

‘ C. OR R.C.? ’

OR

WHAT AND WHERE IS THE
OLD RELIGION?

BY

A MEMBER OF IT

M. E. M. DONALDSON

Price 1s.

“ C. OR R.C.? ”

OR, WHAT—AND—WHERE IS THE OLD RELIGION?

‘ Thus saith the Lord . . . ask for the old paths wherein is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.’—Jer. VI. 16.

By M. E. M. DONALDSON (Miss)

‘ **I**N the Catholic Church, care is especially to be taken that we hold that what has been believed everywhere always, and by all: For this indeed is truly Catholic, as the very force and meaning of the word signifies, comprehending as it does in general, all truth universally. We shall follow Universality if we confess that to be the one true faith which the whole Church throughout the world confesses: Antiquity also if we in no respect recede from those tenets which it is manifest that our holy Elders and Fathers held; and consent if in this antiquity we follow the definitions and opinions held by all, or nearly all, the ancient Bishops and Doctors.’ St. Vincent of Lerins (a monk who died 450) in his Commentary against Heretics.

‘ Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.’—
1 Thess. v. 21.

INTRODUCTORY

We often hear from Romanists, especially if we meet any in one of our old Cathedrals or Churches, the claim that they represent ‘ the “ old ” religion ’; and the complementary statement that Henry VIII founded the English Church, which, therefore, cut itself off from the ‘ old ’ Church. (This latter assertion will be dealt with in conclusion.)

Now the Church of England takes her stand upon the Bible, and does not accept any doctrine as true which is opposed to its teaching. On the other hand, Romanists are forbidden to read the Bible except in some translation with notes, authorised by Rome; and even that is not allowed in countries where Rome has full power. As an example of Romanist translation, in the Douai Bible, made for English Romanists, we find such an example as this. St. John the Baptist exhorted men to ‘ Repent ’, which in the Greek original means literally ‘ change your mind ’; but the Douai version translates this ‘ do penance ’.

So let us Anglicans make a start by obeying the exhortation of St. Jude (V. 3) ‘ earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints ’.

Where there is any dispute as to the meaning of certain texts, as regards, for example, our Lord’s words to St. Peter (St. Matt. XVI, 18, 19), we enquire what the earliest Fathers of the Church, men of the Apostolic age, have to say about it, on the principle that ‘ the nearer the source, the purer the stream ’. We also go to the later Fathers, as accredited tea-

chers of the Church, to ascertain their general agreement. The degrees of some of the General Councils of the Church also enlighten us regarding accepted truths.

In the early days of Christianity, before there were any divisions in the Church, there were often still some particular doctrines in dispute. In these cases, the Christian Emperor, who was then the dominant power in the Christian world, summoned all the bishops to attend at some centre, such as Nicaea or Constantinople, (which gave us the Nicene Creed) to decide the question. The most illustrious Councils in church history are called ' Ecumenical '—a word now entirely misused—for those rightly so-called are those whose decisions were subsequently received by the whole Church.

Other authorities to whom we refer are those great teachers called the ' Doctors of the Church ', of whom there are eight outstanding, four representing the West, and four the East. (We often see their representations in carved figures on some of our pulpits.)

So when questions are in dispute between us and Romanists, it is to these various authorities that we appeal, as we shall do in what follows.

Since fundamentally the whole Romanist case is based on the position and claims of the Papacy, we must first ascertain the antiquity and extent of these claims.

THE PAPAL CLAIMS

To begin with, we have no proof that St. Peter was ever Bishop of Rome. The earliest writers, Clement, Ignatius, and Irenaeus, speak of St. Peter and Paul as joint founders of the Roman Church—to this day their feast is jointly observed on June 29th in the Roman Church. These writers say that these two apostles instituted one Linus as the first Bishop of Rome; yet claiming St. Peter as the first Pope, Romanists base the Petrine claims mainly on our Lord's words (St. Matt. XVI, 18, 19) ' Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church '.

In Leo XIII's Encyclical¹ *Satis Cognitum* of 1896, the Pope speaks of the papal interpretation of this famous text as ' the venerable and constant belief of every age '. So far from this being the case, the Fathers of the Church give various interpretations of the text, many stating that the rock was St. Peter's confession—' Thou art the Christ ', and that every one who proclaimed this became a Peter. Allnatt, a learned Romanist author, can find no earlier instance than Pope Siricius (386) of any writer who claims that the promise was given exclusively to St. Peter.

¹ An encyclical is a letter which the Pope addresses to his bishops, and each one is known by the words with which it begins. These never have any relation to the subject of the Bull, and to translate them is meaningless.

