he knew no practical difference between them. The second remarkable fact established here is, not, as the Council of Trent and the advocates of image-worship teach us to believe, that the idolaters of old regarded the statue of wood or stone as the god, and did not look to any invisible object represented by it (on which an attempt is made to ground the distinction between idolatry and image-worship), not so, but that the invisible object of unlawful religious worship is called expressly an idol. In remonstrating with those misbelievers who, though they would pay religious honour to the Son of God, yet denied his eternal power and Godhead, Gregory says, they were worshipping an idol, and giving the name of Christ to an idol, in a case where no idea of a material image, or a visible idol, could have any place.

Having quoted the Psalmist's words, "There shall be no new god in thee, neither shalt thou worship another god," Gregory says: "Let us take this as our rule and index for a knowledge of the object of worship, so as to be persuaded that that is the true God, which is neither new nor another. Since, then, we have been taught that the Only-Begotten is God, we believe that He is neither new nor another. . . . So that he who severs the Son from the nature of the Father, either absolutely and altogether renounces his worship, lest he should be worshipping another god,

<sup>s</sup> προσκυνεῖν—εἰδωλον σέβεται—λατρεία—σέβασμα—θεραπεύειν—θύειν.

or he reverences an idol, establishing as the object of his worship, a creature and not God, adding the name of Christ to an idol." "When we hear these sentiments, and such as these, from inspired men, how can we do otherwise than leave, for idolaters to worship, that which is not from eternity, but is new and estranged from the true Divinity? For that which now is, but formerly was not, is palpably recent, and not eternal; but to look to any recent being Moses calls a service to devils, saying, 'They sacrificed to devils and not to God. Gods, whom their fathers knew not, came in, new and recent.' If, then, what is recent is held in religious veneration, it is the service of devils, and is alienated from the true Divinity. But that which is now, yet was not always, is recent, and not eternal. Of necessity, therefore, we, who look to that which is, must reckon among the worshippers of idols those who look under the same view to that which is not, and that which is, and who say that once it was not." Again, repeating his condemnation of those who, though they worship Christ, yet hold that there was a time when He was not, Gregory declares it to be nothing else than "a transgression of the Christian faith, and a turning to idolatry<sup>9</sup>."

*Ephraim the Syrian, A. D. 380.*

Here we should have gladly inserted the result of our examination into the remains of Ephraim of Edessa; but until his works are more faithfully edited than they have hitherto been, the labour of searching through them would not only be thrown away, but would mislead us. "Page after page," we are told, "proves him to have believed as the Church of Rome believes, as to the worship of the Virgin Mary<sup>1</sup>:" and when we examine those pages, we find

<sup>9</sup> Cont. Eunom. Orat. ii. vol. ii. p. 451; and Orat. vii. vol. ii. p. 622.

<sup>1</sup> See Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 224.

them, page after page, most palpably spurious. On the subject, however, of image-worship, we are not aware that any appeal has ever been made by its advocates to his writings.

*St. Ambrose, A. D. 397* <sup>2</sup>.

One of the most painful and perplexing circumstances, inseparable from a careful examination of the remains of primitive Christian antiquity, is the uncertainty whether, when we are quoting a passage, either the passage or the work came from the person to whom it has been ascribed. This is, in a very lamentable degree, the case with the works usually attributed to St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, whose praise has prevailed in the Church generally from his days to our own. The Benedictines have done much, in their edition, towards the exclusion of the spurious works usually circulated as his; but, consistently with a grateful acknowledgment of what they have done, it is possible to entertain serious doubts, whether they have not retained some works which ought to be rejected, and given their judgment against others, which a further investigation would pronounce genuine.

On the subject of our present inquiry, while not a single word can be found that suggests the idea that the Church of Christ, in the age of Ambrose, admitted images of saints, of the blessed Virgin, or of our divine Saviour, as objects of religious worship, an appeal has been made by the supporters of image-worship to some passages which we must examine.

In his treatise on the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord, Ambrose is solving the objection made to the doctrine, that the wisdom, in which Christ is said in his youthful days to have increased, was human wisdom, in contradistinction to the divine wisdom, which was his own as God. The objection

<sup>2</sup> Venice, 1781.

to this view was, that, by ascribing a two-fold wisdom to Him, we divided Christ. To this Ambrose replies:—

“What, then, when we adore his divinity, and his flesh, do we divide Christ? What, when in him we venerate the image of God and the cross, do we divide him? The Apostle certainly, who says of him<sup>3</sup>, ‘For though He was crucified through our weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God,’ says himself that Christ is not divided. Well, then, when we say that he assumed a rational soul, capable of exercising an understanding, do we divide him<sup>4</sup>?”

This is cited, as Cardinal Bellarmin tells us<sup>5</sup>, to prove that St. Ambrose worshipped the cross with the same adoration with which he worshipped Christ himself. The passage palpably shows that he is here speaking, not of the cross on which Christ died, nor of any material cross, but of the human nature of Christ, in which He suffered. And were this not evident from the plain sense of the passage, his words in another part would put it beyond doubt.

This is not the place for inquiring into the reality of the tradition as to Queen Helena’s having miraculously discovered the very cross on which our Lord suffered. In his oration on the death of Theodosius Ambrose refers to it, though his account materially differs from that, which has been generally received, especially when he describes the queen as having distinguished the cross of Christ from the other two by the title. On this point he says:—

“She therefore found the title; she adored the King—not in truth the wood, for this is a heathen error, and the vanity of the ungodly; but she adored Him who hung on the wood, and who was designated by the title.”

This passage will supply a key to the true meaning

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> De Incarn. Dom. cap. vii.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. ii. cap. xx.



of the following, which has also been cited for the same purpose as the preceding. Having told us that she caused one of the nails to be converted into a curb, and of the other made an ornament for the royal diadem, Ambrose says: "Helen did wisely in placing the cross on the head of kings, that the cross of Christ might in kings be adored<sup>6</sup>."

It must not be forgotten that many persons consider this oration to be spurious; and certainly it seems in several points to sink far below the character of the celebrated man to whom it is ascribed.

Another passage, from his Commentary on the 119th Psalm, has been quoted, to show that the honour paid to an image passes on from the image to the prototype: but the entire passage, in its true meaning, tells directly and forcibly against a Christian's adoring an image of our Saviour, and then defending it on the plea, that in that image he is adoring Christ; for this is the very plea, for using which in defence of their idol-worship, Ambrose condemns the heathen<sup>7</sup>. The true intent and bearing of the writer is so evident, that we wonder how any one could distort it to countenance any thing so inconsistent with it as is image-worship. Ambrose tells us, that a righteous and poor man is the image of God, and cautions us against behaving towards him with injustice, cruelty, reproach, or neglect; for by so doing we shall be guilty of the same wrongs towards God, according to whose likeness he is formed:—

..... "So that if we see a poor man, let us in the poor man honour Him after whose image he is made, for of him He says, 'Ye have given Me meat, because what ye have given to one of these ye have given to Me.' For he who crowns the image of an emperor, verily honours him whose image he crowns; and he who insults the statue of an emperor, seems to do the

<sup>6</sup> De Obit. Theodos. cap. xlvi. xlviii.

<sup>7</sup> In Psalm cxviii. cap. xxv.

injury to the emperor whose statue he has used ignominiously. The heathen adore the wood because they think it the image of God; but the image of the invisible God is not in that which is seen, but in that surely which is not seen. You see, then, that we are walking among many images of Christ; let us take heed lest we appear to take off from his image the crown which Christ has placed on each. Let us take heed not to take away from them to whom we ought to add. But, what is worse, so far from honouring the poor, we dishonour, and destroy, and persecute them; and we do not reflect that, when we think those who are made after the image of God may be injured, it is on the image of God we heap those injuries<sup>8</sup>."

We have space for only two or three more references to this light of the Latin Church. He speaks of worshipping the divine spiritual serpent, of which the brazen serpent was the type<sup>9</sup>; but he speaks not of the people of God as ever having, without guilt, worshipped that type in the wilderness. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. In the brazen serpent is prefigured my serpent: on that wood my serpent was exalted; the good serpent who pours forth not poison, but remedies from his mouth. That man needs not be afraid of serpents who has learned to adore this serpent."

Of "the blessed wood whereby cometh righteousness, and the accursed wood which is made by the hands of man<sup>1</sup>," Ambrose says: "The former referred to the cross of the Lord, the latter to the error of the Gentiles who worship blocks of wood. But what is the righteousness of the cross, except that He who

<sup>8</sup> See much that is most edifying and awakening, to the same effect, in the eleventh chapter of the same discourse.

<sup>9</sup> In Psalm cxviii. serm. v. cap. xv.

<sup>1</sup> He is referring to the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, chap. xiv. ver. 7, 8.

ascended that tree, the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified the handwriting of our sins, and cleansed the sin of the whole world by his blood<sup>2</sup>.”

In his book “On Flying from the World<sup>3</sup>” he has this passage, scarcely, one should think, compatible with his knowledge that the Church then used, and worshipped images:—“Now holy Rachel, that is, the Church, hid the images<sup>4</sup>, because the Church knows nothing of hollow opinions and the vain figures of images, but knows the true substance of the Trinity.”

The Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is one of those treatises which many still think to be the genuine work of St. Ambrose; but which the Benedictine editors have unhesitatingly pronounced to be spurious<sup>5</sup>. Still, they regard it as the production of a contemporary of St. Ambrose, and fix its date at the close of the fourth century, considering it probable that Hilary, the Roman deacon, was its author. Whoever was its author, it seems incompatible with any knowledge that images of saints were worshipped in the Christian Church in his day. On the passage, “Professing themselves wise, they became fools,” he thus expatiates on the folly of the heathen in justifying their worship of images on the plea that, through those beings whom the idols represented, they could more easily obtain a favourable hearing with the supreme Deity:—

“They think themselves wise because they fancy they have investigated the laws of nature; examining the courses of the stars, and the qualities of the elements, but despising the Lord of these. . . . When under a feeling of shame, they habitually make this excuse for neglecting God, that by means of those

<sup>2</sup> In Psalm cxviii. serm. viii. cap. xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> De Fuga Sæculi, cap. xxvii.

<sup>4</sup> The words “vel prudentia” are added in the original.

<sup>5</sup> See “Romish Worship of the Virgin”—Evidence of St. Ambrose, p. 253.

beings they can approach to God, as men approach a king by his courtiers. Come now! Is any one so foolish and forgetful of his own safety, as to claim for the courtier the honour due to the king? Should any be found attempting such a thing, they would justly be condemned of high treason. And yet the men who transfer the honour of God to a creature, and, leaving the Lord, adore their fellow-servants, do not think themselves guilty. As if there were any thing further that could be reserved for God! Men approach a king by his ministers or courtiers, only because the king is a man, and knows not to whom he ought to entrust his government. But to secure God's favour (from whom nothing is hid, for He knows the deserts of every one) there is need, not of an intercessor, but of a devout mind; for whensoever such an one addresses Him, He will answer him<sup>6</sup>."

In an epistle<sup>7</sup> to Valentinian, Ambrose employs language (we have quoted it in a former part of this work) which shows that the Pagans, (men of learning and eloquence,) in worshipping their idols, maintained that it was God whom they, through the images, worshipped; the contrary to which both the Council of Trent and Roman Catholic authors maintain, in their argument that the commandments and prohibitions of the Holy Scriptures do not apply to the worship of images in the Christian Church:—

"Sift, I pray you, and thoroughly try the class of the Gentiles; what they utter is rich and grand, but what they defend is utterly devoid of truth. They speak of God; they adore an image."

*St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine.*

We have elsewhere<sup>8</sup> adverted to the tradition that these two burning and shining lights of the early

<sup>6</sup> Vol. ii. p. 34, of Appendix.

<sup>7</sup> Epist. class. i. xviii.

<sup>8</sup> Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 254.

Christian Church were born into the world in the very same year, A. D. 354; though some place the birth of Chrysostom seven years earlier. Chrysostom was called from his labours to the rest which awaits the people of God soon after he had passed the meridian of life; whereas Augustine was permitted to toil in the Lord's vineyard till he had passed the age after which the Psalmist bids us look only for labour and sorrow.

*St. John Chrysostom, A. D. 400<sup>o</sup>.*

John, surnamed, from the richness of his eloquence, Chrysostom, or "the golden-mouthed," was born at Antioch, in Cœlo-Syria. At the age of twenty-seven he was ordained deacon, and at thirty-two, priest. In his forty-fourth year he succeeded Nectarius, the successor of Gregory of Nazianzum, as Bishop of Constantinople. From this station he was deposed, and he died in exile about the year 407.

We have already observed on the great difficulty of separating the genuine works of ancient Christian writers from spurious productions, some of very much later origin, ascribed to them. The Benedictine editors, who have done much towards clearing the field from the weeds (though they have left much yet further to be done), tell us that innumerable treatises have been imposed upon the world as Chrysostom's by the vanity of petty authors and the fraud of booksellers; they might have added another most prolific cause of the evil, a determination to uphold and propagate theories and practices in religion by the authority of great names, with little care whether the testimony be spurious or genuine. On the subject of our present inquiry, the only testimony attempted to be adduced from St. Chrysostom is drawn from a work beyond all controversy spurious. The works

of Chrysostom, genuine and spurious, even after the rejection of many by the Benedictines, together with the Latin translation, notes, indexes, and dissertations, fill no less than thirteen folio volumes. Among his writings are found subjects of every class and under every variety of circumstances; some of his discussions being carried on with calm reflection and logical accuracy; while in other works he gives full rein to the fervour of his imagination, and pours forth his thoughts with most glowing eloquence. And yet in all these diversified labours not one passage can be found to intimate, that he knew of any use of images in the Christian Church as objects of religious reverence and worship, external or mental.

The advocates for image-worship have not scrupled to quote as St. Chrysostom's the following words, purporting to be a rubric in his Liturgy: "The priest bows his head to the image of Christ."

