

QUESTIONS POSED

Put by some Protestants during the Clonard Missions for All Denominations, 1949-'59

FOREWORD

During Lent, 1949, the undersigned were invited to give a series of lectures for all denominations in the Redemptorist Church, Clonard, Belfast, by the Very Rev. G. J. Reynolds, C.S.S.R., Rector of Clonard Monastery. This was the third series of its kind to be given in Clonard Church since Lent, 1948. On March 18, 1949, two days before our lectures were due to begin, Mr. Norman Porter, organising secretary of the National Union of Protestants (Ireland) wrote to us from the headquarters of his organisation (Belfast) stating that "we feel it our duty to meet what we consider a challenge to the Protestant Faith," and enclosing "a set of questions" with the request that they be answered either at lectures announced to be given between March 20 and April 10, or direct by post.

Mr. Porter's 36 questions covered, 16 subjects in all, from the Church and the Papacy to Politics and Sunday Observance. Meanwhile, numerous other questions were coming in from other inquirers. In the limited time at our disposal we could not hope to answer all these questions publicly or to send written replies to all the inquirers. Accordingly, we picked out those questions which would, we thought, be of general interest, including some of those submitted to us by Mr. Porter, and answered them in groups of five or six at a time on the Sunday nights between March 20 and April 10 inclusive, when representatives of the National Union of Protestants were present in Clonard Church. At the same time, we made it clear to our audience that we did not wish to leave any of the questions sent in to us unanswered and promised to give a verbal reply to any inquirer who came to see us in person immediately after the lectures or at some other convenient time.

On April 11—our lectures were due to end on Good Friday evening, April 15—Mr. Porter telephoned Clonard Monastery and asked for an interview with the lecturers. On the following evening, accordingly, he and three other membershis organisation visited us at Clonard and as a result of our discussion of with them we decided to publish a full set of answers to their questions.

Already, however, the National Union of Protestants had prepared a booklet of their own entitled Questions to the Lecturers at Clonard Roman Catholic Church. It contained the questions which had been submitted to us, "Collard's" answers to these questions and finally the N.U.P.'s own answer to each question in turn. "Clonard's" answers were taken for the most part as the foreword to the booklet explained, not from what we had said in the course of our lectures but from an earlier booklet called Difficulties of Belfast Nor-Catholics Answered, which had been issued after the first Clonard mission of Lent, 1948. When an answer to a particular question was not forthcoming either in our lectures or in Difficulties, the N.U.P. recorded, "Clonard : No answer." An unwary reader might interpret these words as meaning, what in fact, the N.U.P. did not allege, that Clonard had no answer to give.

Here then are our answers to all the N.U.P.'s questions. Taken together they amount to a statement of Catholic teaching on a number of important and topical subjects. As such they will, we trust, serve a twofold purpose. On the one hand they will give interested inquirers a true picture of what we Catholics believe in, as distinct from what we are often credited with believing. On the other hand, they will facilitate for Catholics themselves the observance of the Scriptural precept. "If anyone asks you to give an account of the hope which you cherish, be ready at all times to answer for it, but courteously and with due reverence." (I Pet. 3, 15-16 : Knox's translation.)

These words of St. Peter's First Epistle are preceded by others still more important: "Enthroned Christ as Lord in your hearts." Many Protestants would say: "That is just where Roman Catholics fail; they do not enthrone Christ alone as Lord in their hearts, but Christ plus something else; Christ plus an infallible Church, Christ plus the Papacy, Christ plus Tradition, and so on." No: we do not enthrone Christ plus anything in our hearts, but Christ only, "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2, 13). Why then do we believe in an infallible Church, the Papacy, Tradition and so on? For the same reason that we believe, as Protestants believe, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and so on :because we believe that all these things, sacred books and sacred institutions alike, come to us from Christ and lead us back to Him.