It is impossible here for us to consider all the wealth of evidence negating Pope Leo XIII's claim, so we must content ourselves by quoting two great names. One of the Four Great Latin Doctors of the Church was St. Gregory the Great, the Pope who sent St. Augustine to England. He, in an Epistle to the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, rebuking some who sought to confer the title of 'Universal bishop' upon himself, wrote: 'This title is profane, superstitious haughty, and invented by the first Apostate' [the devil]—if one Bishop be called Universal, the whole church falls if he should fall.' St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 'the last of the Fathers' (died 1153) in a letter to Pope Eugenius III, wrote: 'Remember, first of all, that the Holy Roman¹ Church over which thou art chief, is the mother of churches, not their sovereign mistress,² that thou thyself art not the Lord of Bishops, but one among them.' Clearly, then, we see that the Papal Claims are not 'the venerable and constant belief of every age', and therefore they can be no part of the 'Old Religion'.

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

In their 'Protestation' to Parliament which preceded the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1781, the four Vicars Apostolic [of Rome] in England, as well as nearly all the Romanist clergy declared: 'We acknowledge no infallibility in the Pope.' Similarly, in an anti-Protestant publication, Keenan's 'Controversial Catechism', approved and licensed by the Romanist Archbishop of New York in 1846, and by the Romanist bishops in Scotland in 1853, one question asks: 'Must not Catholics believe the Pope himself to be infallible?' To this the answer was: 'This is a Protestant invention: it is no article of the Catholic faith.' (This conclusion, of course, is the truth.) Yet in 1870, the Infallibility of the Pope was decreed by the Vatican Council to be an article *de fide* (of faith), and consequently the question and answer above quoted from Keenan's Catechism were, with great subtlety, deleted from new editions expressly compiled for the purpose.

So late as the 16th century, Hadrian VI before his elevation to the Papacy, when he was chancellor of Louvain taught: 'I say then that, if by Roman Church, we understand the Head of that Church, i.e. the Pope, it is certain that he may err, even in matters pertaining to the faith, by asserting heresy through his determination or decretal; for several Roman pontiffs have been heretics.' So far from

¹ Note not Holy 'Catholic'.

² Yet in the creed of Pope Pius IV 1564, which has to be recited publically by all bishops and beneficed clergy, and which is imposed, to this day, on all converts to Rome, the Reciter has to declare: 'I recognise the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church as the mother and mistress of all churches.'

retracting these words, when he became Pope, Hadrian actually republished the work in which they occur.

Now it is very important for us to understand the exact meaning of Papal Infallibility. In accordance with the definition of the doctrine by the Vatican Council in 1870, it is held to mean that when the Pope makes a pronouncement officially on a matter of faith or morals, God guards him against teaching error. But when it comes to asking what specific papal declarations are to be classed as infallible, we cannot obtain any agreed answer. For during these 19½ centuries, when there have been more than 250 Popes, there is no agreement amongst Romanists as to which of all their pronouncements are those to be accepted as infallible. Some authorities say only two, others would say four or five.

There is one, however, of appalling significance, which an English Roman Catholic priest, Dom Cuthbert Butler, in Vol. 2 of his 'Vatican Council' quotes, on the authority of one Père E. Dublanchz, as fulfilling the conditions of infallibility. It is this. The Bull *Exurge Domini* of Pope Leo X promulgated in 1521, condemned Luther for the heresy of teaching that it is contrary to the will of the Holy Spirit that heretics should be burned. This condemnation necessarily implies that the Pope has infallibly maintained exactly the contrary.

Is this papally approved burning of heretics discernible as any part of the 'old religion' as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ?

THE DENIAL OF THE CUP TO THE LAITY

First of importance in our considering what is the 'old religion' is in regard to the following of our Lord's own explicit injunctions. When He instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the first three Evangelists, followed by St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, record that 'He took the cup, and after He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of this'. So in the Roman Canon of the Mass, these very words (in Latin) are said by the celebrating priest. Nevertheless, despite this declaration, actually it is only he, and not even any of the priests who may be present, who receive from the Chalice.

Yet in 495, Pope Gelasius, hearing that some communicants 'abstained from the Cup of the consecrated Blood', ordered that they should 'either receive the Sacrament in its entirety, or be repelled from the entire Sacrament, because the division of one and the same mystery cannot take place without great sacrilege'. Before him, Pope Leo the Great (d. 461) excommunicated as sacrilegious, certain African heretics who would not receive the chalice. So, too, the Council of Clermont, presided over in 1095 by Pope Urban II in

person, decreed that ' No one shall communicate at the altar unless he receive the Body and Blood separately '.