There is, however, no doubt at all that the Liturgy which used to be circulated in the name of St. Chrysostom was the production of a much more recent age<sup>1</sup>. We have seen, too, with what eagerness any expression of his was cited in defence of image-worship by the Second Council of Nice; though the testimony alleged went no further than to show, that the friends and countrymen of a good Christian had his portrait hung up in their houses, and engraven on their seals. We may be sure that, had such a work

<sup>1</sup> In the copy printed by the Benedictine editors, the priest and deacons are to make obeisance before the images both of our Saviour and of the Virgin Mary. In the Venice copy the priest is directed to worship those images with a prayer, "We worship thy most pure image, O good Lord," &c. But both Goar and all others represent the diversities in the several copies to be so many and great, as to make it a hopeless task to attempt to determine which is the earliest and best; or, rather, as the Benedictine editors state, there are so many passages which have on their very face the marks of a much more recent age, that we cannot look in them for the views of Chrysostom. Vol. xii. p. 776.

as the Liturgy referred to been in existence even towards the end of the eighth century, it would have settled the controversy.

We are referred to a passage in his comment on the Epistle to the Ephesians<sup>2</sup>, in proof that in his time statues and images were admitted into Christian churches. The passage contains a most graphic picture of a rich man's house on fire, by which Chrysostom powerfully illustrates the spiritual calamities which had befallen the Church of Christ; comparing some of its members to the statues and images which adorned the house before the conflagration; but of any the most distant allusion to material images in Christian churches there is not a trace. The reader will not regret, though for the argument it may be superfluous, to be furnished with a specimen of St. Chrysostom's style and manner; at the same time, he will see how the supporters of an unsound cause will catch at any thing in their eagerness to connect the names of great men with it. Even the Benedictine editors, in their index, and in the margin of the page, point to this passage with the words "Images in Churches."

"You have often been present at the burning of great houses; you have seen how the smoke rises up to heaven; no one going near to extinguish the mischief, but every one looking to his own; and with perfect freedom the fire devours every thing. Often the whole city stands around; but they stand round as spectators of the evil, not to aid and assist; and you may see all standing round doing nothing, but stretching out each his hand, and showing to one who has just come up either the flame rushing continually through the door, or beams falling, or the entire circuit of the supports torn away, and dashed to the ground. There are also many daring people, reckless of danger, who will approach near the very burning

<sup>2</sup> Hom. x. cap. iv. vol. xi. p. 77.

buildings, not to lend a hand to extinguish the evil; but to have a more pleasing view, seeing close by objects which often escape those at a distance. If the house should be a spacious and splendid mansion, it seems a lamentable object, and calling for many tears. And, indeed, it is a pitiable sight to witness the capitals of the columns becoming cinders, and many of the columns themselves broken in pieces, some by the work of the fire, others thrown down by the hands of those who built them, to prevent them giving more food for the flames. You may see also statues which stood most ornamentally, supporting the roof, now that the roof has fallen, exposed to view, and standing with all unsightliness in the open air. Why should we speak of the great wealth stored away within? the robes of gold, and vessels of silver? Moreover, where the master alone used to enter with his wife, where was the store-room of many garments, and spices, and precious stones, now, that one funeral pile is raised, bath-men, and scavengers, and vagabonds, and all the rest enter, and see what is left within. And all within is water and fire, and mud and dust, and half-burnt timbers. But why have I drawn out this picture at such length? Not simply from a wish to describe the burning of a house; for what is that to me? but from a desire, as far as I could, to place before your eyes the evils of the Church. For, in good truth, like a conflagration, or lightning flashed from above, has calamity fallen upon the roof of the Church, and has roused and disturbed no one; but while our Father's house is burning, we are sleeping a deep and unconscious sleep. For, whom has not this fire reached? **WHAT STATUES STANDING IN THE CHURCH** has it not reached? For the Church is nothing else than a house built by our souls. But this house is not all of equal value; but of the stones brought together to construct it, some are fair and beautiful; some are less valuable than those, and not so polished, yet much better than others. We may see here, too, many men



corresponding with the gold that decorated the roof; we may see, too, other men supplying the place of the ornament derived from statues; and you may see many standing as columns; for he (the apostle) calls men columns<sup>3</sup> not only from their strength, but because by their beauty they contribute much of ornament, having their heads adorned with gold: and you may see a multitude occupying the place of the wide and spacious circuit; for the great body of the people correspond with the stones that build the walls.”

While not a word can be found through the volumes of St. Chrysostom to countenance the worship of images in the Christian Church, passages abound in which his unqualified condemnation of idols and statues, as objects of worship and religious attention, force on us the conclusion, that, had he been even aware of such a practice among his fellow-believers, he must have referred to it, more especially in those cases where he contrasts in words the customs of the heathen and of Christians. Had the difference consisted in what the Church of Rome now tells us that it consists, we should have found that difference asserted in these contrasts drawn by him; but the difference he speaks of is this, that the heathen made to themselves images to worship, and the Christians had them not.

In one passage he says, that Isaiah, having described the origin of idolatry, represents the pagans as “falling by degrees into the gulf of perdition, worshipping idols.” “Then, ridiculing their worship, he [Isaiah] adds, ‘*the works of their hands.*’ For what can be more ridiculous than for a man to be the maker of a god? And Scripture is used to call images an abomination, and the statue on the temple is called the abomination of desolation. . . . . For when he withdrew them from holding in admiration objects of

<sup>3</sup> See Gal. ii. 9.

sense, he forbade them to make any similitude; and he called it an abomination, removing them far from the impiety. For to abominate is excessively to hate as an impure and accursed thing; and so what is hated and rejected is called in Scripture an abomination; and every idol is of this kind. ‘*And they worshipped what their fingers made, and the man bowed down, and the great man brought himself low;*’ for as the worship of God lifts one up on high, so the worship of them [idols] lowers one, and brings one down: indeed, what can be more debased than a man fallen from salvation, and having the God of the universe his enemy, and then worshipping stones? For God raised us to so great honour as to make us higher than the heavens; but the devil is bent on bringing those who obey him down to such worthlessness as to be more insensible than insensible things<sup>4</sup>.”

On the words of the Psalmist, “*The images of the Gentiles are silver and gold, the works of men’s hands*”<sup>5</sup>, St. Chrysostom says:—

“After having said at the opening, ‘Our Lord is above all gods,’ . . . . he next ridicules the weakness of idol-gods; and forthwith from their nature he frames the charge against them, or rather urges their very name as an accusation; for idol is nothing else than a powerless, worthless thing, the name of excessive weakness; and so, thence, he begins saying, ‘The idols of the heathen are silver and gold;’ first, that it is an idol; secondly, that it is lifeless and dumb matter; thirdly, that, from the very circumstance of their being idols, they derive their littleness, and weakness, and worthlessness, not only from themselves, but also from men: consequently, he adds, ‘The works of men’s hands,’ which forms the strongest charge against those who *worship* them

<sup>4</sup> Comment. on Isaiah, chap. ii. vol. vi. p. 28, &c.

<sup>5</sup> In Ps. cxxxiv. s. vii. vol. v. p. 394.

[pay<sup>6</sup> attention to them], inasmuch as the very men who are the cause even of their existence, place their hopes of safety in them. . . . Then, again, he raises another point of ridicule against them, saying, 'They that make them are like unto them.' Consider what kind of gods are those, the very likeness to whom affords ground for a curse. **BUT NOT SO ARE OUR AFFAIRS.** For the highest limit of virtue, and what makes us mount to the topmost pinnacle of good, is, according to our capacity, to be made like unto God; but with them, he says, both their worship and their gods are such, that to be like them is the extreme limit of a curse. So that in as much as they are lifeless matter, and in as much as they are made by their worshippers, and in as much as they are idols of deformity, and in as much as they lie without sense, and in as much as he puts the likeness to them on the footing of a curse, by all these arguments is shown the excess of the error."

Another passage very similar to this, and in some points almost identified with it, occurs in his comment on the First Epistle to the Corinthians:—

"Paul, then, having mooted these points and such as these, says, 'Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led';" and since he was speaking to men acquainted with the subject, he does not state all the points with accuracy, not wishing to distress them; but merely reminding them, and bringing all to their reflection, he speedily withdraws, and hastens to his subject. But what means this, 'To dumb idols?' These soothsayers were led and drawn to them. But if they were dumb, how could they use them? and why did the devil carry them as captives and bondsmen to the statues, at the

<sup>6</sup> The word here used (*θεραπεύω*) is very general in its application, signifying any attention paid to God or man, or to any lifeless thing, by way either of service, or respect, or care, or remedy, or preservation, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Hom. xxix. sect. ii. vol. x. p. 260.

same time making their error plausible? That the stone might not appear to be speechless, he strove to join men on to idols, that the deeds of the men might be ascribed to them. BUT OUR AFFAIRS ARE NOT SUCH."

Throughout we find Chrysostom contrasting heathenism with Christianity, not in as much as the heathen paid a supreme worship to their idols, terminating in those idols, irrespectively of the fable-deities whom they were made to represent, and Christians paid a secondary or relative worship to the images of their saints, the Virgin, or our blessed Saviour, passing on to the prototypes or originals,—not so, but in as much as the heathen had visible and material images in their worship, and Christians had none.

*St. Augustine, A. D. 425* <sup>8</sup>.

The language of this renowned teacher in Christ's school is so strong and so directly against the worship of images of any kind in the Christian Church, that, on one passage, Cardinal Bellarmin<sup>9</sup>; after having unsuccessfully tried to explain away his sentiments, says, that when he wrote that work he had recently been converted from paganism, and many Christian observances then offended him, to which afterwards he became fully reconciled. We doubt whether the cardinal (had the fact been so) could have devised a more unanswerable argument against image-worship. The passage well deserves our consideration at the very threshold of our inquiry into the views of Augustine on the point before us. He is urging the want of candour and honesty and common fairness in those heathen who drew arguments against Christianity from the unsatisfactory lives of some who professed it, against whom the Church was continually protesting, and for whose restoration to a sense of duty she

<sup>8</sup> Paris, 1679.

<sup>9</sup> Lib. ii. cap. xvi.

was ever labouring. Among the worst of these (and he is enumerating the worst) he reckons the worshippers of pictures. Could he have employed this language, had pictures been then admitted into Christian churches as objects of any sort of religious worship, primary, or subordinate, direct, or relative, *dulia*, *hyperdulia*, or *latria*, or secondary forms of these? But Augustine knew nothing of such puerile distinctions in things concerning the worship of Almighty God, and the salvation of souls through Christ for ever. He says:—

“Do not, I pray you, collect professors of the Christian name, but who neither know nor show forth the power of their profession. Do not inveigh against crowds of ignorant men, who even in the true religion itself are superstitious, or are so given up to lusts as to forget what they have promised to God. I have known many to be ADORERS of tombs and PICTURES. I have known many who drink most luxuriously over the dead, and, laying a banquet before the corpses, bury themselves over those who are buried, and put down their surfeiting and drunkenness to the score of religion<sup>1</sup>.”

In St. Augustine's works we find so many passages bearing testimony, though diversified, yet essentially the same, against the use of images (applicable equally to statues and pictures in Christian churches, as to idols by the heathen altars), that the difficulty is in the selection. We must content ourselves with a few. The following extracts will show what view he took of the danger of exhibiting statues and pictures to represent absent objects of religious worship:—

“That idols indeed are devoid of all sense, who can doubt? Nevertheless, when they are fixed in these seats, raised to an honourable height, so that they may be regarded by those who pray and those

<sup>1</sup> De Moribus Ecclesiæ, lib. i. cap. xxxiv. vol. i. p. 714.

who sacrifice, although they be senseless and lifeless, yet, by the very resemblance of living members and senses, they so affect weak minds as that they appear to them to live and breathe, especially since this is seconded by the reverence of the multitude by whom so great worship is paid to them<sup>2</sup>.”

To the following passages we adverted, when we proved that the distinction, which the Council of Trent and other favourers of image-worship have attempted to establish between the worship of images now and the worship of idols in heathen times, is altogether without any foundation in fact, and is a most unjustifiable and groundless assumption. The whole comment, however, is so very full of irrefutable arguments against employing any image or picture in divine worship, that we would gladly have transcribed it into these pages. But we have space only for the few following extracts. On the passage, “Lest the Gentiles say, Where is their God?” Augustine comments thus:—

“Because we worship an invisible God, who is known by the bodily eyes of none, and only by the pure hearts of a few, as if on that account the heathen might say, ‘Where is their God?’ whereas they can show their gods to our eyes, he [the Psalmist] first teaches, that the presence of our God is perceived by his works; and, as if he should say, ‘Let the Gentiles show their gods,’ he says, ‘The images of the idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands.’ That is, although we cannot show our God to your carnal eyes, whom you ought to have understood from his works, yet do not be seduced by your vanities, because you can point with your finger to your gods. Much more creditably would you be without what you can show, than that, in what is shown by you to our eyes, the blindness of your heart

<sup>2</sup> Epist. cii. Lib. ad Deogratias, sect. xviii. vol. ii. p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> In Ps. cxiii. Serm. ii. vol. iv. p. 1262.

should be shown. For what do you show but silver and gold? . . . . Do not apply to it the hands of men, as if out of that metal which the true God made you would wish to make a false god, yea, a false man, whom ye might worship for the true God, and whom should any one adopt for his friend as a true man, he would be mad. For the likeness of the form, and the imitative structure of the limbs, carries, and by a kind of low feeling hurries away, the weak hearts of mortals."

After much to the same effect, he proceeds:—

"What is more manifest than this? My beloved brethren, what more plain? What child, were he asked, would not answer, that this is certain? 'The images of the Gentiles have a mouth, and speak not; eyes have they, and see not;' and the rest which the divine word has interwoven. Why, then, does the Holy Spirit take so much care, in very many places of Scripture, to instil and inculcate this as on persons unacquainted with it, as if it were not well known and open to all! Why, except that the appearance of limbs, which we are accustomed to see on living bodies, and to see in ourselves, (although, as they assert, fabricated for a sort of spectacle and placed on a high stand,) when the object begins to be adored and honoured by the multitude, produces in every one the basest feeling; that since in that fictitious thing a man discovers no living motion, he believes there is a hidden divinity; and, deceived by the figure, and influenced by the authority of institutions, and of the crowds following, he does not think that an image, like to a living body, can be there without some living indweller? Wherefore the divine books in other places watch against this, in order to prevent people from saying, when their images are ridiculed, I do not worship that visible thing, but the divinity which invisibly dwells there. The very divinities, therefore, in another psalm, the same Scripture thus condemns, 'The gods of the heathen are demons.' . . . ."