Such is our faith, the faith of every convinced member of the Roman Catholic Church. Is it necessarily an absurd or

slavish kind of faith? Surely not: one can hardly dismiss offhand as either a fool or a coward every man and woman of the thousands of men and women—among them acknowledged leaders in every field of praiseworthy human endeavour—who, in this as in other ages, have reached the conclusion that what the Catholic Church teaches is not after all a fabrication, but the truth; not a gospel of bondage, but one of spiritual liberation. The open-minded inquirer will at least listen to what the Catholic Church has to say for herself and weigh it well. If having done so he finds himself back where he started, he can at any rate look forward with confidence to the last Verdict of all, as can those other men and women—their number is known to God alone—whose lives, passed in complete good faith outside the visible fellowship of the Catholic Church, are nevertheless sanctified by the inward and abiding presence of Jesus Christ Our Lord. It is on Him that we all, Catholics and Protestants alike, depend for our happiness here and hereafter ; and He, the Loving Master and Merciful Judge of us all, will condemn no man who holds to what he sincerely, even if mistakenly, believes to be true and lives according to what he sincerely, even if mistakenly, believes to be good.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS*

NOTE

The answers given herein have been grouped under the headings used by the National Union of Protestants itself when submitting its questions. There are three groups of answers, each published in a separate booklet. The present booklet contains answers on the Pope, Indulgences, Saints, Marriage, Gambling and Drinking, answers on the Church, Images, the Bible, the Virgin Mary and Sunday.

THE POPE

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) What is your Scriptural authority for calling the Pope "the Vicar of Christ on earth?"
- (2) On what authority do you claim the Pope to be in direct line of succession to St. Peter?
- (3) How can you prove the infallibility of the Pope from Scripture?

Our Answers

(1) There is no Scriptural authority for the term "Vicar of Christ on earth," just as there is none for such terms as the Trinity, the Incarnation or the Virgin Birth.

Nevertheless, all Christians believe that the doctrine designated by these last three terms are contained in Scripture. Similarly we Roman Catholics believe that the doctrine designated by the term "vicar of Christ on earth," which is used to describe the nature of the Papal office, has a solid Scriptural foundation, the main lines of which may be traced as follows.

While Our Saviour was on earth, He Himself was the visible Head of the fellowship of the disciples. He is moreover, and He alone can be, the Divine Head of "His body which is the Church" (Col. 1, 18-24), the inward divine Source of all its spiritual life and energy: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1, 27). But now that He has ascended into Heaven He is no longer the visible Head of the Church. Was it then His intention that during the uncounted centuries of its earthly pilgrimage His Church should have no visible head at all? This is on the face of it an unlikely supposition. Every visible fellowship of which we have experience has a visible head. The father is the visible head of the fellowship of the family, the captain of the fellowship of the football team, the king or president, as the case may be, of the fellowship of the nation.

The example of the family is particularly worth noting. No other fellowship springs so directly and spontaneously from the social nature of man as does this one; yet within it, says St. Paul "the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the Church . . . Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands in everything" (Eph. 5, 23-24).

* *New Testament texts occurring in these answers are quoted according to accurate English versions of the original Greek. The Protestant Revised Version is, from this point of view much superior to the popular Authorised Version. See the answer to the question: "Why had your Church banned, even burned, the Holy Scriptures in many parts of the world?" in "The Bible."*

Must we then refuse to look for a visible head in the fellowship of Christ's Church? Does it possess no one member who serves as a centre of unity and cohesion for all the other members: no one who has been entrusted by Christ with the task of ruling and teaching it in His name and as His delegate: in a word, no "vicar of Christ on earth?" If so, the Christian Church no longer answers to Christ's own design for it. The New Testament clearly teaches that Christ established His Church not only on the general "foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2, 20) but on one part of that foundation in particular: the Rock of Peter, the kepha of Kepha, on which He declared, in the plainest possible words, that He would build His Church (Matt. 16, 18).*

True, He makes no explicit reference to a perennial line of successors to Peter in this office, just as He makes no reference whatever, explicit or implicit, to the fact that in course of time the Holy Ghost would inspire the writing of a new collection of sacred books parallel to the inspired writings of Israel. But He does explicitly promise that the Church built on Peter will endure to the end of time. This can only mean one of two things; either that Peter himself will continue to live in his own person until the divine Head of the Church becomes its visible Head once more, or that Peter will continue to live in the person of other men who will carry on his work, generation by generation, to the world's end. Christ Himself expressly rules out the first alternative: Peter will die as his Master died (John 21, 18). Therefore the second alternative must be true: there will be other visible heads of the Church, other "vicars of Christ on earth," until He Himself returns.