It was the Council of Constance which, in 1415, gave the first formal sanction to communion in one kind only, thus directly negating the emphasized injunction of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who instituted this Holy Sacrament. Hence we clearly see that Romanists who are not permitted to receive in both kinds have in this respect, most seriously departed from the ' old religion '.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

As regards the place accorded to the Mother of our Lord in the New Testament, we find there is no evidence to support her cultus by Romanists. It was not till 1854 that Pope Pius IX added a new article to the Roman creed, that of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This was a doctrine not only implicitly contradicted by St. Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), one of the Four great Latin Doctors of the Church, but explicitly denied by St. Bernard the Great (previously quoted in another connection) whose devotion to the Mother of our Lord was very great.

This novel doctrine robs Jesus Christ of His unique attribute of being alone without sin, and quite inapplicable are the few texts Romanists quote in support of it. On the contrary, when ' a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto Him, ' Blessed is the womb that bare Thee ', His reply was, ' Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it '. (St. Luke XI. 27 and 28.)

The only other references to the Blessed Virgin are as follows.

There are the titles of honour accorded to her by St. Luke in his first chapter, where he terms her 1, ' highly favoured ', or full of grace; 2, ' blessed amongst women '; 3, her own statement that ' all generations shall call me blessed '; 4, Elizabeth's declaration ' blessed art thou amongst women '; and 5, her question, ' Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me ? '

The only other mention of her in the Gospels is the statement of Christ's subjection to her and St. Joseph at Nazareth; and His Word from the cross to St. John: ' Son, behold thy Mother.'

Romanists take no regard of the fact that our Lord's subjection to His Mother was part of His humiliation in taking upon Himself our human nature. They also ignore certain other instances which tell against modern Romanist teaching. For St. Luke records (II. 41-50) our Lord's reproof of her for her search of Him in Jerusalem, and her lack of understanding of His meaning: and it is the beloved disciple who in St. John II. 1-5 relates how at the marriage in Cana our Lord rebuked His Mother.

On such a slender foundation—if foundation it can be called—has the Roman Catholic Church reared the enormous fabric of the worship of the Virgin—all entirely opposed to the 'old religion.'

In none of the Fathers can we find any support for this cultus, but, on the contrary, much against it. Epiphanius (d. 403), as the most precise of these, shall be one cited out of many more. He wrote: 'Mary's body was holy indeed, but she was not a Deity. She was a Virgin, too, and honoured, but not given to us for worship. . . . If Christ willeth not that the Angels should be worshipped, how much more is He unwilling that worship should be paid to her who was born of Anna?' And St. Ambrose, another of the Four Latin Doctors of the Church (d. 397) writing on the Holy Spirit, declares: 'And lest anyone should divert this (act of worship) to the Virgin Mary, Mary was the temple of God, not the God of the temple. And therefore He only is to be worshipped Who wrought within that temple.' Finally, St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1109) in his *Cur Deus Homo*¹ held that the Blessed Virgin, like all other human beings, was conceived and born in sin.

In 1803, the Romanist authority known as the Congregation of Rites decreed that in all the writings of St. Alfonso de Liguori (d. 1787), 'there is not one word which can justly be found fault with'; and later Pope Pius IX made him a Doctor of the Church, and he was canonised.

In his 'Glories of Mary', Liguori writes: 'Often we shall be heard more quickly, and be thus preserved if we have recourse to Mary than we should be if we called on the Name of Jesus our Saviour.' Again, 'Many things are asked of God and are not granted: they are asked from Mary and are obtained.' A final quotation, 'At the command of the Virgin all things obey, even God.'

The 'Raccolta' is a collection of prayers specially indulged by the Popes (of which practice, more later), and therefore of indisputable authority in the Roman Church. (The following quotations are from an English translation published by Burns and Oates, the R.C. publishers.)

'Hail, Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, Sweetness and Hope, all hail! To thee we cry, banished sons of Eve, to thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this Vale of tears. Turn then, Our advocate,² they merciful eyes to us, and after this our exile, show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.'

And again. 'Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation.' And

¹ 'Why God became Man'.

² Contrast this with the teaching of the 'old religion' given in I. St. John, II. 1: 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

further: 'Leave me not, my Mother, in my own hands, or I am lost.' And much more novelty to the same effect.