“But those seem to themselves to be of a more purified religion who say, Neither the image nor the demon do I worship; but I regard the bodily figure as the image of that which I ought to worship . . . .”

“But who adores or PRAYS LOOKING AT AN IMAGE, and does not so feel as to suppose that he is heard by it, and hopes that what he desires will be supplied by it? Thus, men bound by such superstitions generally turn their back to the sun itself, and pour forth their prayers to the statue which they call the sun; and while they are struck by the sound of the sea behind, they strike with their sighs the statue of Neptune, which they worship for the sea, as though it had feeling. For the very figure of the bodily members causes, and in a way compels, a living mind, with the senses of the body, to think that the body which it sees most like its own body has feeling, rather than the round sun, and scattered waves, and whatever it sees which is not formed with the same outlines with which those bodies are formed, which it has been accustomed to see alive. Against this feeling, by which human and carnal frailty may be easily influenced, the Scripture of God dwells on the most familiar points, in order to remind men, and, as it were, to rouse the minds of men, sleeping like their bodies. ‘The images of the heathen are silver and gold.’ But God made silver and gold. ‘The work,’ he says, ‘of men’s hands.’ For they reverence that which they themselves made of silver and gold.”

Augustine then anticipates an objection by which a heathen might retort these arguments on the Christian; and we would ask, Is it conceivable, that, had images then been set up in Christian churches to have due reverence paid to them, whether the images of saints or angels, or of the Virgin, or of Christ, Augustine could have thus answered the anticipated objection?



“ But we too have very many instruments and vessels of the same kind of material or metal to be used in celebrating the sacraments, which, consecrated to the service, are dedicated as holy to the honour of Him to whom for our salvation that service is offered. And are those instruments or vessels forsooth any thing else than the work of men’s hands? Nevertheless have they, I ask, a mouth and speak not? have they eyes and see not? Do we offer any supplication to them on the ground that through them we supplicate God? The chief cause of the insane impiety is this, that in the feelings of wretched men the figure resembling a living being has more influence to cause itself to be supplicated, than the certainty of its not having life has to convince one that it ought to be despised by a living man. For the images exercise more power to bend down the unhappy soul, by their having a mouth, and eyes, and ears, and hands, and feet, than they do to set the same soul right by their not being able to speak, nor see, nor hear, nor smell, nor handle, nor walk. Hence it follows, ‘that all who make them and trust in them are like them.’ Let them, therefore, with their open eyes of sense see, and with their shut and dead minds adore, images which neither see nor live.”

Speaking of those who, at Carthage, relied on a similar plea, Augustine says:—

“ But attend to the light in which it is held by the people themselves, not what it is in itself. I and you equally know that it is a stone. . . . We know that it is not a god. Would that they so knew it! but the conscience of those weak persons who do not know this ought not to be hurt. . . . For that they hold it as a divinity, and receive that statue as a divinity, the altar testifies. Let no one tell me, It is not a divinity, it is not a god. I have already said, Would that they so knew this, as all of us

know it! But why they have it, and for what thing they have it, and what they do there, the altar bears witness<sup>4</sup>.”

Would that the advocates for image-worship would act upon these principles of Christian charity!

But while Augustine thus shows that image-worship had no place nor name in the Catholic Church of Christ, he plainly intimates that heretics were beginning to introduce this heathen practice, and so corrupt the purity of Christian worship. In his arguments against Adimantus, a disciple of Manichæus, he tells us that that misbeliever, in calumniating the Scripture, seemed to have no other reason for speaking with reproof of God's jealousy, than because “WE ARE PROHIBITED by that jealousy to worship images. He, therefore, wishes himself to appear favourable to images, and for this reason, that he might conciliate even the good-will of pagans to his mad sect<sup>5</sup>.”

Again, in his book on Heresies, speaking of the Carpocratians, Augustine says:—“Tradition says one Marcelina belonged to that sect, who worshipped the images of Jesus, and Paul, and Homer, and Pythagoras, by adoring them and putting incense before them<sup>6</sup>.”

We have space only for one more passage. It is from his work “*De Civitate Dei*,” in which he adverts to the doctrines of Varro, who had made great progress towards the truth, but was not in possession of it:—

“He, Varro, also says, that the ancient Romans, for more than 170 years, worshipped their gods without an image. And if that custom, he says, had continued, the gods would have been more holily worshipped. And as a testimony to his own judgment, he cites, among others, the Jewish nation; nor

<sup>4</sup> Ser. lxii. de Verbis Evang. Matt. viii. vol. v. p. 361.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. viii. p. 126.

<sup>6</sup> Lib. de Hær. cap. vii.

does he hesitate to finish the passage by affirming, that those who first placed the images of the gods before the people, both robbed their republics of fear, and added error; wisely considering that the gods would easily fall into contempt by the absurdity of the images<sup>7</sup>."

How are we here irresistibly drawn to contemplate the parallel, and the contrast, between pagan and Christian Rome! The public worship of pagan Rome was preserved for 170 years free from the ensnaring and degrading superstition of worshipping the unseen divinity by the intervention of images; and a heathen could set his seal to the conviction that, had their original custom continued, their worship would have been more pure and holy. Not for 170 years, but for at least that space three times told, or rather quadrupled, did Christian Rome adhere in this respect to the faith and practice of the Apostolic age. And on the principles which the voice of Christendom re-echoes from all parts of the Lord's vineyard, we can only repeat and apply to our present subject the sentiments of the heathen Varro, "How much more pure and holy would the worship of Almighty God have been in the Church of his ever-blessed Son, had the heathenish corruption of worshipping by the intervention of images never thrust out the primitive and apostolical spiritual service!" That so lamentable a scandal, which has so long fixed its stain on Christendom, may, in God's good time, be expelled from his holy Church, it is our duty, patiently, and heartily, and unwearyedly, to pray, and labour.

<sup>7</sup> Lib. v. cap. xxxi.

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# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XXV.

## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VII.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH (*Continued*).

#### SECTION III.

FROM THE TESTIMONY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, TO POPE  
GREGORY THE GREAT.



LONDON:

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IN examining the references to the Psalms, the reader will bear in mind that our English version, which strictly follows the original Hebrew, differs from the Roman Catholic version in the numbering of the Psalms from the 9th to the 147th. The Roman Catholic version throws our 9th and 10th Psalms into one; and thus our 11th becomes their 10th, our 12th their 11th, and so on till the 147th, which they divide into two, beginning their 147th at the 12th verse of ours. Between these limits, consequently, the reader, in referring to a passage quoted from the Roman Catholic version, must turn in our version to the Psalm next after that so quoted. Thus, if the quotation is taken from the 50th Psalm in the Roman Catholic version, the reader must refer to the 51st Psalm in ours.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VII.

*Evidence of the Primitive Church (Continued).*

### SECTION III.

*From St. Augustine, to Pope Gregory the Great.*

*St. Jerome, A. D. 418<sup>1</sup>.*

WE have already observed, that it is to this doctor of the Latin Church we are indebted for the preservation of that letter of Eusebius in which he records his zeal in tearing down a picture of Christ, or of a saint, which he found hanging in one of the churches in Palestine. The supporters of image-worship seem to have appealed only to two passages in the remains of this Father; and the appeal is in both cases utterly futile.

Those who hold that an image is to be worshipped with the self-same adoration which is due to the Being represented by the image, refer to a letter in which Jerome says, that Paula fell prostrate before the cross, and adored as though she saw our Lord hanging upon it. "But (say they) she adored the

<sup>1</sup> Verona, 1734.



Lord with supreme worship, therefore it was with supreme worship that she adored the cross."

Here Cardinal Bellarmine, who held a different doctrine as to the nature of the worship to be paid to images, saves us all trouble, by himself pointing out that Paula did not worship the cross at all, but worshipped before it, as fervently as though she saw our Lord hanging upon it<sup>2</sup>.

Another passage to which we are referred by the Cardinal himself, is quoted to show that the Jews worshipped the sanctuary. But the word used by St. Jerome in the passage means, in his vocabulary, "esteem," "reverence," such as all of us are ready to feel and to show towards any thing dedicated to God's service; nay, he employs the same word to express the regard which a man feels towards any one thing above another. Thus he says: "A clergyman easily falls into contempt, if he is often invited to dinner and never refuses. . . . If you treat with neglect the person who asks you, he respects [*veneratur*] you more afterwards<sup>3</sup>." Dissuading a clergyman from forming any secular habits in the hope of conciliating the men of the world, he says: "The secular judge will pay more deference to a self-denying, than to a rich clergyman, and will respect [*venerabitur*] your holiness more than your wealth<sup>4</sup>." The works of Jerome remarkably abound with this use of the word.

"The Jews formerly revered [*venerabantur*] the holy of holies, because in it was the mercy-seat, and the cherubim, and the ark of the covenant, and the manna, and Aaron's rod: does not the sepulchre of our Lord seem to you more deserving of reverence [*venerabilius*]?"

But while in Jerome no vestige can be discovered

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 691, ad Eustochium, epist. cviii. Bellarm. lib. ii. c. 20. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Epist. lii. p. 267; Epist. xlvi. Paulæ et Eustoch. ad Marcellam, vol. i. p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> Epist. lii. p. 263.

of his approval, or even of his knowledge of the religious use of images in Christian worship, the language in which, like his contemporaries and predecessors, he speaks of idol-worship, leads us inevitably to the conclusion, that, had he known and approved of the use of images, he would have qualified his language, in order to except them from his condemnation. To expect to meet with prohibitions of an evil not yet in existence, is altogether preposterous. We have seen, in the case both of Epiphanius and of Eusebius, that when they observed any signs of such a superstition, either in an individual or among a Christian congregation, they reprov'd it, and put it to shame.

The passages, however, are very many in which Jerome not only condemns the folly of worshipping an image, but fixes the folly upon that very point in which pagan idols and the images used by Christians entirely agree; the folly, that is, of a man falling down before an insensible material figure, the work of man's own hands. And whereas the Council of Trent<sup>5</sup> speaks distinctly of Christians not only kissing images, and uncovering the head, but falling prostrate before them, St. Jerome as distinctly says, that, to the best of his recollection, to "fall down to adore" is applied in Scripture to the worshippers of idols, and not of the true God. With the accuracy of his criticism we have no concern now; we are inquiring as to his testimony.

In his comment on Isaiah he says<sup>6</sup>: "The discourse is against the idolaters of the time in which the prophet lived; and he convicts those who, despising the religion of Almighty God, bent down to images of wood, and adored the works of their own hands. . . . And not only shall the things which are made, but those who made them, be accounted for nothing. . . . And when the time of vengeance shall come, the works of their own hands will in no wise be able to

<sup>5</sup> Session xxv.

<sup>6</sup> Comment on Isaiah, lib. xii. cap. xlv. vol. iv. p. 527.

rescue them; but, being blind and insensible, will confound those who formed them. For who can believe that a deity can be formed by an axe, and an auger, and a mallet? and that images can be cast in burning coals and melted, or suddenly rise into deities by help of a rule and a saw, and squarings and compasses? especially since the worthlessness of the art is proved by the hunger and thirst of the artificer. A wooden image is made, expressing a human form; the more beautiful it is, the more august a god is it thought: and that which a long time grew in the woods, and was, according to the variety of trees, a cedar, oak, or pine, is placed in a shrine, and shut in an eternal prison. And, in a strange way, cuttings of it and chips are thrown upon the hearth to warm the maker of a god, and to dress his pottage; and another part is fashioned into a god, so that, when the work is done, its maker may adore it, and pray the succour of his own work.”

In his comment on Daniel, chap. iii., Jerome, remarking on the expression, very often repeated, of “falling down and worshipping the golden image<sup>7</sup>,” says: “Running over in my mind the whole of Holy Scripture, (unless my forgetfulness deceives me,) I never find that any of the saints fell down and adored God; but whoever adored idols and demons, and unlawful things, is said to have fallen down and adored, as in the present passage, not once, but frequently. And in the Gospel the devil saith to our Lord, ‘All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.’”

Jerome speaks of our possessing images, and our having idols painted on the walls of our temples; but the image we must thus possess is the image of God, according to whose likeness we were created, which was lost by sin, and must be regained by repentance; and the idols painted on the walls of our temples are

<sup>7</sup> Com. in Dan. cap. iii. vol. v. p. 636.

the deformities of sin<sup>8</sup>. "We, too, can show idols painted on the walls of our temple, when we are subject to all vices, and paint the conscience and divers images of sin in our heart. . . . There is no man who has not some image, either of holiness or of sin<sup>9</sup>."

*Orosius and Sedulius*, A.D. 400.

*Vincentius*, A.D. 440.

These three are numbered in the Roman Canon Law among the Fathers whose works are to be received as orthodox. Not one word can be found in any of them to imply that they knew any thing whatever of the existence of image-worship in their days. And certainly in the History of Orosius, and in his work on free-will, we should have expected to find traces of image-worship, had it been in being; and in the poem of Sedulius, and the parallel version in prose (if that be his) in which he laments the sad effects of idolatry, had Christians then worshipped the images of the holy saints and martyrs, and the pure Virgin, and the divine Saviour, the poet must have taken advantage of the contrast between the objects of worship in the two cases.

A passage, however, has been quoted by Bellarmin and others, which, in words, seems to imply that Sedulius would have the cross worshipped. It is a very strange passage, in which the writer says, that the cross must be worshipped (*colenda* in the poem, *causam venerationis* and *adoranda* are the words used in the prose version, if sound criticism can admit that version as the production of the same man) because it comprehends the four quarters of the world, the head of Christ, as He hung upon the cross, embracing the east; the feet pleased with the west; the north being represented by the right; the

<sup>8</sup> In Jerem. Hom. xiii. vol. v. p. 365.

<sup>9</sup> In Ezek. cap. viii. vol. v. p. 86.

south brightened by the left. This we must leave as we find it. One editor says the writer was a Scotsman; another says this writer and the Scot were different men. The whole of this evidence is so vague and confused, that we must be content with referring the reader to it. The prose never appeared till 1585: Bellarmin seems not to have known of the existence of any such version<sup>1</sup>.