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven" (Acts I, II). Meanwhile we have Peter "standing up in the midst of the disciples" (Acts 1, 15), ruling and teaching us in Christ's name.

Postscript

Questions, p. 2, objects as follows: "The Church of Rome cannot give any Scripture for such a title ('the Vicar of Christ on earth') to a human being. It is blasphemy, and the Scriptures claim that the Holy Spirit is the rightful owner of such a title (John 14, 26 ; 15, 26).

The texts referred to do not describe the Holy Spirit as "the Vicar of Christ on earth" but as "the Paraclete" (the Comforter or Advocate or Helper). The Pope is a human instrument of the Paraclete, not a substitute for Him.

Questions, p. 3, raises another objection to Papal supremacy: "In 1 Peter 5, 1, Peter refers to himself as an elder, and he was sent out preaching by the apostles (Acts 8, 14). Is the Pope sent out to preach by his subordinates?"

Acts 8, 14 does not say that Peter was sent out preaching by the apostles but that "when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John"-- obviously by arrangement with Peter and John themselves, since they too were apostles. To the present day a Council of the Church can, by arrangement with the Pope, entrust to him the execution of any scheme which it judges to be for the good of the Church as a whole. Thus the Council of Trent entrusted the Popes of the sixteenth century with the task of revising the Vulgate translation of the Scriptures, and the work of revision was actually carried out under Papal supervision between 1546 and 1592. As for Peter's description of himself as an "elder" (a "fellow-elder" to be exact, 1 Pet. 5, 1, Revised Version), we may compare it with the traditional title of the Pope, "the servant of the servants of God."

(2) The following is a brief selection from the enormous mass of historical evidence which proves:

- (a) that St. Peter established his See at Rome ;
- (b) that his successors in the Roman See inherited his primacy over the Christian Church.

1. About 95 A.D. Clement, Bishop of Rome, wrote to the Corinthians: "Let us set before our eyes the good Apostles. There was Peter who...having borne his testimony went to his appointed place of glory. By reason of jealousy and strife Paul pointed out by his example the prize of patient endurance

. . . To these men of holy lives was gathered a vast multitude of the elect who...set a brave example among ourselves."

This passage shows that the Romans of Clement's day regarded SS. Peter and Paul as the apostles of their own city. It occurs in a letter in which Clement himself lays down the law for the Corinthians with such a tone of authority that Bishop Lightfoot, a distinguished Anglican scholar, regarded this document as " the first step towards Papal

domination " (Apostolic Fathers I, 69-70). But it must be remembered that Clement himself had, according to St. Irenaeus, who wrote about 180 A.D., " known the apostles Peter and Paul and conversed with them " (Adv. Haer. 3, 3). Moreover, he was writing at a time when thousands who had also known the apostles were still alive and could easily have disproved his statements and his claims if they were not well founded.

2. Between 107 and 117 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote in his letter to the Romans (chap. 4): "I do not give an order like Peter or Paul: they were apostles, I am a man condemned to death." This sentence would have no point if Peter and Paul had not actually preached the Gospel in Rome. Twice in the inscription in his letter Ignatius speaks of the Roman Church as "presiding."

3. Between 165 and 174, Dionysius of Corinth wrote to Pope Soter: "you have, therefore, by your urgent exhortation, bound close together the sowings of Peter and Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both planted the seed of the Gospel also in Corinth and together instructed us, just as they likewise taught in the same place in Italy and at the same time suffered martyrdom "(Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 2, 28).

4. About ten years later, St. Irenaeus expressly says that the Church of Rome was founded by Peter and Paul. He goes on to enumerate the succession of the bishops of Rome since "the blessed apostles entrusted the episcopal office to Linus." "To this Church," he declares, "every Church must have recourse because of its special authority...since in it...the apostolic teaching has been preserved" (Adv. Haer. 3, 3).

5. Victor, Bishop of Rome from 189-199, threatened to cut off the bishops of Asia from the communion of the Church if they would not accept his ruling on the date of the celebration of Easter. This was, according to Bishop Lightfoot, another "decisive step" on the road to Papal domination. Yet Irenaeus, who was himself a Greek, did not deny Victor's right to act as he did, though he asked him not to push matters to a crisis.