Passing from one stage in the exaltation of the Blessed Virgin to another, in 1854, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was decreed by the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* of Pope Pius IX. This is the doctrine that the Virgin Mary was not only without actual, but was born without original, sin, and that she was stainless from the moment she was conceived. But the 'old religion' teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ was alone without sin, so it is not surprising that St. Thomas Aquinas, prince of scholastic theologians (d. 1274) denied the doctrine as unknown to the early Fathers, and St. Bernard held that she was conceived in sin.

The climax of the modern Roman glorification of the Blessed Virgin is as recent as the 1950 proclamation by the present Pope Pius XII, in his Bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, that she was bodily taken up into Heaven. This, he declared was 'by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, by that of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, we pronounce, declare, and define, as a divinely revealed dogma'. For this dogma we have seen that neither the 'old religion', as represented by all the relevant quotations from the Gospels already given, nor authentic early tradition, provide the slightest basis. On the contrary, in his Gospel we see St. John writes: (III. 13) 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.' This evangelist, we remember, was he to whom our Lord from the cross committed His Mother, so no one could speak more authoritatively.

There is an obscure passage in the Book of Revelation (XII. 14) in which some have seen a reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but most commentators have taken it to refer to the Church.

Pope Benedict XIV, in 1740, stated that the most ancient of the Fathers of the Early Church are silent as to the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and declared that the doctrine is not an article of faith. Finally, if we consult an authoritative Romanist work, called 'The Catholic Encyclopaedia' (published before the new Papal dogma of 1950) we shall find it states that 'The belief in the corporal assumption of Mary is founded on the apocryphal¹ treatise *De Obitu S. Dominae* (c. 400). In the English Church, and those in communion with her, following the authentic 'old religion,' we honour the Blessed Virgin by the keeping of the following Holy days—of her Purification, of the Annunciation, and of her Visitation, Nativity, and Conception.

INDULGENCES

As regards the Romanist doctrine of Indulgences, originally we find they were no more than the remission of

a canonical (or recognised) penance imposed by the Church herself, based upon the authority given by her Lord to 'bind and loose' (St. Matt. XVIII. 18). Next, the Roman Church commuted the penalties formerly exacted for sins into monetary fines, assessed at a fixed tariff in her 'Penitentials'. So it happened that men came to think, that by certain gifts or acts, the penalties due to sin in general might be escaped. This was at last plainly stated in 1095 by the Council of Clermont which decreed that to go on the Crusade to free the Holy Land from the infidel was to count instead of all penances. Subsequently we discover similar remissions were attached to less onerous acts of piety, such as almsgiving going on pilgrimage and journeying to Rome for a papal jubilee. In 1300, Boniface VIII established the Jubilee, and promised 'the fullest forgiveness of all sins' to such as participated in it.

Further developments of the doctrine held that if temporal penalties were not duly performed or authoritatively remitted in this life, they might be reduced, or even wiped out, in purgatory. For this purpose, Indulgences might be obtained by the living, and transferred to the account of departed friends.

The Schoolmen (who were mediaeval theologians), then invented the doctrine of the Treasury of Merits, which was formally authorised in 1343 by Pope Clement VI. This doctrine was based on the fact that in Christ's sacrifice on the Cross there was a large excess of what was necessary to redeem the world, since one drop of His Blood would have sufficed for this. The same, they alleged, is true in their lesser degrees of the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saints. Hence all these supererogatory merits, or voluntary good works, over and above God's commandments, constituted a spiritual bank upon which the Church, as represented by the Pope, could draw.

Opposed to these novel doctrines we find there is the teaching of Christ (St. Luke XVII. 10), 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do'. Our Lord's parable of the Ten Virgins is also opposed to the doctrine of Indulgences, for He makes the Wise Virgins refuse to share their oil with the foolish, on the express ground that there would not be enough for all.

The 'old religion', we see then, knows nothing of the doctrine of Indulgences. On the contrary, our Lord overthrew the whole theory on which they are based when He declared: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.' (St. Matt. V. 26.)

THE ROMAN DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY

Closely allied with the doctrine of Indulgences is that of the Roman doctrine of Purgatory ; which according to the Roman Catechism of Trent (1564), is reserved exclusively for pious and justified souls, which have departed in a state of grace. And the Pope Benedict XIV (d. 1758) declared that the pains of purgatory, both physical and mental, are the same as those of hell, except in the length of duration.

Contrast this teaching with that of the genuine 'old religion'. The Book of Wisdom, which we read in the English Church, and which is accounted canonical by that of Rome, declares : 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and there shall no torment touch them—they are in peace' (III.1–3). And St. John says : 'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.'