Of Vincentius we cannot say less, than that, if the principles of Christian faith and worship which he pronounces to be fundamental, had been adhered to in the Roman Church, the Roman Church would to this day have been free from the deplorable inroads and innovations on the pure primitive worship of Christians which in an especial manner stamp her degeneracy.

Orosius, at the close of his work on free-will, employs an expression to which we must all respond with hearty sympathy: "Jesus Christ is my witness; I confess I hate heresy, but not a heretic."

In the "*Bibliotheca Patrum*<sup>2</sup>," between the remains of Orosius and Sedulius, we find, among others, a work entitled "*Consultations between Zaccheus, a Christian, and Apollonius, a philosopher.*" That the date of this work is somewhere in the fifth century, no doubt is entertained: Fabricius sees reason for referring it to so late a date as A. D. 470; others think that too late by perhaps fifty years.

This work, merely as the production of the century to which all ascribe it, without reference to its author, affords valuable evidence on the point before us. We cannot conceive that, had the worship of images been then recognised in the Christian Church, the heathen philosopher would have confined his objection, as he does, to the case of the images of the

<sup>1</sup> *Biblioth. Patr.* tom. ix. p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> Venice, 1773, vol. ix. p. 217.

living emperors; nor could the Christian have made only the answer which we now read, as follows:—

Apollonius philosopher: “Your reproof has doubtless some show of truth, but can be met by a refutation. We [heathens] adore the statues and images of those whom we believe truly and religiously to be gods, or, as instructed by ancient tradition, do not know that they are not gods: and you [Christians] to whom that is an abomination, why do you venerate, even with public adoration, on the ground of reverence towards kings, images of men, either painted on wax tablets or formed of metal, and give even to men the honour, as yourselves preach, due to God only? If this is not allowable, but contrary to law, why do you Christians do this? or why do your priests not forbid it, that you may not, under the plea of duty, incur knowingly the very thing which you charge on us, though in ignorance, as an abomination?”

Here we would ask, if this philosopher could have alleged against the Christians not only the unjustifiable flattering homage which they joined the heathen in paying to the pictures and statues of their living sovereigns, but the religious worship of pictures and images of dead men and women, and unseen spirits, would he not of necessity have urged that objection? And then would not the Christian's answer have been totally different from what it is, and an answer which would have drawn a distinction between the worship of images by Christians, and of idols by the heathen; an answer, therefore, more in accordance with the positive, but, as we have shown, unfounded assertion of the Council of Trent? The Christian's answer is as follows:—

“That, indeed, is what I am not bound to approve, nor can I; because, by the palpable commands of God, we are not permitted to adore the elements, nor the angels, nor any whatever of the powers of heaven and earth, or the air. This name [adoration] belongs

to our duty to God, and is a reverence higher than all human veneration : but, just as flattery first drove men into an evil of this kind, so now custom scarcely recalls them from the error ; in which, however, you find only an unguarded obsequiousness, not any divine worship. The excessive pleasure excited by seeing the likeness of countenances that are beloved, produces a greater expression of feeling than perhaps even those [kings] would require to whom it is shown, or than they ought to express who show it. And although the more strict Christians abhor this custom of unguarded obsequiousness, and their priests do not cease to forbid it, yet he is not called a god whose image is saluted ; nor are the images fumed with frankincense ; nor are they placed above altars to be worshipped ; but they are exposed as memorials of merit, that they may afford to posterity an example of praiseworthy deeds, or bring back contemporaries from their bad conduct. The very persons to whom these marks of obsequiousness may be offered, were they consulted, would be unwilling for it to be done ; or, although they do not extinguish such a custom of vain-glory, yet without rashly assuming to themselves any thing divine, they confess themselves mortals unworthy of the honour of God, to whom they owe what they are.”

Here we find that consistent Christians held the heathen custom of worshipping the images of the living emperors in abhorrence, and that the ministers of their religion forbade its continuance ; yet the practice, of which we have very many records, was too inveterate for the influence of Christianity to destroy at once. But, had the pictures and images of our blessed Lord, the Virgin Mary, the angels of heaven, and saints in heaven, been set up in the Christian churches, of necessity the heathen philosopher would have seized upon that, as the strongest proof of inconsistency in a Christian condemning the heathen for worshipping the images of those whom they be-

lieved to be gods, and at the same time himself worshipping the images of creatures.

*Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, A.D. 440*<sup>3</sup>.

When we read, as the words of this truly evangelical and apostolic man, in the close of his work on the right faith, "Our hope is all in Christ," it would doubtless be matter of surprise to us, could we detect in his writings any indication of his approval of image-worship. Indeed, we are not aware of any appeal having been made to him by the advocates of that worship, though in the Tridentine Catechism his name is mentioned with many others. Were we to quote the passages in which, without any modification, or exception of Christian images, he condemns the worship of the works of men's hands, we should repeat what we have already again and again brought forward in the case of other primitive writers: we have only room for one or two extracts.

We have seen how strangely and perversely the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," was interpreted in the Second Nicene Council, to forbid our serving any other being but God, yet not to forbid our worshipping any other, because the word ONLY is attached to "serve," and not to "worship." Instead of thus trifling with the word of God by frivolous and evasive subtleties, in order to escape from its plain and obvious force (distinctions to which an honest man would be ashamed to have recourse in his own behalf, in the interpretation either of his father's will, or of an agreement between man and man), Cyril accepts the command in all its breadth and fulness:—

"The Son is one of those who are worshipped, not of those who worship; for it says, 'Let all the angels

<sup>3</sup> Paris, 1638.



of God worship Him.' For not angels, but God alone, is any one ordered to worship; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve<sup>4,5</sup>."

Instead of representing the mercy-seat and the cherubim as having been objects of worship to the Israelites, and thence inferring that it is agreeable to the analogy of faith for Christians to worship images, (as the members of the Second Nicene Council, and Cardinal Bellarmine, and other moderns, including the authors of the notes in the Douay Bible, have strangely argued,) Cyril writes, that the " Jewish priests, when they turned to the ark, and saw it, thought they were turned to God, and saw Him; and if the mercy-seat is viewed spiritually, we say that it is He who was made man for us, whom God sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood<sup>6</sup>."

We have seen that a common charge made by the heathen against the Christians was, that they worshipped the cross; and we have seen how this charge is met by a direct denial of its truth. Julian connects this charge with another, namely, that the Christians set up the form of the cross in their houses, and before their doors, and signed their foreheads with it. Instead of replying to such ever-repeated charges, Cyril tells us that Christians used the sign of the honoured cross to remind them of their duty to cultivate every moral and spiritual excellence<sup>6</sup>.

Cyril abounds with passages in which he speaks of the image of God; but it is as that image is seen either in all its fulness in His ever-blessed Son; or else in the soul of man, who was created after the likeness of his Maker, and has that image, which was lost by sin, renewed and restored by repentance,

<sup>4</sup> Thesaurus, vol. v. p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> De Adorat. in Spirit. et Ver. lib. ix. vol. i. p. 295.

<sup>6</sup> Cont. Julian. lib. vi. tom. vii. p. 194.

and faithful obedience, through the free grace of God<sup>7</sup>.

*Isidore of Pelusium, A. D. 450<sup>8</sup>.*

In the letters of this spiritually-minded man, of which more than two thousand have escaped the ravages of time, no trace of image-worship can be found. And yet in many of his epistles, had such an innovation been then brought into the Church, some reference to it might naturally have been expected. He laments one innovation on primitive Christian excellence, which, being in his time a growing evil, paid more attention to the visible decking and ornaments of the ecclesiastical buildings, than to the adorning the Church itself, the congregation of Christian souls, with spiritual graces.

“Were the choice given to me,” he says, “for my part, I should rather have lived in those times when the churches were not yet so decked, but when the Church was crowned with divine and heavenly graces, than in these times, when the churches are beautified with all kinds of marbles, and the Church is stripped naked and bare of those spiritual graces<sup>9</sup>.”

The only image of God of which Isidore speaks, is primarily, and in the highest sense, his ever-blessed Son<sup>1</sup>; and, in a real, though secondary sense, the soul of a Christian devoted to God<sup>2</sup>. But we hear from him of no visible and material image of our blessed Saviour, or of the saints, set up and worshipped.

*Theodoret, A. D. 457<sup>3</sup>.*

While no appeal seems to have been made to this copious writer in support of image-worship, his works abound with proofs that his principles of interpreting

<sup>7</sup> Comment. in Joan. tom. iv. p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> Paris, 1638.

<sup>9</sup> Lib. ii. epist. cexlvi.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ii. epist. cxliii.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. epist. xvi.

<sup>3</sup> Halle, 1769.

Scripture, and his views generally on the points before us, were altogether at variance with the supposition, that he either approved, or was even cognisant, of any practice among Christians of employing images in their worship.

The language in which he condemns the preposterous folly of idol-worship is equally applicable to images in Christian churches. "They are," he says, "senseless, motionless, lifeless representations of invisible beings, and unable to protect themselves from insult, or those who made them from harm<sup>4</sup>." The passages are many in which he must have made exceptions of such images as are now set up in churches, had they existed in his time.

The following objection, for example, applies equally to the image or painting of our blessed Lord and of the Virgin Mary, and of a saint, as to the image of Jupiter, and Juno, and Diana. "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man." Unwilling to understand that the Creator of all things is free from corruption, and higher than all objects of sight, these men call the images of their own bodies deities; for the makers of statues and effigies, and painters, do not make their images resemblances even of their invisible souls, but of their corruptible bodies<sup>5</sup>."

And as now among the worshippers of images, we find most contradictory opinions maintained; so Theodoret tells us that vast disputes prevailed among the worshippers of idols, as to the nature of the gods whom their idols represented:—

"So great a battle is there among their poets and philosophers concerning those which are not gods, but are called gods. To these they build temples and raise altars; and honour them with sacrifices; and, fabri-

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxiii. vol. i. part ii. p. 1413.

<sup>5</sup> In Rom. cap. i. vol. iii. part i. p. 25.

cating certain effigies and likenesses of stone and wood and other materials, they address the works of their hands as gods; and the images produced by the art of Phidias, Polycletus, and Praxiteles, they deem worthy of a divine appellation. Charging them with this error, Xenophanes says, ‘Mortals think that the gods are born, and have the same senses, and voice, and bodies with ourselves’<sup>6</sup>.”

In his interpretation of holy Scripture, too, Theodoret is far from countenancing those forced meanings which such men as Bellarmin himself are not ashamed to press into their service, when they seek for some ground in the sacred volume on which to build their innovations. Thus, on the passage in the Psalms which we translate, “Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool,” and which they, in proof that creatures are to be honoured on account of their relation to God, interpret, “Worship his footstool,” Theodoret makes this comment:—

“Make such a return as you can to your Benefactor, and offer the reverence due to Him. ‘Exalt Him;’ that is, proclaim his exalted state. ‘His footstool:’ in former days the Temple of Jerusalem was so called, but now the churches throughout all the land and sea, in which we offer our worship to the most holy God<sup>8</sup>.”

The forced and unnatural attempt in the Second Council of Nice to distinguish between “*service*” and “*worship*,” to which we have already adverted, is as contrary to the interpretation of Theodoret, as it is to common sense. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” “This only forbids you,” said they, “to *serve* any thing else; it does not forbid you to *worship* any thing else; therefore it does not forbid our worshipping of images.”

<sup>6</sup> Græc. Affect. Curat. disp. iii. vol. iv. part ii. p. 779.]

<sup>7</sup> Bell. lib. ii. cap. xii. “Adorate scabellum pedum ejus.” Ps. xcix. 5. This is the translation of the Roman Vulgate.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. i. part ii. p. 1307.

But the lesson which we learn of Theodoret is of a very different kind. In answer to a question arising from Exodus, chap. xx., "What is the difference between an idol and a similitude?" (a graven image and a likeness, as we read it) having said that the idol is nothing in existence, and the likeness is the image and resemblance of something, and having illustrated this by instancing the gods of Egypt and of Greece, Theodoret says: "These the Lawgiver bids us neither worship nor serve. Yet he does not simply forbid both these; but, since it may happen that a person through fear of man may outwardly worship, and yet not serve in his soul, the Lawgiver teaches us that both are impious<sup>9</sup>."

He describes the cherubim, and the brazen serpent, but he does not hint that they were made objects of religious worship to the Israelites<sup>1</sup>.

We must content ourselves with one other instance of the manner in which the sentiments and language of Theodoret run counter to the innovations and superstitions of the Romish Church. That Church holds, that, while the service called "*latria*" is to be confined to the Supreme Being, the religious worship called "*dulia*" is of right due to the angels and saints, a middle worship being still reserved exclusively for the blessed Virgin. And, as we have seen, canonised saints of that Church have held, that *dulia* is to be paid to the images of saints, while *latria* is due only to the images of the Godhead, and to the cross. That Theodoret could not have recognised, or been familiar with such unwarrantable sophisms, while it is evident throughout, is especially shown in the following passage<sup>2</sup>:—

"He [Joshua] exhorts them to sever themselves from the service [*dulia*] of the strange gods, and to

<sup>9</sup> Vol. i. part i. p. 149.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. part i. p. 163; vol. i. part i. p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Quest. on Josh. Ch. xxiv. vol. i. part i. p. 319.

serve [*latria*] God alone, who made and saved them. He moreover gives them the choice, saying to them, 'Choose for yourselves to-day whom you will serve [*latria*], whether the gods of your fathers beyond the rivers, or the gods of the Amorites, among whom ye dwell in their land.' Having thus offered to the rest the choice, he shows the piety of his own mind: 'As for me and my house,' he says, 'we will serve [*latria*] the Lord God, for He is holy.' Then, when the people renounced the worship [*latria*] of false gods, and promised to serve [*dulia*] God alone, who saved them, the most pious Joshua taking it up, says to them, 'Ye cannot serve [*latria*] the Lord, because God is holy; and being jealous with you, He will not bear your iniquities and sins when ye shall desert the Lord and serve [*latria*] other gods.' . . . And when they accepted this also, and promised to serve [*dulia*] the Lord, he urges on them, 'Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that you have chosen the Lord to serve [*dulia*] Him.'"