6. At the beginning of the third century, Tertullian wrote in Africa : "The apostolic Churches show their titles...Rome shows Clement who was ordained by Peter" (De Praescript. 32).

7. About 370, another African, St. Optatus of Milevis, wrote: "Therefore in the one Chair...Peter sat first, to whom succeeded Linus, to Linus Clement...(a list of Popes follows), to Damascus succeeded Siricius (the Pope of St. Optatus's time), with whom the whole world is, in accordance with us, in the bond of communion" (De Schism, Donatist. 2, 2).

8. In 391, the greatest of all the African bishops, St. Augustine, declared "I am held in the communion of The Catholic Church by the succession of bishops from the very Chair of Peter the Apostle, to whom the Lord commended His sheep to be fed, up to the present episcopate" (Contra Ep. Manich. 41,5). Elsewhere he speaks of, "the Chair of the Roman Church, on which Peter sat and on which Anastasius sits today" (Contra Litt. Petil. 2, 51).

9. Preaching to the people of Antioch, St. John Chrysostom (347-407) said that God had indeed "ordered Peter, the ruler of the whole world...to pass a long time here...But though we received him as teacher, we did not retain him to the end but gave him up to royal Rome" (Hom. in inscript.. Act. 2, 6).

10. As a testimony from Ireland we may note the words of St. Columbanus (died 615) who addresses the Pope as the legitimate occupant of the See of Peter, "apostle and bearer of the keys" (Monum. Germ. Hist. Ep. III, 158). To him the bishops of Rome are "almost divine because they rule in the city of the "twin apostles" (ibid. 174-5).

11. Finally we have the testimony of the Councils of the Church. The bishops assembled at Chalcedon in 451 declared that "Peter has spoken by Leo," and those assembled at Constantinople in 681 that "Peter has spoken by Agatho" (Mansi, Concil. VI, 972: XI, 665).

In view of this evidence from the early centuries, and it is only a small fraction of what might be quoted, Roman Catholics have the amplest historical justification for believing that the Pope is in the direct line of succession to St. Peter and for accepting the definitions of the Councils of Lyons (1274), Florence (1438) and the Vatican (1870) regarding Papal supremacy and infallibility. True, it was only after a long process of theological debate and discussion that the position of the Papacy in the Christian Church was fully clarified and defined. But this is not a valid argument against our claim that it was accepted, in principle, by the Christian Church from the beginning. The same process of gradual clarification takes place in the sphere of civil law, which is not changed but more accurately defined, even for lawyers, as a result of authoritative legal decisions on intricate cases that come before the courts. As Cardinal Newman came to realise even while he was still all Anglican, "it is a common occurrence for a quarrel and lawsuit to

bring out the state of the law, and the most unexpected results often follow...It is a less difficulty that the Papal supremacy was not formally acknowledged in the second century than that there was no formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity till the fourth. No doctrine is defined till it is violated" (Development of Christian Doctrine, 1845: IV, 3).

Postscript

On April 19, 1949, we received a booklet from the National Union of Protestants entitled 'A Roman Catholic to a Minister'. It contained a 16-page reply by an American Protestant Minister, the Rev. Albert E. Johnson, to a 4-page letter which he had received from an American Catholic priest, Fr. John D. Murphy, on the subject of the Roman Catholic claims.

On page 5 of his reply, Mr. Johnson states that "there is not a crumb of evidence for the supposition that St. Peter was ever in Rome, and on page 3 that "there is no reliable historian who would dare say that Peter visited Rome." It would be interesting to hear Mr. Johnson's definition of "a crumb of evidence" and also of a "reliable historian." Most experts in historical studies would think twice before denying this title to Adolf Harnack, the best-known Protestant scholar of his day, or to Professor F. J. Foakes-Jackson. What then can have induced both these men to shatter their historical reputations (in the eyes of Mr. Johnson) by lending their support (presumably without "a crumb of evidence") to the Romanist theory that St. Peter went to Rome and died there? (See Harnack, *Chronologie I* [1897], 240ff.; Foakes-Jackson, *St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles* [1927]. Or again what can have induced Luther (*Werke*, new Weimer edition, XII, 398), Grotius, Ewald, von Soden, Dobschütz, W. Bauer and a long line of other distinguished men in the field of Scriptural studies—not one of them a Roman Catholic—to believe that the First Epistle of Peter was written at Rome, the "Babylon" of 1 Pet. 5, 13 (cf. Rev. 14, 8; 16, 19-18, 24)?