THE ROMAN DOCTRINE OF DEVELOPMENT

This modern doctrine has been invented in order to account for the many changes of teaching in the Roman Church. This is how it came about.

Let us recall one of the most eminent converts from the English Church that the Roman Church ever received—he who afterwards became Cardinal Newman. In order to recant the position he had held as an Anglican, Dr. Newman, as he then was, published his celebrated *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. When a Churchman, he had proved in his writings that what were distinctive Roman doctrines were unknown in the early Church. But at the same time as he went over to Rome, he published this Essay on Development to maintain that what Christ had committed to His Church were certain seeds and germs of truth, destined to be developed by the Church. This doctrine was eagerly seized upon by the Romanists, who made the fullest use of it.

But it is somewhat amusing for us to find that actually a century earlier, the very same plea for Protestant novelties was made by a Calvinist minister called Jurien, who was opposing the doctrines of the Church. This minister asserted that the truth of God was only known by instalments, and book was most indignantly repudiated by the celebrated French priest, Bossuet, a great orator, and considered the most formidable champion of the Roman Church about the end of the 17th century.

Now opposed to this late doctrine of development, we find the authoritative assertion of the Roman Church herself that her teaching now is exactly what it has been from the beginning, and that it is attested by the unanimous consent of the Fathers. Both the Councils of Trent (1545–63) and

the Vatican (1870) affirm this, the latter most explicitly declaring: 'The Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of St. Peter, that by His revelation they might make known new doctrines; but that, by His assistance they might inviolably keep and faithfully expound the deposit of faith handed down by the Apostles.' Again, more contradictions.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Such are some of the more outstanding novelties of the present Romanist faith, sufficient to prove that the Roman Church is certainly not the exponent of 'the old religion' in this country. There are many more doctrines, or cults, such as that of the Sacred Heart which are equally incompatible with any profession of holding 'the old religion'.

In all the foregoing, we have contrasted the authentic 'old religion', which is the true Catholic religion, with the novel doctrines and contradictions of the present Roman Church.

Romanists in this country almost invariably refer to their schism i.e. their separation from the English Church—as 'the Catholic Church', and to themselves as 'Catholics'—a term they deny to Anglicans. We should never allow this to pass, for as we shall see, the Catholic Church in this country, her continuity unbroken, is the English Church, and consequently her members are rightly styled Catholics, for in every service of the Church we proclaim individually our belief in the Catholic Church.

Actually the official style of the Roman Catholic Church, as used by herself at the Council of Trent, is given in the new Creed it produced, that of Pope Pius IV, as we have previously mentioned. There, the initial reference is to the 'Holy Roman Church', and later on, to the 'Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Roman Church'.

In the oath taken to the Pope, the Roman Church is described as the 'Holy Apostolic and Roman Church', and in the formula conferring the red hat on cardinals, there is stated what is expected of them for the 'honour of the Roman Church'.

But as regards the Church in England, right the way throughout her history she continues as she began—'the English Church', never the Roman. We know that Pope Gregory the Great (who sent St. Augustine to England), wrote of it as 'the English Church' (*Ecclesia Anglicana*); and by that name, or by such names as the 'holy Church of England', she continued to be described.

Romanists, and those ignorant of English history, who assert that Henry VIII founded the Church of England, are wholly unable to substantiate the statement, for such an event never took place.

To the ancient question, ' Where was your Church before the Reformation ? ' a famous Vicar of Leeds, Dr. Hook, promptly counter-questioned : ' Where was your face before you washed it this morning ? '

When in 1534, Papal Supremacy was abolished in England, the Papacy took no action.

We find it was actually not till 1570 that the Pope excommunicated the then sovereign Queen Elizabeth, and all who refused the Papal supremacy. Those who then separated themselves from the English Church became schismatics, and set up a new religious body, the present Romanist body here.

Romanists in England besides claiming to represent ' the old religion ', sometimes also claim that they have been robbed of the old Cathedrals and parish Churches. This they do in ignorance of the fact that, in 1826, the Romanist Bishops and Vicars Apostolic drew up a Declaration disclaiming ' any right, title or pretension with regard to the same '.

In conclusion, we have seen that the present edition of the Romanist faith has only been reached after a mass of Papal contradictions. As so many of these are clearly matters of faith or morals, they in themselves refute any claim to Papal Infallibility. So Anglicans for the reasons given, refuse to accept any of these Roman novelties, and take their stand on the ' old religion, which is the genuine Catholic Faith held throughout the world-wide Anglican Communion.