*Prosper, A. D. 460.*

This being a writer whom the canon law of Rome designates as a very religious man, we mention his name here merely to say, that not a trace of image-worship is to be found in any of his remains. He was the disciple, and friend, and defender of St. Augustine; and certainly, trained as he was under such a master, we should have been astonished had we found in him any intimation of his acquiescence in the worship of images; and there is none.

*Pope Leo, A. D. 461<sup>3</sup>.*

It is impossible for a Church to give its sanction to any one of its teachers and saints more fully and un-

<sup>3</sup> Venice, 1753.

reservedly than the Church of Rome has given her sanction to Pope Leo. On the subject of our present inquiry, had the images of our Saviour, or the blessed Virgin, or the saints, been then set up in the churches for religious worship; or had the cross been an object of adoration then as it is now in the Church of Rome; it is scarcely possible to conceive that Leo's sermons would have been without any vestige of such practices. He delivered many sermons upon the festival of Christ's nativity, upon his crucifixion, and upon his resurrection. He preached on the anniversaries of St. Peter and St. Paul, apostrophising the city of Rome as having been signally blessed by the teaching and example of those two great Apostles; and apostrophising Peter as the honoured tutelary saint of grateful and admiring Rome. Had their images then adorned the walls of the churches in Rome, or had our blessed Lord's image then been lifted up on high to be worshipped, some reference to it would assuredly have fallen from him. But we seek in vain for any intimations of the kind.

There are, however, some passages of so directly contrary a tendency, that we do not wonder at the anxiety which has been shown to explain away their force, and escape from the application of them to modern superstitions. Indeed, if the principles which Leo professes had been acted upon as Christian charity required, such stumbling-blocks as image-worship would never have been placed in the way of sincere but humble believers. Thus, in his third sermon on our Lord's nativity, he urges his audience to be on their guard against the illusions of the enemy of souls, who would by his machinations try to corrupt the religious joys of that blessed day, by suggesting the adoption of the views of some deceived men, who held the day sacred, not so much on account of the birth of Christ, as on account of the rising of the new Sun, as they termed it. "Whose hearts," he continues, "involved in deep darkness, are severed

from all increase of the true light. They are drawn away by the most absurd errors of the heathen; and because they cannot raise their minds above what they see with their eyes of flesh, they venerate with divine honour the ministering luminaries of the world. May such impious superstition and monstrous deception be far removed from Christians! Beyond all measure eternal things are distant from temporal, incorporeal from corporeal, the subjects from their sovereign Lord. Though those things have a beauty to be admired, they have no divinity to be adored. That excellence, then, that wisdom, that majesty is to be worshipped, which created the universal world out of nothing, and by his omnipotent mind produced the heavenly and earthly matter into such forms and measures as to Him seemed good<sup>4</sup>."

Leo is here speaking of paying religious reverence to God's creatures, and condemns it as heathenish. But now we have the worship of images defended on the evidence of Scripture, "that some ground is holy," "that Christ forbids his followers to swear by the heaven, because it is God's throne, or by the earth, for it is his footstool," and "therefore both are creatures to be religiously honoured, because of their relation to God<sup>5</sup>."

Again, after speaking of the idolatry which certain fatalists and astrologers encouraged, he reprobates a custom which he traces to the same origin; and that in words which testify against all who allow themselves in any practice which is unauthorised by true religion, and which exposes to error those who are less learned and less grounded in the faith. He says:—

"Of such practices this impiety is the offspring, that the sun rising at the opening of the light of day is from eminences adored by some of the less wise

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> See Bellarmin, tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. xii.



class<sup>6</sup>; a practice which even some Christians so far themselves religiously observe, that, before they come to the church of the blessed Apostle Peter, which is dedicated to the one living and true God, having mounted the steps by which they ascend to the level of the higher floor, turning their bodies, they look to the rising sun, and bowing their necks, they bend themselves in honour of the brilliant orb. That this should be done partly by the fault of ignorance, partly by the spirit of paganism, we are much depressed and grieved; because, although SOME PERHAPS WORSHIP THE CREATOR OF THE FAIR LUMINARY RATHER THAN THE LUMINARY ITSELF, WHICH IS A CREATURE, yet it is our duty to abstain even from the very appearance of that service, which, when he who has left the worship of the gods finds among our people, will he not retain with himself, as a thing to be approved, this part of his old opinion which he finds to be common to Christians and to the pagans [*impiis*]? Let, then, such reprehensible perverseness be cast away far from Christians, and let not the honour due to God only be mingled with the rites of those who serve creatures. . . . Awake then, O man, and acknowledge the dignity of your nature. Remember you were made after the image of God, which, though it was corrupted in Adam, was formed again in Christ. Use the visible creatures as they ought to be used, as you use the earth, sea, heavens, air, fountains, and rivers. . . . Touch the corporeal light with the corporeal sense; and with the entire feeling of the mind embrace that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. . . . For if we are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in us, what every faithful one has in his own mind, is more than what is admired in the heavens<sup>7</sup>.”

<sup>6</sup> See Serm. lxxxii. on the birth-day (that is, the martyrdom) of Peter and Paul, p. 322.

<sup>7</sup> Serm. viii. in Nat. Dom. p. 95.

Of the cross of Christ he speaks as we hope no son or daughter of the Church of England will ever be ashamed to speak<sup>8</sup>. But when he speaks of the cross; it is not a frame of wood or stone set up to be worshipped, but that cross on which Christ shed his blood, or that moral and spiritual cross which all Christians are bound to bear.

We will quote only one more passage from this great oracle of the Church of Rome, and we would gladly have found that its sentiments had been more satisfactorily adopted by his successors, and by the Romish Church at large:—

“What need is there to admit into the heart what the law has not taught, what prophecy has not proclaimed, what the truth of the Gospel has not preached, what the Apostolic doctrine has not delivered down<sup>9</sup>?”

Had Leo's principles here been realised, there would have been no images in Christian churches.

Through the forty years which elapsed between the death of Leo and the conclusion of the fifth century, six several Pontiffs occupied the Papal throne: Hilarius, A. D. 461; Simplicius, A. D. 467; Felix, A. D. 483; Gelasius, A. D. 492; Anastasius, A. D. 496; and Symmachus, A. D. 498, whose life was extended to A. D. 514, that is, fourteen years beyond the period to which our present inquiry is limited. For although we must give a general view of the state of Christendom with regard to image-worship through the two following centuries, we consider five hundred years more than enough to enable us to pronounce, with unhesitating confidence, that the whole system is an innovation; that, so far from having any ground or countenance in holy Scripture, it militates against the plainest dictates of God's word, and

<sup>8</sup> Serm. iv. de Pass. Dom. pp. 209. 227, &c.

<sup>9</sup> Epist. xii. vol. i. p. 704.

the broadest and most palpable principles of faith and conduct; and that, so far from being supported by the testimony of the earliest Fathers and accredited teachers in the Church of Christ, not a vestige of it is to be found in their works as a practice approved by them, while the overwhelming mass of their evidence runs directly against it.

In the works of these six Popes who lived between Leo and Hormisda, successor to Symmachus, not a syllable can be found to intimate that they either approved of image-worship in the Church, or were cognisant of its existence. And yet, in their letters to bishops and emperors, on subjects of Church discipline, there were many points ruled, or suggested, or forbidden, of far less moment than image-worship. We find, throughout the proceedings at this time, an uniform, steady, untiring determination to establish the supremacy of the Papal government of Rome above all the churches in the world; and not only do we find mandates issued through distant provinces to refer all cases of difficulty and privilege to the decision of the Apostolate, a title which the bishopric of Rome had assumed to itself; but we find repeated references to Rome on subjects both of doctrine and discipline. In the Pontifical book<sup>1</sup>, whatever be its authority, Pope Symmachus is said to have adorned the churches with various silver ornaments, shrines, crosses, and images; but whether this be so or not, there is not a shadow of an intimation that they were set up as objects of religious worship. But they warn us how far more safe, and wise, and Christian a thing it is to preserve the Church of God free from those innovations, which weak and corrupt nature can scarcely fail to convert into superstition.

Although we have already examined the evidence of the Primitive Church down to a date below the

<sup>1</sup> See Conc. Gen. A. D. 498.

period within which we purposed to limit our inquiry, so very important a witness existed at the end of the sixth century, that we are induced to devote some time to his testimony, as a link connecting the ages in the Christian Church which were free from the superstition of image-worship, with those which have been tarnished, and, to a great extent, unchristianised, by that inroad on Apostolical worship. The witness we advert to is Pope Gregory the Great, who succeeded to the see of Rome A. D. 590, and died A. D. 604. How many and deplorable were the superstitions which had forced themselves within the precincts of the Christian sanctuary, or had stealthily insinuated themselves, displacing some doctrinal or practical truths, or else mingling themselves with others, and making them more like the offspring of paganism than of the Gospel, we have had already many occasions to observe. And even the very testimony of Gregory the Great, though it proves that at the commencement of the seventh century the religious worship of images was still discountenanced in Christendom, yet tells us too plainly, that in many departments degrading errors had already established themselves, and that in many other portions of the garden of the Lord seeds were sown in a soil already prepared for them, the fruits of which were destined to convert the pure unadulterated worship of the Almighty, into a debasing superstition, mingling it with heathenish and unspiritual rites; and, under the plea of exalting Christian faith, cutting away the very foundation of true and certain Christian hope; teaching for doctrines the inventions of men, and paving the way for that maxim (the dreadful result of which we have with sorrow of heart and astonishment witnessed), **EITHER ROME OR INFIDELITY.** But on the subject of image-worship the evidence of Gregory the Great is quite satisfactory, though, by the language in which he prescribed the use of pictures and images in the

churches, he has unhappily, though unwittingly, lent his name to countenance the worst sort of that profanation. The passages are well known, but it will be more safe to quote them in this place.

While Gregory was Bishop of Rome, Serenus was Bishop of Marseilles. At that time many in the south of Gaul remained unconverted pagans, and the converts to Christianity still retained much of their former superstitions; among others, the paying of religious adoration to the visible material representations of invisible spirits—a custom to which the unsound principle of allowing evil that good may come induced the rulers in Christ's Church too readily to give countenance. By doing so, they probably made the change from paganism to the outward profession of Christianity more easy, and so increased the numbers of those who called themselves Christians; but at the same time they lowered the holy religion of spirit and truth to the corruptions of degenerate human nature, which has ever hankered after visible objects of worship, substituting outward observances for the inward conversion of the heart.

Serenus<sup>2</sup>, observing that pictures and images in the churches laid too strong a temptation before the people, and acting on the principle of St. Augustine, that images set up in holy places would naturally seduce men to make them objects of worship, and finding, by his own experience, professed Christians actually worshipping pictures and images within his diocese, had them taken down and destroyed. Like Phineas of old, he was zealous for the honour of his God, and he resolved at once to cut up the noxious, growing evil, root and branch; and to this day Christendom may lament, that, instead of being commended for his zeal to its full extent, and seconded in it, he was rebuked by the Roman Pontiff. The

<sup>2</sup> We have already briefly adverted to this important circumstance in a previous number of the present series of Tracts on "What is Romanism?" No. xxi. p. 6.

first letter which Gregory wrote to Serenus is couched in these terms<sup>3</sup> :—

“That we have been so long in writing to you, brother, put down not to indifference, but to my engagements. The bearer of these, our most beloved son Cyriacus, the father of a monastery, I commend to you in all things, that no delay may detain him in Marseilles, but that he may proceed to our brother and fellow-bishop, Syagrius, with the consolation of your Holiness, under the protection of God.”

“Besides, I apprise you, that long ago information was brought to us, that you, brother, witnessing some adorers<sup>4</sup> of images, broke in pieces the same images in the churches, and cast them out. Now, we praise you for your zeal in preventing any thing made with hands from being worshipped, but we apprise you, that you ought not to break the said images; for on this account is a picture admitted in the churches, that those who are unlearned, at least by looking on the walls, may read what they cannot read in books. You ought, then, brother, both to preserve them, and to prohibit the people from worshipping them; so that those who are ignorant of letters, may have the means of obtaining a knowledge of history, and the people never sin at all in the adoration of the picture.”

Looking to human nature, as the knowledge of history leads us to look, we cannot help inferring that Gregory was unintentionally enjoining two inconsistent and incompatible things. From paying religious *reverence* to images and pictures hung up in our holiest places of religious *worship* (and that is, at the very least, what the Council of Trent commands), the transition is very short and easy to the religious adoration of them. It ever has been so; it is so now; and while human nature remains the same, it ever

<sup>3</sup> Paris, 1705, vol. ii. epist. lib. ix. epist. cv.

<sup>4</sup> “Imaginum adoratores.”

must be so. And that Gregory himself did not any longer regard images and pictures as merely works of art, fitted to adorn churches, and to teach the unlearned, but as possessing a claim for religious reverence, we learn from the following circumstance, to which the advocates for the system of the Romish Church are fond of referring<sup>5</sup>.

A certain Jew, lately converted, had, with some ungovernable companions, taken forcible possession of a synagogue on Easter-day, and had carried into it an image or picture of the Virgin and of Christ, and a cross, and the white garment in which he had been baptized the day before : and Gregory, directing that reparation be made, prescribes that the picture, and the cross (which he calls venerable<sup>6</sup>), should be removed "with the veneration that is due."