Mr. Johnson's own standard of historical accuracy is certainly an original one. On page 2 of his reply to Fr. Murphy he refers to the account of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, 13-32 and says that "James, Peter and John presided." John's name is not mentioned once in connection with the Council.

(3) The command given by Christ to His Apostles was that they should "teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In the exercise of this mission Christ Himself will be with them "even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28, 18-20).

Thus the teaching authority of the Church can never be used to lead Christ's flock astray; otherwise Christ would no longer be with us. In other words, the teaching authority of the Church, formally and solemnly exercised, must be infallible.

The privilege of infallibility was promised in a special and individual manner to Peter. "I have prayed for thee," said Christ to him, "that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke 22, 32). The Protestant commentator, Bengel, explains the sense of these words: "In preserving Peter, whose fall would have dragged down all the others, Jesus preserved them all. The whole of this discourse of Our Lord presupposes that Peter was the first of the Apostles and that on his resistance or fall would depend more or less the faith of the rest" (*Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, 1742, in h.l.). Thus, whoever else may err, the Rock on which the Church is built can never err; and this must hold good not only for the first holder of the headship of the Church but for all its holders to the end of time.

In 1870 the infallible teaching authority of the Church as a whole, acting through the Council of bishops assembled at the Vatican, defined the doctrine of Papal infallibility as an article of faith and at the same time laid down the three conditions which must be fulfilled before a Papal decision can be regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as necessarily infallible.

First, the Pope must speak as the supreme pastor and teacher of all Christians, not merely as an individual priest or even as Bishop of Rome.

Secondly, he must define a doctrine concerning faith or moral conduct; if he cares to express his views on other subjects he does so on equal terms with other men. Finally, he must define a doctrine to be held by the whole Church, not merely by any particular Christian or group of Christians.

When these three conditions are present, the Vatican Council declares that the Pope is preserved from error, not in virtue of his personal virtue or learning (or lack of them), but "in virtue of the divine assistance promised to him in the

person of St. Peter." This was exactly the line taken by St. Augustine in his own day: "Even though some bad men should have crept into that series of bishops from Peter himself to Anastasius, who now sits on the same Chair where Peter sat, this would in no way tell against the Church or against innocent Christians to whom the Lord, in His thoughtful care, said concerning evil rulers: "Those things which they say unto you do ye, but do ye not things which they do, for they say and do not perform" (Epis. 53, 1).

Catholics have never denied that an occasional "bad man" had crept into the long series of bishops from Peter to John XXIII who "sat on the same Chair where Peter sat." But, as a distinguished Anglican theologian said in the last of a series of eight lectures on the Papacy which he delivered before the University of Oxford in 1942, "in spite of the occasional failure of individual Popes to uphold a morality consistent with the demands of their high office, it is a strange form of historical blindness which is unable to perceive in its long and remarkable history a supernatural grandeur which no mere secular institution has ever attained in equal measure. Its strange, almost mystical, faithfulness to type, its marked degree of changelessness, its steadfast clinging to tradition and precedent, above all its burning zeal for order and justitia compel us to acknowledge that the Papacy must always defy a categorization which is purely of this world" (Trevor Gervase Jalland, D.D., *The Church and the Papacy*, 1944, pp. 542-3).

INDULGENCES

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) What does your Church mean by an indulgence and what is the Scriptural authority for such teaching?
- (2) Are indulgences granted for money, works of penance and the wearing of a scapular; and if so, where did this teaching originate?

