

THE CATHOLIC

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

Very Rev. W. P. MacDonald, V. G., Editor.

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MARIOLATRY OR THE IDOLATRY OF MARY.

To the Editor of the Catholic Telegraph.

MR. EDITOR:—Can there be any thing in this world of woe! worse, than offering insults to the ever blessed Mother of our Lord? Can any man, pretending to be a christian, have a love for the adorable Son, whilst he is outraging all decency with regard to the Mother? Is there any thing manly, putting christianity aside, in insulting a tender Virgin. Might not her very sex save her from the tongues of the malevolent? Vigilantius assailed her; but himself, and the crew, that joined in the impious crusade, are among the ruins of the past. Jovinian, and Eunomius, did all that malice could effect against her; but the pens of calumny have fallen from their palsied hands. Constantine Copronymous stretch'd forth the sceptre of despotism and heresy to awe her sons, and daughters; but his throne, and imperial staff, and house, have fallen, and been buried in the wreck of ages. The successors of those impious men tried their skill in the sixteenth century to accomplish that, in which heresy has ever failed—the destruction of the prerogatives of Mary—and they failed. It is more glorious to stand in the ranks of an Ambrose, a Jerome, an Athanasius, a Hilary, an Augustine,—the defenders of Mary, than to mingle among such apostates as Vigilantius, Jovinian, Julian, Copronymous, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Cranmer and the rest—the unprincipled foes of Mary. As a matter of taste Catholics are right. But there are different tastes. Let it be so. We are pledged never to change.

But hear, O ye heavens, and thou O earth, the foul language of a mortal against the Mother of your Lord! "The worship of the Virgin Mary, the most odious of all forms of idolatry, when seen under all the passionate expressions of love, and trust, and praise, with which Romish superstition arrays it." And again, "There is peculiar learning of all that is spiritual, in appearance, in this system, towards this very abomination. When these writers seem most to mount upon their high places, they seem nearest the express vindication of the Romish Mariolatry." And this is the language used to represent the respect that Catholics pay the B. V. Mary! How estranged, and corrupted, must be the heart, that could give such words to the tongue! But let us examine the capital words in those two extracts taken from the late Charge of Bishop McIlvaine.

"The Worship."—What term in the English language, can be more vague as to its meaning, than the word worship? Did his lordship intend sophistry in the choice of this word? Why did he not give us his definition?—Let his Rule of Faith, the Bible, try to limit the meaning. The word worship is used in these places to denote sovereign honor, absolute adoration, the grand acts of Latria: Exodus, iv. 31. 1 Chron. xvi. 26, Psalms xxix. 5. John iv. 24. Acts xxiv. 14. In another class of passages, the term is used to denote the respect we pay to angels—which is called inferior honor, the acts of David: Josue v. 14. Genesis xix. 1. We find the same words employed to specify the respect paid to the men of God on earth: 4 Kings iii. 15. Daniel ii. 46. In other passages the word is taken in a bad sense, as meaning idolatrous worship: Rev. xiii. 12. Rom. i. 25. Rev. xiii. 2. In England, and Ireland, we say to the civil officers, "your worship—worshipful—right worshipful." In the English Book of Common Prayer, we read, in the

Solemnization of Matrimony, these words—"and with my body, I thee worship. We have said "the English &c.," for these words are not in the American Editions. But in which of all these senses do Catholics worship the Blessed Virgin Mary? Not in the sense of supreme or sovereign honor: for that belongs to God alone. Not as a creature on this earth; for, she is in heaven. Not in a mere civil sense; for Mary is not a political office: she is a celestial creature. And not in a bad sense; for that would be blasphemy. But we worship, or respect her, as Josue did the Angel; as Lot did the two Angels; as Abraham did the three Angels. That is, with such limited, inferior, and absolute, respect, as becomes her exalted, and finite, created, dignity. It is true to say that we worship her in this sense, but it is false to say that we worship her in the Bishop's sense. Mary is so essentially the creature, that God cannot make her otherwise. Mary's Grace, and sanctity, and nature, are so finite, that God cannot give her an infinite measure of grace. The man must be either grossly ignorant, or incomparably malicious, who will say that any Catholic could adore the blessed Mother of Christ, our Lord.

"The Virgin Mary." But the Bishop has suppressed the word Blessed, and whilst he does this, he declares in his charge, that the Bible alone is the only rule of Faith! That Protestant Bible, mutilated, and corrupted, as it is says "that all generations shall call Mary blessed." Why then does man plunder Mary of her rights? Mary's sex entitles her to her proper names. Still it is easy to tell a man's country, habits, and early associations, from his language; for, "from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Heresy is detected by its clipping, stammering, garbling suppression of truth. And Orthodoxy is known by its plain, and ennobled diction.