What Gregory would term due veneration does not appear ; certainly he denounces worship, or adoration. Probably he meant merely that the removal should be made not tumultuously nor recklessly, but just as we are charged to place the offerings on the Lord's table, reverently. Be this as it may, Serenus seems to have thought it improbable that Gregory should have written that letter, and to have suspected some unjustifiable interference on the part of Cyriacus, who was entrusted with it. For this he was reproved by Gregory, who, in a letter too long for transcription here, resumes the subject of his former communication thus :—

"It had been reported to us, that, inflamed with indiscreet zeal, you had broken some images of the saints, under the plea that they ought not to be worshipped : and in truth for having forbidden them to be worshipped we praised you ; for having broken them we blamed you. Say, brother, by what priest did we ever hear that what you did was done. . . . . To adore a picture is one thing, to learn by means of a picture what ought to be adored is another. For

<sup>5</sup> Epist. lib. ix. epist. vi. vol. ii. p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> "Venerandam."

what writing effects for those who read, the same does a picture for unlearned persons who see it. . . . This point ought to have been especially attended to by you who live among the heathen, lest, when you were inflamed by a right zeal unwarily, you should raise a scandal in savage minds. That, therefore, ought not to be broken which was placed in the church not to be adored, but only to instruct the minds of the ignorant: and because antiquity has not without reason suffered the history of the saints to be painted in venerable places, had you seasoned your zeal with discretion, beyond doubt you would have been able with benefit to obtain what you desired, and not to scatter the flock which was gathered, but rather to collect what was scattered. . . . You must call together the dispersed sons of the Church, and show them by proofs of Holy Scripture that it is unlawful for any thing made with hands to be worshipped; since it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.’ And then you must add, that the paintings of images were formed for the edification of the unlearned, that, being ignorant of letters, they might, by seeing the story, learn what has been done; and that, because you saw that it passed into worship, you were moved to order the images to be broken. And say to them, ‘If for that instruction, for which images were anciently made, you wish to have them in the church, I allow them by all means to be made and had.’ And tell them, that not the mere sight of the history displeased you, but that worship which was improperly paid to the images. . . . And if any one desires to make images, by no means forbid them; but by every means forbid images to be worshipped. And anxiously, my brother, admonish them, that from the sight of the historical subject they cherish a warmth of compunction, and humbly prostrate themselves in the worship of the Omnipotent Trinity alone.’”

<sup>7</sup> Lib. xi. epist. xiii. p. 1099.



Another passage from this Pope Gregory will show what great progress superstition had then already made, though as yet it fell far short of its future character when fully matured. Every page of this eventful history of the Church warns us that, what the wise man says of strife is singularly applicable in the case of every kind of superstitious innovation: "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with<sup>s</sup>." No sooner does superstition find for itself the smallest aperture through the barriers which the Scripture and primitive antiquity raised to keep it out, than it begins to force its way more and more rapidly and freely; and nothing is able to stay its violence, till it has flooded the fairest portion of God's heritage, destroying some parts, undermining others, and changing and corrupting the face of the whole. Whether we refer it to the judgment of the Almighty against any innovation that tampers with the integrity and purity of his worship; or to the proneness of fallen human nature ever to relapse into idolatry: however it may be accounted for, the fact seems indisputable, that any superstitious practice, though at first apparently innocent, and though its advocates may profess to provide against its abuse, has an inevitable tendency to prepare an easy reception for something sevenfold worse than itself.

In the following passages of Gregory we find evidences of innovations allowed and entertained by him, which through the first centuries would have been condemned as baneful superstitions and perversions of the truth as it is in Jesus; while in the same passages we find him condemning practices which in subsequent ages the most celebrated doctors and saints of the Church of Rome approved and maintained. "Let no image or pic-

<sup>s</sup> Prov. xvii. 14.

ture be admitted on any account into the Christian Church," said Eusebius; so said the Council of Eliberis, and others, before the first Nicene Council. "On no account forbid images and pictures to be made and kept in churches; they are the books of the unlearned; but by all and every means forbid any worship or adoration to be paid to them:" so said Gregory the Great, A.D. 600. "Worship the image of Christ, and adore it with the same adoration with which you worship Christ Himself:" so said the canonized saints, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura (both in the middle of the thirteenth century), with Naclantus in the middle of the sixteenth century, and many others before and since. And so say the Missal, the Pontifical, and the Breviary of the Church of Rome to this very day.

But we must now bring our remarks on Gregory the Great to a close, by two or three more quotations which will verify what we have above alleged. In a very long letter to Secundinus, Gregory, as the epistle now stands, writes thus<sup>9</sup>:—

"The images which you requested to be sent by Dulcidus, the deacon, we have sent. Your request very much delighted me, because with your whole heart and mind you are seeking Him whose image you desire to have before your eyes, that your bodily sight may daily supply an exercise; that while you see his picture, you may be inflamed in mind towards Him whose image you desire to see. We are not acting improperly, if we show invisible things by visible. I know indeed that you do not ask for an image of our Saviour, that you may worship it as if it were God; but in order that, from a remembrance of the Son of God, you may glow with the love of

<sup>9</sup> It must be observed, that the letter as a part of which this is quoted, is most corrupt, and that this passage, on which much stress has been laid, is found in very few manuscripts, and, indeed, would in itself raise a suspicion that it was not from the pen of Gregory. The letter is found lib. ix. epist. liii.

Him whose image you desire to see. And we, too, do not prostrate ourselves before it, as if it were before a divinity; but we adore Him, whom by the image we remember to have been born or to have suffered, but at the same time to be seated on a throne. And while the picture itself, as a writing, brings back to our memory the Son of God, it either makes us glad on account of his resurrection, or soothes us on account of his passion. Wherefore I have directed to you two *surturie*<sup>1</sup>, containing the pictures of God our Saviour, and holy Mary parent of God, and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and one cross, and also a key as a benediction from the most holy body of Peter, prince of the Apostles, that you may remain defended from the malicious one by Him, by whose sign you believe yourself to be protected."

These letters of Gregory (taking their genuineness for granted) abound with numberless proofs of the melancholy depths of superstition in other departments, into which the holy religion of the Gospel was then rapidly sinking, or rather (though worse degeneracy awaited the Church of Rome) into which it had already sunk. A very few specimens are needed to show how much such superstitions paved the way for image-worship<sup>2</sup>.

In a long letter to Richard, king of the Visigoths, he thus announces the presents he had sent him:—

"We have sent to you a very small key from the most sacred body of the blessed Apostle Peter, as his benediction, in which is inclosed some iron from his chains, that what bound his neck for martyrdom may loose yours from all sins. I have also given the bearer a cross to be offered to you, in which is some wood of the Lord's cross, and the hair of the blessed John the Baptist, from which [cross] you may always

<sup>1</sup> "*Surturias.*" Some say this word meant a sort of garment, others a kind of shield, on which the pictures were drawn.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. ix. epist. cxxii. p. 1031.

have the comfort of our Saviour, by the intercession of his forerunner<sup>3</sup>.”

In a letter to one Andrew the Noble, he writes:—

“ I have sent you a most sacred key from the body of the holy Apostle Peter, which is wont to shine forth with many miracles upon the sick, for it has within it some portion of his chains. May the same chains, then, which bound that holy neck, being hung from your neck, sanctify it<sup>4</sup>.”

In a letter to Dynamius he thus speaks on the same topic:—

“ I have sent, as the benediction of the blessed Apostle Peter, a very small cross, in which are inserted benefits<sup>5</sup> from his chains, which bound his neck for a time, but may loosen your neck from sins for ever; and in four parts around, benefits from the gridiron of the blessed Laurence, on which he was burnt, that this on which his body was burnt for the truth may kindle your mind to the love of God<sup>6</sup>.”

In a letter to Asclepiodotus the same idea is conveyed, but the benefit to be effected by suspending the key from his neck is thus expressed:—“ that it may defend you against all adversities.”

In another letter, to Savinella<sup>7</sup> and other women, he tells them he had sent them a key from St. Peter's body, containing a benediction from his chains, “ which,” he adds, “ being suspended from your neck, this, which was to him the cause of martyrdom, may, through his intercession, be to you the grace of absolution.”

While we read these sentiments and such as these from the pen of the head of the Roman Church at the close of the sixth century, are we not involuntarily led to ask at every turn, Can this be the religion which our blessed Saviour founded by his

<sup>3</sup> Lib. i. epist. xxx. p. 519.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. iii. epist. xxxiii. p. 648.

<sup>5</sup> “ Beneficia.”

<sup>6</sup> Lib. xi. epist. xiv. p. 1182.

<sup>7</sup> Lib. xii. epist. vii. p. 1185.

Gospel, which the holy Apostles preached, and which the Catholic Church preserved entire for centuries after its first professors were called to their rest in heaven?

Contemporary with Gregory the Great was Gregory of Tours, the first person of note in the Roman Church who ventured to assert the assumption of the Virgin Mary, body and soul into heaven, a story which he drew from that false Melito, whose work, a century before, Pope Gelasius and the Roman council had pronounced to be apocryphal and forged. Had the zealous love of primitive worship shown by Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, in his destruction of the images which he found to be then made objects of religious worship through his diocese, and the reproof of Gregory the Great to that more primitive shepherd of the Lord's fold, not informed us what rapid and gigantic strides superstition had already taken in the West, Gregory of Tours would have intimated to us that at least the day of image-worship was then opening and hastening on. He does not speak of any worship either due to images or paid to them by others, but, in the midst of many legends and stories unworthy of a Christian, much more unworthy of a bishop of the Church, he gives currency to the opinion, that some holy and mysterious power resided in images; and thus he helped in preparing the way for the offering of religious worship, mental and bodily, to them<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> De Gloria Martyrum, lib. i. cap. xiv. and xxiii.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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No. XXVI.

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IMAGE-WORSHIP.

PART VIII.

EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE,

AND

CONCLUSION.



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IN examining the references to the Psalms, the reader will bear in mind that our English version, which strictly follows the original Hebrew, differs from the Roman Catholic version in the numbering of the Psalms from the 9th to the 147th. The Roman Catholic version throws our 9th and 10th Psalms into one; and thus our 11th becomes their 10th, our 12th their 11th, and so on till the 147th, which they divide into two, beginning their 147th at the 12th verse of ours. Between these limits, consequently, the reader, in referring to a passage quoted from the Roman Catholic version, must turn in our version to the Psalm next after that so quoted. Thus, if the quotation is taken from the 50th Psalm in the Roman Catholic version, the reader must refer to the 51st Psalm in ours.

# WHAT IS ROMANISM?

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## IMAGE-WORSHIP.

### PART VIII.

#### *Evidence of Holy Scripture.*

HAVING, under the previous heads of our inquiry, ascertained what is the theory and the practice of image-worship in the Church of Rome, and having seen that, through the first five centuries, image-worship had, in the Primitive Church of Christ, no place nor name, it remains for us now to test it by the written word of God. And finding, as we do, that image-worship, so far from resting on any foundation of Holy Scripture, runs counter to the spirit of the Almighty's commands throughout, there we may well let the matter rest; for when we have once satisfied our judgment as to the mind and will of our heavenly Lawgiver, all human authority will not weigh against it as a grain of dust in the balance of the sanctuary.

We must not be withdrawn from the pursuit of this inquiry by any modern assertion, that, "Whether pictures and images were used in the Church of old, is not a point of much importance, for their use has always been a matter of discipline<sup>1</sup>." In this senti-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, (London; 1836,) vol. ii. p. 130.



ment two considerations forbid us to acquiesce: First, even were the admission of images, accompanied by the due worship required to be paid to them, a mere matter of discipline, yet, if it have no sanction in God's most holy word, but be proved to be contrary to the true spirit and real bearing of that word throughout, it must then be rejected by all who are not ready to make the word of God of none effect by human tradition, and by teaching, for our guidance, the commandments of men.

In the second place, we do not see how the case is practically affected by regarding that as a matter merely of discipline, which is not only so positively and solemnly enacted by the Council of Trent, and so "most firmly asserted" in the creed of Pope Pius IV., but is declared by the Second Council of Nice (to the sanction of which council the Council of Trent appeals in this very article of image-worship), to be binding on all Christians, on pain of incurring "most dreadful anathemas," the curses and maledictions apportioned to the worst of heresies,—a sentence in which the representatives of the Roman Church present at that council concurred, and on the strength of which image-worship was forced on all the Churches of the West. When we find, moreover, in the same council, that the admission and adoration of images is made (not by individual bishops and patriarchs only, but by the whole council together<sup>2</sup>) an article of the self-same creed and profession of faith in which they declare their belief in God, in the Holy Trinity, in our blessed Saviour, and in the resurrection to eternal life; subjecting all "who dare to think or teach otherwise" to excommunication and cursing; and, lastly, when we find the council held at Oxford in the time of Archbishop Arundel,—a few years only after heresy had been made by the English Parliament punishable by death

<sup>2</sup> Syn. Nic. II. Act vii., at the close, (Paris, 1671,) p. 551.

by burning,—decreeing any person to be guilty of heresy who asserted or insinuated any thing contrary to the worship of images,—we cannot see how the distinction which would rank the use of images among matters of discipline, can be allowed to affect the course of our inquiry.

We proceed, therefore, to inquire, in the first place, whether the use and the invocation of images in the Church of Christ are sanctioned by the inspired word of Revelation; or, on the contrary, whether they be not palpably contrary alike to the letter and to the spirit, and the true intent and meaning, and the bearing and ruling of that word<sup>3</sup>. Now, when we examine the holy Scripture from its first to its last page, not with the view of accommodating its laws and ordinances and doctrines and examples to our opinions, but with the honest desire of conforming our belief and practice, our judgment and our will, to the principles there promulgated and established, and the intimations of the Almighty's mind and will there revealed, what is the result? We find throughout, over and over again, in every variety of language, the formation of any material figure whatever as an object of worship prohibited, and denounced as an abomination in the sight of the Divine Lawgiver. And we never discover any exception in favour of any form, or figure, or representation whatever; all are equally condemned on pain of incurring the displeasure of Almighty God. The refined and subtle distinctions of those objects into idols, likenesses, and images, and imitations (attempted now to be drawn by the defenders of image-worship in the Church of Rome), have no countenance in the Bible. In our present inquiry

<sup>3</sup> We would here earnestly invite the reader to reflect carefully on the principles on which alone we are persuaded that a believer, bent on arriving at the truth, can study the Holy Scriptures, either as the record of covenants between God and his fallen and redeemed creatures, or as the will and testament of Him who died for our salvation. The reader will find those principles stated and illustrated in "Primitive Christian Worship," part i. chap. ii. section ii.

we will not knowingly omit a single sentence of Holy Scripture usually cited as countenancing that worship. We would first, however, recal some of those passages which appear to rule the case entirely, and, like a master-principle, to provide a safe and ready key to the interpretation of any expression, the meaning of which may at first sight seem doubtful or ambiguous.

