

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR APRIL.

- APRIL 1st—Tuesday before Easter.
 " 2nd—Wednesday before Easter.
 " 3rd—Thursday before Easter.
 " 4th—GOOD FRIDAY. Pr. Pss. M. 22, 40, 54. E 69, 88.
 " 5th—EASTER EVEN.
 " 6th—EASTER DAY. Pr. Pss. M. 2, 57, 111. E. 113, 114, 115. Pr. Anth. instead of *Venite*. Athan. Cr.; Prop. Pref. in Com. Service till April 13th incl. *Notice of Monday and Tuesday*.
 " 7th—Monday in Easter week.
 " 8th—Tuesday in Easter week.
 " 13th—1st Sunday after Easter.
 " 20th—2nd Sunday in Easter. (*Notice of St. Mark*).
 " 25th—St. Mark's Day. (E. & M.)
 " 27th—Third Sunday after Easter. (*Notice of St. Philip and St. James*)

WORDS FOR TRUTH.

BY THE LATE REV. R. F. LITTLEDALE,
L.L.D., D.C.L.

"THE OLD RELIGION."—[Continued.]

Article VI.—"I confess that under either kind alone, a whole and entire Christ and a true Sacrament is received."

This article is intended to uphold the usage of lay communion in one kind only. But communion in one kind is denounced as "sacrilegious" by Pope Leo the Great (440-461) and Pope Gelasius I. (492-496), the latter stating the reason why it is so is, that it is a "division of the mystery." It was forbidden, save in cases of necessity, by Pope Urban II. in the Council of Clermont in 1095; and again by Pope Paschal II. in 1116, save in the case of infants and very infirm old people, who cannot swallow bread, and may therefore be communicated with the chalice only. And the first ruling the other way was at the Council of Constance, on June 15, 1415, when the Council had deposed the reigning Pope or Popes, and had not elected another. This, consequently,

is a very late innovation upon ancient doctrine and practice.

Article VII.—"I constantly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are assisted by the prayers of the faithful."

Pius IV., who drew up this creed, mentions in his Bull against the Greeks that they "reject Purgatory;" and they did so, in fact, at the Council of Florence in 1437, as unknown to Oriental theology. And Cardinal Fisher, in his book against Luther (A. D. 1535), says: "Since it was so late before Purgatory was admitted into the Universal Church, who can be surprised that at the earlier period of the Church no mention was made of indulgences?" Accordingly, this article also was new.

Article VIII.—"In like manner I hold that the saints reigning with God are to be venerated and invoked, and that they offer prayers for us, and that their relics are to be venerated."

There is not quite such overwhelming evidence against this clause as against those cited previously, for there is some seeming warrant of invocation of the saints found in Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries; even this, however, being far too late to rank as part of the primitive Christian belief and practice. But when these earliest examples are tested, they prove to be sermons on the anniversaries of Saints' Days and the like, in which merely a sort of poetical call is made upon the saint commemorated to unite in the worship being offered by the Church, exactly analogous to the mention of Ananias, Azarias and Misael in the Benedicite, which no sane person supposes to be addressed as a prayer to them. And invocations of the modern kind, asking the saints to confer favors, are not to be found till the ninth century. This article, consequently, is no part of the ancient faith of the Catholic Church.

Article IX.—"I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, of the ever-Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained, and that due honor and veneration are to be rendered to them."

The cultus of images was first licensed by the pseudo General Second Council of Nice (a packed and fettered assembly) in 787, and was promptly repudiated and condemned by the Western Church in the Council of Frankfort in 794; while the so called "Caroline Books," a theological indictment against image worship, drawn up at the instance of the Emperor Charlemagne, are still extant to testify to the opposition this novelty met with at the outset.

Article X.—"I most firmly assert that the power of Indulgences has been left in the Church of Christ, and that their use by the Christian people is of the most salutary character."

There is no trace whatever of Indulgences, save as mitigations of canonical penalties imposed by human ecclesiastical law, discoverable till the year 1084, when Pope Gregory VII., offered remission of sins to all who would take up arms against the Emperor Henry IV., with whom he was then at feud. (And see above, under Article VII.) This is, therefore, a new doctrine.

Article XI.—"I acknowledge the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church to be the mother and mistress of all churches."

This article is one which has to be tested by facts as well as by dates. As it is certain that the Gospel was first preached from Jerusalem, it is to Jerusalem only that the title of "Mother of all Churches" can historically or theologically apply. Rome itself was evangelized from Jerusalem, first by the "strangers of Rome," who reported St. Peter's Pentecostal sermon there, and after by St. Paul, who first organized the Roman Church. And Rome was not a missionary centre for a very long time. It is just possible that North Africa was evangelized thence, but after that Anglo-Saxon

England, in the sixth century, is the first fruits of Roman missionary enterprise.

None of the many hundred churches founded in the East or West up to that date were the result of Roman missions, or could have supposed for an instant that they were so; and it is thus impossible that a belief of the Roman Church being their "mother" could have made any part of their creed or tradition. As to us being the "Mistress of all Churches," though many strenuous efforts were made to establish such supremacy, yet the Eastern Churches never accepted it at all; and several of the Western Churches—and notably the Church of England—resisted it in principle and in detail. Consequently this claim lacks the mark of ancient consent, and is to be classed amongst innovations.

Article XII.—"I vow and swear a true obedience to the Roman Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ."

Here it will be enough to say that the Church of North Africa, in 419, and again in 414, enacted canons repudiating the Papal claim to interfere in the concerns of the African church and excommunicating all African ecclesiastics who should appeal beyond sea—that is, to the Pope, as that was the point at issue—from the decision of an African Synod, and the famous St. Augustine took part in both these rejections of Papal authority. And the Western Church deposed Popes several times, on the ground of the superior authority of the collective Church over any single bishop, however exalted in station. The last case was as late as 1415. If the proposition in the Creed of Pius IV., was historically or theologically ancient or true, such an act would have been the cutting off its own head on the part of the body, and thus its own self-murder and annihilation.

It will be seen from this chronological survey that while several of the twelve articles of the special Roman Creed may be called old in comparison with the tenets of various modern sects, they are not old in relation to the only standard of age which holds good for the Catholic faith. And although Rome differs from the sects in this important particular: that she has not cast away any of the ancient articles of Christian belief, however she may have overlaid and obscured them, yet the passion for religious novelties is just as acute amongst Roman Catholics as amongst the most innovating of the sects. The only difference is one of procedure. In Protestantism the inventor of a novel opinion or practice starts a new sect for its propagation and maintenance; in the Roman Church it is not necessary to secede for such a purpose, since it can be effected by starting a new cult, supported by a guild or confraternity of some kind, and certain to obtain formal recognition in course of time, if it can first succeed unofficially in winning a sufficient measure of popularity. That is how the cult of the Sacred Heart, for example, came in. And it was freely alleged, during the inception and course of the Vatican Council, by some of the ablest Roman Catholic critics, that one of the most powerful motives which influenced the advocates of Papal Infallibility was that it would provide machinery whereby, without the long delays of previous inquiry and conciliar procedure, a perennial flow of fresh theological definitions and new articles of belief could be supplied for the jaded appetites of devotees, craving for some ever-new fashion in religion.

It is thus clear that not one of the twelve additional articles of the special Roman Creed can be traced back to primitive or even to very early times. What that means is this; that the only "old religion" to be found in the Roman Church is that part of its belief and practice which agrees with the standards of the Church of England. What is peculiar to itself, and what makes by far the largest portion of its practical working system, is most mediæval,