"That most odious of all forms of idolatry"—Reckless mortal, remnant of Episcopalian heresy, could you define the word idolatry? Does not idolatry mean, either to worship the creature, as God, or, make a God of the creature, or, to believe that any attribute of God can be communicated to the creature? We do not worship Mary, as God; but we do respect her as the best creature of God—as the mother of God. We look upon her to be as much, and as verily, the creature of God, as the worm of the earth. We know that it is impossible to impart to her any absolute, or relative, attribute of God. We ask Mary to pray for us, and we ask every other good Mary in heaven, and on earth, to do the same. Episcopalians ask the prayers of Bishop McIlvaine, and of every other Protestant Bishop; and Catholics think, that they have as good a right to ask the prayers of Mary.—But there is a difference. Mary prays without pay, and Protestant Bishops pray for pay. The one acts through love, the other acts for gain. Mary's prayers are better for nothing, than the others are for money. In a mere spirit of speculation the Catholics are the wiser. We love Mary, because God loves her. Is this idolatry? We respect the Mother of the Lord Jesus. Is that idolatry? We believe the Blessed Virgin Mary to be full of grace! Is this idolatry? As sure as there is a God in heaven, so sure will Episcopalianism, and every other anti-Marian heresy be destroyed by the Son of her, whom all Catholic generations love to call Blessed. From the past, we judge the future.

"Romish superstition—this very abomination—Romish Mariolatry." "Romish!" Son of Cranmer, you are the man to call your betters by foul names! Cranmerish establishment, are you not afraid to allow your children to indulge in hard words! Oh! Church by law, both so born, and bred, did not Cranmer, make you? But who has made that church of which Cranmer was once a member, the church of the Edwards, and Alfreds, and Langtons, and Becketts, and Littletons? It was not Rome; for Rome could not make a religion for herself. It is not the Pontiff of Rome; for he, would he attempt to make a religion, would be as great a botch as ever lived. But it is the God of the universe that has made the religion of the universe.

"Superstition"—Who has told you, conceited man, the quantity, and the quality, of your Catholic's love towards the Mother of the Lord? Child of superstition, when did God give you power "to search the reins, and the hearts" of your fellows? When did you receive the scales of the sanctuary in order to weigh the thoughts of men? Why do you snatch the reins of judgment from the blood-stained hands of the Blessed Redeemer? Rash judgment is superstition; for we stand above (super and sto) our level. Pride is superstition; for, this exalts us above the order of God. Vincible ignorance is superstition; for, in this state, erect ignorance on the ruins of Truth. He that runs may read. But all heresy is superstition.

"Abomination"—A word, that is hard indeed. Shades of the venerable Bede, behold the man of Gambier! Illustrious Athanasius, do you hear your traducer! Faith of all ages, of all times, of all places, of all people, mark the obscure individual, who calumniate you! Is it because we revere your Blessed Mother, O adorable Saviour, that our creed is to be called an abomination!—But man murdered the Son Christ Jesus, and man would do the same to the Mother if he could! Can man honor the Son, and insult the mother? Could the Son insult his Mother, without insulting himself! Let Christ be adored, let Mary be honored. So said St. Augustine.

"Mariolatry"—That is, the Marian idolatry, or the idolatry, or idolising of Mary. And this is the charge laid at the very doors of nearly two hundred millions of living Catholics, and of countless millions who are already judged! Idolatry is contrary to the first principles of the law of Nature, and the violation of these principles will admit of no excuse. There is no such plea as invincible ignorance. The man, who is guilty of idolatry, is condemned by every law, natural, human and divine. If Bishop McIlvaine speak the truth about the Catholics, the two hundred millions, that are now living, must be damned. The millions of all ages, places, and tribes who have professed that faith, must be damned! All the sons and daughters of England traced from St. Augustine to the pseudo-Reformation must be damned! Is there any man monstrous enough to maintain these propositions? No charity can explain away the crime of idolatry. Either then the Bishop has been guilty of a gross outrage against the faith of the Catholic world, or, the Catholic world is irretrievably lost. No good man would be guilty of such a charge. No honest man is guilty of libel. May God both pardon, and convert, every enemy of Mary, through the prayers of Mary, and the blood of her Son, is the humble prayer of yours,— P. McL.