In the first place, we would say that by the very terms of the first and second prohibitions of the decalogue, such a master-principle is established against any images being made by the servants of the one true God, for the purpose of any religious worship whatever, "Thou shalt not have any other gods: beside me," or "in my presence." "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." Again, thus solemnly is the command enforced by God's extreme malediction:—"Cursed is the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place<sup>4</sup>." Again, in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, the enumeration of the different material and visible objects of human worship is remarkably full and striking, intended purposely to comprehend every kind and species of image or representation, molten, sculptured, or painted:—"Ye shall make you no idols, nor graven image, nor rear you up a standing image [or statue]; neither shall ye set up any image of stone [or figured or painted stone] in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God." Again, how powerfully, and at the same time with what intelligible minuteness, is the same prohibition repeated in a subsequent part of the law<sup>5</sup>, professedly a repetition of the original

<sup>4</sup> Deut. xxvii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. iv. 12.

command!—"And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but ye saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. . . . Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is in the earth, the likeness of any fowl that is in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth."

The contrast is indeed very striking between the large, full, and comprehensive spirit of these commands and prohibitions, and the express sanction given by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, not only to make and retain and worship images of saints and angels, of the Virgin, and of our blessed Saviour, as God manifest in the flesh, but also to make visible and material representations of any one of the persons of the blessed Trinity<sup>6</sup>.

Having thus solemnly warned them never, under any figure, image, or likeness, to worship the true God, whose voice they heard, the lawgiver cautions them against the temptation to worship any of the visible works of creation.

And lest they should suppose, that, provided they did not substitute false gods, and idols, and images, in place of the one true God, but merely added the worship of them over and above to his worship, associating the two together, they would not break his law nor incur his displeasure, He both beforehand warns them against such delusions, and in subsequent times vindicated the single and exclusive oneness of his worship, on those who dared to join it with any other. Thus, immediately after the delivery of the

<sup>6</sup> Ad Parochos, part iii.

decalogue: "Ye shall not make WITH me gods of silver," &c.<sup>7</sup>

In the second book of Kings a striking instance is recorded of this unholy union of the worship of the only Lord with the worship of pagan deities:—"They feared the LORD, and served their own gods," "their graven images<sup>8</sup>." In the prophet Zephaniah we read of the fate of these worshippers:—"I will cut off them that worship the host of heaven upon the house-tops, and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham<sup>9</sup>." A similar denouncement was made subsequently by Ezekiel:—"As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the LORD God: Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me; but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols<sup>1</sup>."

Now, without insisting upon what seems most clear, that the prohibition of every kind and species of image as an object of worship had reference to the worship of the Lord God Himself, forbidding his people to worship Him through any similitude ("in that day ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice") even should we allow that all these commands and prohibitions referred to the idols of Egypt and Canaan, still, if no exception is made, if no permission is anywhere given to worship God, or to honour his saints, through an image made after their likeness, we would ask, Are not these solemn repeated injunctions and prohibitions quite sufficient to guide a single-hearted man, bent on conforming himself and his conduct agreeably to whatever the revealed word may declare to be God's will? With the curses, and imprecations, and anathemas of the Second Council of Nice before our eyes, in the fulness of our conviction that both our faith and our practice are primitive and apostolical, we would ask, Does the Roman Church, by

<sup>7</sup> Exod. xx. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Zeph. i. 5.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 33. 41.

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xx. 39.

insisting upon the admission and veneration of images, or our own Church, by excluding images from the worship of God altogether, act more agreeably to the plain unsophisticated words of His eternal truth? The members of that Council, including the two representatives of the See of Rome, pronounce an anathema on any one who should dare to apply to image-worship in the Christian Church the prohibitions against idols recorded in the Old Testament. We cannot but regard these prohibitions not only as applicable to the case of the Church under the Gospel, but even still more authoritatively binding, inasmuch as, from the covenant of the Law (that divine elementary instructor to bring us to Christ), we have passed into the covenant of faith and spiritual worship.

But we must now examine those passages of Holy Scripture which have been commonly cited as admitting and countenancing the worship of images, if they do not suggest and enjoin them.

It is irksome to enter on this part of our inquiry (necessary as it is), because the greater part of the interpretations of such passages are so utterly indefensible, and without any foundation in sound biblical criticism, that, were they not found in the very books of the defenders of image-worship, it would scarcely be believed that they were in good faith and seriously put forward; and we might be suspected of having suggested arguments for the purpose of answering them.

The first we would mention is a passage already quoted as having received, in the Second Nicene Council, from Anastasius, Bishop of Theopolis, a comment favourable to the views of the advocates of image-worship:—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The criticism on this passage which the Council itself adopted is

this:—"In the first member, he says merely, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,' and does not add the word 'ONLY;' in the second member he adds the word 'ONLY,' 'and Him only shalt thou serve;' so that, while we must not *SERVE* any other than God, the same prohibition does not apply to the other word '*WORSHIP.*'" The argument in which the whole Second Nicene Council not only acquiesced, but seemed to triumph, is this:—"In this passage our Lord does not forbid us to worship any other objects than God, provided we do not serve them; therefore we may worship images, provided we do not serve them."

How many reflections are forced upon us here! But, first, as to the argument, utterly groundless as it is: Satan did not, in the words recorded, tempt our blessed Lord to *SERVE* him, but only to *WORSHIP* him. If, then, the rebuke of our Lord only implied the unlawfulness, according to the Divine will, of serving any other being, and not of worshipping that being, the rebuke would have been no answer to Satan's temptation. He asked not for service at Christ's hand, but only worship. If our Lord's words meant that He was at liberty to worship, but not to serve him, as far as the mere words go, Satan might, notwithstanding the prohibition alleged, have obtained all he required. But this is too holy ground for such irreverent trifling. Our blessed Saviour willed, once and for ever, with indignation, to silence the tempter by the universal and overwhelming first principle of the divine law, that the Lord God is the only lawful object of man's worship and service. The learned reader scarcely needs to be reminded that the same word (the same in the Greek of the Septuagint and in this passage of St. Matthew<sup>2</sup>), is again and again employed, when God's people

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iv. 10.

were forbidden to worship any other god. "Thou shalt not worship any other gods<sup>3</sup>." "Thou shalt not worship a strange god<sup>4</sup>." And, not to cite any more passages to prove the futility of the supposed distinction, one paragraph in the second book of Kings, intended, apparently, to embrace every kind of worship, adoration, and service, comes home to the point with remarkable force: "Ye shall not fear other gods, nor worship them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them; but the Lord, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice." In the latter clause, commanding the worship of God, the very word "serve" is even omitted as superfluous, being comprehended in the word "worship," and the word "worship" is inserted in the prohibitory clause<sup>5</sup>.

Another argument from Holy Scripture, employed both by the same Second Council of Nice, and by the apologists of image-worship from that time to the present, is the fact of Moses having, by the immediate command of God, caused two cherubim to be made, which should overshadow the mercy-seat<sup>6</sup>, or cover of the ark of the covenant. The words of Bellarmin<sup>7</sup> are these: "Of necessity, the images of the cherubim, being upon the ark, were adored by those who adored the ark." But where is it ever said that God directed the people to adore the ark? or that the people ever did adore either it or the cherubim, from the day they were made to the time when they were de-

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxxxix. 9.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 35. The conclusive character of this passage is very much weakened to the English reader, because our translators have varied not the meaning but the expression in their rendering of the same word in the two parts of the sentence, in the one calling it "bow yourselves down," in the other "worship;" whereas the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Vulgate have the self-same word in each case, the Vulgate employing the same word in rendering the Hebrew here as in rendering the Greek in St. Matthew—*adorare*.

<sup>6</sup> *ἱλαστήριον*—propitiatorium.

<sup>7</sup> Bell. lib. ii. chap. xii.



stroyed? Still Bellarmin, and the doctors of the Roman Catholic Church in general, refer us to a passage in which David calls that mercy-seat the footstool of the Lord, and another, in which the same holy Psalmist calls upon the faithful to worship God's footstool: and hence they argue that the ark was to be worshipped, and that the images of saints and of the cross may be worshipped also<sup>8</sup>. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the object of worship mentioned by the Psalmist here is not the footstool, but God, at whose footstool he calls upon his fellow-believers to worship; as he does elsewhere, employing the same word, declare his own desire, and invite his brethren to "worship toward," or "at his holy temple"<sup>9</sup>—"toward," or "at his holy hill<sup>1</sup>."

In the Second Council of Nice, on reference being made to this argument, and the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews being quoted, in which its inspired author enumerates the mercy-seat and the cherubim among the sacred things of the first temple, the President Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, exclaimed, "If the Old [Testament] had cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, we, too, will have images of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the holy mother of God, and of his saints, overshadowing the mercy-seat." To which "the most illustrious rulers" answered, "Truly it is the ordinance of God."

Another argument, urged in the same way from the first throughout down to our times, is, "that Moses caused the brazen serpent to be formed, that all who looked to it might be relieved from their plague; therefore, since unquestionably that was a type of Christ crucified, the image of Christ on the cross is to be received in Christian Churches, and worshipped."

<sup>8</sup> 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Ps. xcix. 5; cxxxii. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ps. v. 7; cxxxviii. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xcix. 9.

We have heard Naclantus say<sup>2</sup>, that, had the Israelites worshipped the brazen serpent, and offered incense to it in the wilderness, it would not have been idolatry. The matter of fact is, that we never read of any reverence whatever being paid to it in the wilderness; and the same passage which informs us (in a most warning lesson against the use of images), that the Israelites, in their degenerate and idolatrous state, offered incense to it, records also its utter destruction, on that very account, by the pious king Hezekiah, who has this testimony, that "he trusted in the Lord God of Israel, and clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses." When he brake it in pieces, he called it *nehushtan*, or "the lump of brass."

We might now ask, whether it does not appear, beyond gainsaying or further question, to have been the purpose of the Almighty to fence his own worship against the mixture of images of any kind,—carved, molten, engraven, painted, stone, wood, metal, or any other material; whether the Old Testament does not abound with prohibitions, in every variety of language, to the same effect; and whether, from its first to its last page, there is any one appearance of relaxation from the uncompromising stringency of those prohibitory laws.

It has been said that, living under the Gospel, we are released from the obligations of the elder covenant. But, in a religion called by an especial and distinguishing name, The Law of Faith, as opposed to the law of outward observances, would it not be a retrograde movement to admit images into our spiritual worship, when they were excluded from the Jewish? Accordingly, we find pervading the whole of the New Testament, the same spirit which guided the prophets of old to forbid the making of any figure or similitude

<sup>2</sup> See "What is Romanism?" No. xx.

for the purposes of worship. Every opportunity is taken by the Apostles to withdraw the Gentiles from the worship of idols; and (as we were often reminded when examining the testimony of the primitive Fathers) the prohibitions are so general, that, had the intention of the Apostles been to allow of any relaxation of the rule, they must have mentioned it.

When Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel at Lystra, they did not bid the worshippers of Jupiter take down the image of their fabled god, and substitute the image of their master Christ in its stead. Their indignant rejection of the divine honours offered them admitted of no exception in favour of any being as the object of worship, beside the one living God, nor allowed the image of that God to be set up as His representative: "Sirs, why do ye these things?" were their words, "We also are men of like passions with you, and we preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein<sup>3</sup>." And the beloved Apostle makes no exception of any image of his fellow-Apostles, or of our blessed Saviour, when, as the closing words of his epistle, he gives believers this solemn charge: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

A text, however, to which appeals have been made in favour of image-worship, but which Bellarmin and Coccius and others, though anxiously pressing every colourable evidence into the service, seem, from their omission of it, to have considered untenable, requires to be examined in this place. The passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 21, which our authorized version renders, "Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff" (putting the

<sup>3</sup> Acts xiv. 15.

word *leaning* in italics, to notify that it is an expletive, not found in the original Greek), the Roman Catholic Douay Bible, following the Vulgate, materially changes, rendering the last words, "ADORED THE TOP OF HIS ROD;" and appends the following sentences by way of comment:—

"Observe, that adoration, as the Scripture useth the word, may be done to creatures, or to God at or before a creature, as at or before the Ark of the Testament in old time, now at or before the crucifix, relics, images. . . . . By all which it is evident that it is false, . . . . . that we may not adore image, crucifix, or any visible creature, nor kneel before them."

The circumstances of this passage are remarkable. The inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes the passage in Genesis (xlvi. 31), which records the fact adverted to, in the words of the Septuagint; the Hebrew word which that version renders *rod* or *staff*, meaning also, when read with other points, a *bed*; our version of that passage in Genesis being, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." The Vulgate renders it, "Israel adored God, being turned to the bed's head."

In their interpretation of this passage, Jewish writers differ materially among themselves, some considering it to imply that Jacob bowed to Joseph in acknowledgment of his authority, but the greater part, that he bowed to God in acknowledgment of his mercy<sup>4</sup>.

The Greek in the passage before us, identical with the reading in the Septuagint, cannot admit of the rendering of the Vulgate, but must be translated either "worshipped *upon*," or "worshipped *towards* the top of *his* staff;" a question then arising, whether

<sup>4</sup> The reader may consult "The Sacred Scriptures, in Hebrew and English," (London, 1844,) p. 318.

it was Joseph's staff or Jacob's on which he worshipped, or towards which he bent<sup>5</sup>.

The Roman Catholic commentators above quoted, maintaining that Jacob adored the staff of Joseph itself, and thence concluding, that to adore crucifixes, images, and relics is lawful, appeal to the testimony of St. Chrysostom in confirmation of their view. But that ancient Father is very far from supporting their interpretation<sup>6</sup>. He speaks of Jacob worshipping upon, or towards the top of his staff, to do honour to Joseph, recognizing his superior power and dignity; but he suggests not the shadow of an allusion to Jacob adoring the staff. All that can be reasonably inferred from this view of the passage is, that, by bending towards his son's staff (as it was usual to do towards a royal sceptre), Jacob acknowledged him in one sense his superior, and so fulfilled the prophecy of that son's dream, that his father should bow down before him,—the precise sense in which St. Chrysostom understands it.

The celebrated Roman Catholic annotator, Cornelius a Lapide, maintaining that it was to Joseph's staff, as to a sceptre, that Jacob bent down, adverts to the use and application of the passage made by Pope Adrian in his letter to Constantine and Irene, in which he urged them to convene a council for the establishment of image-worship. Whether, as some suppose, Adrian's letter was originally written in Latin, being afterwards translated for the use of the Greeks, or whether he sent it in Greek, and, like other Greek documents, it was afterwards translated into Latin, the passage in Adrian's letter is very remarkable. In the Greek, the reading of the Septuagint is retained, the Latin version using these words,

<sup>5</sup> The Vulgate points to Joseph's staff, *ejus*, the Greek of Griesbach to Jacob's, (*αὐτοῦ*, his own staff,) several of our own editions, both before and after Griesbach, reading *αὐτοῦ*, which would seem to refer to Joseph.

<sup>6</sup> In Gen. ; Homil. 66, edit. Bened. vol. iv. p. 631.

“Summitatem virgæ filii sui Joseph deosculatus est:” “He kissed the top of his son Joseph’s rod.” Adrian adds, that Jacob did it in the love of faith, and then cites the Apostle’s testimony thus: “The blessed Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, says, that Jacob did not worship the rod, but him who was its possessor, indicating his love; so we, too, from the desire and love which we bear to the Lord and his saints, describe their features in images, not fixing the honour on the tablet and colours, but on those whose names the images bear.”

On the whole, it is difficult to perceive how this passage of the New Testament can be so strained as to support the doctrine and practice, in defence of which it is cited by some Romanists. Even were we, for argument’s sake, to allow that it was to Joseph, then present before him, and not to the Almighty, that the Patriarch intended to do homage, offering an outward mark of that homage by bending before Joseph’s rod as a sceptre, or, to use Pope Adrian’s words, by kissing it, we cannot see how, under that view, this passage can be forced so as to sanction the image-worship of the Church of Rome.

Most persons, however, who approach the question with an unprejudiced mind, will probably acquiesce in the interpretation of our authorized version, as at once the more natural rendering, more easily reconcilable with the present reading of the Hebrew, and closer to the Greek of the New Testament. This interpretation recommends itself also strongly for our adoption, by the direct and full sanction given to it by St. Augustin himself, as well as by other ancient writers. This great Father of the Latin Church contemplates both of the two supposed cases; first, that the staff was Jacob’s; secondly, that it was Joseph’s. If the staff were Joseph’s, Augustin leads us to regard it as a very natural thing for a dutiful son to place his own staff in his father’s hand for the purpose of supporting his enfeebled and sinking

frame. If, on the other hand, the staff were Jacob's own (which St. Augustin seems to regard as the more probable supposition), what could be more natural than for an old man, seated on the side of his couch, and leaning forward, while his son bound himself by an oath to him (the prescribed form of which was, that the person binding himself by the oath should place his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he swore), to rest himself on his staff? The words of St. Augustin are these:—

“It may be easily understood that an old man, bearing a staff in the way in which that age usually did as he bent himself to adore God, did so on the top of his own staff, which he thus bore, so that by bending his head upon it, he would adore God<sup>7</sup>.”

Theodoret, in his Comment on Genesis, interprets the passage thus: “Israel, being old and infirm, was lying on his bed; but hearing that his son was present he rose and sate up, and holding the head of his staff in his right hand steadied himself with it; and being delighted with his son and with the promises as to his own burial, he worshipped, leaning his head on his staff.”

That no opening is made in the New Testament for such admission of images, and no relaxation of the universal law of the Mosaic dispensation, we not only see for ourselves in our study of the New Testament, but might even have concluded, (the advocates of image-worship themselves, with Thomas Aquinas at their head, being judges,) from the gratuitous assumption made by them, when they assert that many rules for the guidance of the Church in after ages were enacted by the Apostles, which

<sup>7</sup> Facile intelligeretur senem, qui virgam ferebat eo more quo illa ætas baculum ferre solebat, ut se inclinavit ad Deum adorandum, id utique fecisse super cacumen virgæ suæ quam sic ferebat, ut super eam caput inclinando adoraret Deum.—Quæst. in Gen., ed. Bened., vol. iii. p. 418.

are not found in the Sacred Scripture<sup>8</sup>, and, among other points, on the use of images. The supporters of image-worship cannot adduce a single word correctly translated and interpreted, "according to the common consent of the Fathers<sup>9</sup>," to countenance their doctrine and practice from the New Testament; and, instead of such sanction, they boldly substitute the assertion, that the Apostles made rules for image-worship which the inspired writers did not record, but left them to the custody of tradition. This is a most groundless assumption. Such a fact seemed necessary to support the theory of image-worship, and therefore its supposed existence was maintained not only without proof, but contrary to the clearest evidence; for, had such rules existed, they must have been found somewhere in the remains of the ancient Fathers; and, had they been even thought of in the first ages, they would unquestionably have been inserted in what are called the Apostolical Canons and Constitutions. The total silence on the subject there not only refutes the fable of such rules having ever been in existence, but proves that images were not in use in the churches of Christ when those Canons and Constitutions were framed.

And now having before our eyes the anathemas, and reproaches, uttered by the Second Council of Nice against all, as maintainers of heresy, who should apply to the images set up and worshipped in the Christian Church the threats and prohibitions and warnings in the Holy Scriptures against idols, we are bold enough (in the strength of the cause of truth) again to ask, even at the risk of unnecessary

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *distinc. ix. quæst. vii. sol. iv.*

<sup>9</sup> Coccius, indeed, in his celebrated work on the Church, resolved not to leave the New Testament without extracting from it some contribution to countenance the use and worship of images, quotes the passage, *Matt. xii. 16*, "Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's."



repetition, whether of the two bodies more closely and faithfully fulfils the will of God, as made known to us in his holy word,—we of the Church of England, who admit no image to be placed in God's house as an object of veneration (whatever be the kind of veneration), or the Church of Rome, which requires images to be had and retained in the churches, and to be venerated? If God says, "Thou shalt make no image to worship it;" we ask, Which shows himself the more ready to receive that command with free, full, and perfect obedience,—the person, on the one hand, who not only admits, but requires images to be used in the worship of God, (by whatever nice distinctions and subtle arguments he may try to separate between the worship paid to them and to idols, and by whatever abstract rules he may endeavour to preserve the veneration of images from degenerating into palpable idolatry,) or, on the other hand, the person who resolves to preserve the worship of Almighty God from the possibility of such contamination, and consequently at once and for ever excludes all images, as objects of religious veneration, from the sanctuary of the Lord? We cannot for a moment doubt what would be the righteous verdict of upright and enlightened men on this issue joined between the two Churches.

## CONCLUSION.

Before we conclude these reflections on the image-worship of the Church of Rome, we would with all respect, but with all firmness, address a few words to each of two dissimilar classes within our own communion.

First, on those who may be importuned to renounce their allegiance to the Church of England, and take refuge in Rome, we would urge the imperative duty of examining thoroughly and repeatedly, sparing neither time nor pains, the reality of the doctrine and the discipline of the Church of Rome on the subject of image-worship. They will be told that even the use of images is not enjoined, but only recommended as an useful and wholesome help to devotion, and that the charge of adoring them is an unfounded and malicious calumny; at all events, that the use of them is an open question, and will be left as a matter of religious indifference for the adoption or rejection of each convert individually. The very same statements and arguments which were made at the commencement of the present century by Dr. Milner, in his work entitled "The End of Religious Controversy," and which are still industriously circulated in new editions of that book, will be employed in every form best fitted to captivate the unwary. With all the tone of unbounded liberality of sentiment, a snare the most dangerous will be laid for the generous and confiding spirit of youth; and that snare will be so skilfully concealed under the most specious fallacies, that we cannot wonder if it should prove fatal to such as expose themselves to the wiles of the temptation, and dally with the tempter, before they

have duly possessed themselves of the power of detecting the fallacies, and extricating themselves from the snare. Let us take, for example, a passage on the subject before us, contained in the 34th letter of that work. The writer says<sup>1</sup>: "It is a point agreed upon among Catholic doctors and divines, that the memorials of religion form no essential part of it. Hence, if you should become a Catholic, as I pray God you may, I shall never ask you if you have a pious picture or relic, or so much as a crucifix in your possession; but then I trust, after the declarations I have made, that you will not account me an idolater, should you see such things in my oratory or study, or should you observe how tenacious I am of my crucifix in particular." To this passage Dr. Milner appends the following sentence by way of note:—"The learned Petavius says, 'We must lay it down as a principle, that images are to be reckoned among things *adiaphora* (indifferent), which do not belong to the substance of religion, and which the Church may retain or take away as she judges best.'<sup>2</sup>"

How deceiving and misleading a guide is such a passage as this! how full is it of treacherous fallacy! The writer is one individual speaking to another individual; and, although what he says may be true as to the Church of Rome in her legislative character, yet, in the only sense in which it could apply to an individual, it is not true. To that Church, image-worship in the abstract may be a thing indifferent, and she might (but for the Council of Trent) withdraw her decrees concerning it at her pleasure; yet to an individual member of that Church it is not a thing indifferent, and he cannot accept it or reject it at his pleasure. The Church of Rome herself is bound by the decrees of the Tridentine Council; and those decrees enact, that images are by all means to

<sup>1</sup> Edit. 1842, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. xv. De Incarn.

be retained, and to be treated with the veneration due; and till the decrees of that Council be reversed, and the Missal, Breviary, and Pontifical be reformed,—that is, till Rome herself be changed,—image-worship cannot become a thing indifferent; it is prescribed by the Church of Rome, and must be practised by every one who binds himself to pay dutiful allegiance to that Church.

Those who are tempted by such fair promises, and plausible statements, and extenuating representations, must be cautioned against the peril to which they expose themselves, if they give too hasty heed to them. Image-worship is not the only superstitious practice which persons, before their conversion, have been persuaded to regard as a thing indifferent, but the entire adoption of which, after they have been irretrievably taken captive, they have to their confusion found to be an indispensable condition of full communion with Rome. The worship of the Virgin Mary was lately so understood by one, who afterwards was dismayed by an authoritative announcement, that nothing short of the repetition of the entire Litany of the Virgin could be accepted as a passport to the receiving of the holy communion. It has come to the knowledge of the writer of these pages, that the mental distress and perplexity of several persons lately labouring under similar struggles are great in the extreme; and that their earnest entreaties that their friends would offer prayers at the throne of grace in their behalf are in the highest degree importunate and affecting. May God enlighten and comfort them, bringing them back to the truth!

But, surely, before any one allows himself to be enticed to renounce his baptism in the Church of England, and to espouse Rome, with all that Rome imposes and exacts, it is his bounden duty to God and man, and to his own soul, to investigate the whole truth; not to dwell with a morbid sensibility

(as many have done to their own bane) on any supposed imperfections in his own communion, nor, under plea of escaping from such imperfections, rashly to adopt a religion which may perhaps show more goodly to the sight, and be more fair to look upon, but which has a secret canker at the heart. On many who have suffered themselves to be misled, the discovery of that canker bursts suddenly and too late; and very few indeed, after discovering it, can summon strength of mind and courage enough to break off their fetters, to confess that they have been deceived, and to return to the fold which, in an evil hour, they deserted. The large majority are, before that discovery, inextricably entangled by the arts of Rome, which prove themselves far more potent than the fabled spells of the enchanter. The descent is easy, and many are seduced to tread the downward path of superstition: the return is of all things most difficult, and, but for the omnipotence of divine grace, might, indeed, be pronounced impossible.

To those among us, on the other hand, who are already adequately alive to the corruptions with which Romanism, through the lapse of ages, has overlaid the religion of our blessed Saviour, and who sensibly feel the peril of idolatry to which the superstition of image-worship exposes the soul, stealthily seducing it from the simple worship, spiritual and primitive, of the Gospel, to a religion in which our fallen nature has mingled with pure Christianity much of the baneful poison of heathenism, we would urge a different consideration. On them we would affectionately impress the duty of not mistaking in themselves indignation and zeal against religious errors for a genuine and generous love of the truth, or for an exalted and purified devotion of the soul to heaven.

God's mercy has bestowed on us the blessing of a more primitive faith and of a more scriptural Liturgy:

we are indeed members of a Church more apostolical and evangelical, than that to which those persons have strayed whose sad defection we lament. But the merciful privilege which we enjoy brings with it increased responsibilities. It well becomes us all to take good heed, lest even the worshippers of images, with all their errors, rise up in the judgment at the last, and condemn us. This they may do, if, with all our greater advantages, our faith do not approve itself as more stedfast and unfeigned; if our hope be not at once more sure and more purifying; if our charity be not more fervent and more comprehensive. They unhappily persuade themselves to have recourse (in aid, as they say, of their devotion) to those innovations and superstitions, which we discard as unjustifiable, unworthy and distrustful inventions of degenerate human nature, in the holiest of man's duties, where the gracious Founder of our faith has Himself provided for us whatever is necessary for the soul's well-being and its progress towards heaven. For this they may obtain pardon, because Omniscience may pronounce them to have persevered in their superstition ignorantly in misbelief. But how shall we escape either the displeasure of Almighty God, or the censures of our own conscience, if, with all the appliances of the Gospel provided for our use, spiritual and heavenly as they came fresh from the Divine treasure-house, neither bound by the shackles of superstition, nor checked by the corruptions of man's device, we do not show forth his praise by a more ardent piety and a more holy life? How can we satisfy our duty to our heavenly benefactor, and to his Church, the keeper and witness of the truth, if we do not honestly, yet humbly, give proof of the scriptural and primitive integrity and holiness of our principles, by a more steady and calm, and at the same time a more zealous and energetic devotion of our whole selves, body, mind, and spirit, to the work of our heavenly Master, which indeed is none

other than the work of our own salvation? How can we become or continue an acceptable people in his sight, unless we strive, by prayer and self-denial, and the best exertion of every faculty, as long as it is his good pleasure that we sojourn here, to increase daily in his Holy Spirit more and more, having our conversation daily more and more in heaven, and, as we walk with God on earth in faith, and hope, and love, conforming ourselves daily more and more to the likeness of his ever-blessed Son, "the image of the invisible God?"

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