Our Answers

(1) An indulgence, according to the Catholic Catechism, is the remission of the whole, or part of, the temporal punishment due to sin, which sometimes remains after the sin itself has been forgiven. Therefore, an indulgence is not either pardon for past sin, permission for future sin, or remission of eternal punishment after death. "The temporal punishment is not inflicted by the Church, nor measured by the Church; it is in God's hands alone. Scripture for it may be found in John 15, 2: "Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit." The Church understands this to mean that the justified soul needs further purification before it is fully acceptable to God. Purification normally means suffering. Hence the Church in ancient times prescribed works of self-denial, such as so many days of fasting, to those whose sins had been forgiven. She did so on the authority given to St. Peter (Matt. 16, 19): "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." On the same authority, she charges, as she sees fit, one sort of good work for another and an easier one. Thus an indulgence of so many (lays (say 300) means that the Church substitutes for so many days of severe penance, such as fasting, something easier, such as saying short prayers. The easier thing is normally something which people are likely to do with more spiritual earnestness than they would put into the harder work. Thus indulgences are granted on certain holydays for the saying of short prayers and attendance at religious services, because people feel more devotion on such occasions. The practical value of indulgences is therefore threefold; they keep before the mind the need for voluntary self-denial, even after sin has been forgiven; they throw emphasis on spiritual earnestness in doing what is smaller, rather than on much repetition of what is greater and tends to be done mechanically; they temper the severity of penance to the weakness of human nature and thus encourage people to do at least something in that way.

The doctrine of indulgences rests on a threefold foundation:

- (a) the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, which is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed (cf. Rom. 12, 5). This Communion unites the Church Militant on earth, the Church Suffering in Purgatory and the Church Triumphant in Heaven;
- (b) the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction by which the good of one soul becomes the good of all. "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church" (Col. 1, 24);
- (c) the infinity of Christ's merits. "Upon the altar of the Cross Christ shed His blood, not merely a drop...but a

copious torrent...thereby laying up an infinite treasure for mankind" (Clement VI, Unigenitus, 1343).

This community of spiritual goods between the Redeemer and the redeemed is the source of indulgences in the sense that when the Church substitutes an easier for a harder work of penance, as has been already explained, she depends on the merits of Christ and the holier members of Christ's body to make up the difference for the less holy.

It must, however, be made clear that penance presupposes repentance and that no one can repent for another, even though one can do works of penance for another.

(2) Indulgences are granted for all sorts of good works, including alms-deeds, penitential practices and the wearing of religious emblems, but only on condition that they are performed with a truly religious disposition of soul ; if this disposition is wanting they are not, in the true sense of the term, good works at all.

From the fourth century onwards bishops were empowered to grant remissions of penance to sinners who were judged deserving of them. "We decree," says the Council of Ancyra (314), "that the bishops, taking into account the penitents' conduct, have power either to show mercy or to prolong the duration of the penance" (Can. 5 : Mansi, conch. II, 514-5).

In later times indulgences were granted to pilgrims and crusaders, e.g. by the Council of Clermont (1095), and to benefactors of hospitals (e.g. the mediaeval hospital of Halberstadt in Germany). Scapulars, or symbols of the habits worn by different religious orders with which laymen and women desired to associate themselves, first came into use during the thirteenth century. At present, indulgences are generally granted for the recitation of certain prayers, e.g., the short Biblical prayers: "Lord, save us; we perish" and "Thy will be done."

SAINTS

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) Can you explain how dead saints hear the prayers of those who are living?
- (2) How long must a person be dead and what must they have done to be canonised by the Church of Rome, and is there any Scripture for the canonising of saints?

Our Answers

(1) To ask Catholics to explain how dead saints can hear the prayers of those who are living seems rather to beg the question. For saints who are dead in body are very much alive in soul. The mind of man is part of his soul and its vital activity is to know and to acquire knowledge. It would seem then that the burden of proof ought to be on those who deny that the saints in heaven can know what passes on the earth, not upon those who assume that saints do not lose touch with the Church on earth by going to heaven. St. Paul tells of the saints of the Old Testament who endured torment and death "that they might obtain a better resurrection " (Hebr. 11, 35). He calls them " witnesses " and says that we on earth are " compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," while we struggle against evil as they did (Hebr. 12, 1-5). It is at least, probable that St. Paul thought of those ancient saints as watching over their descendants whom he was then exhorting. Our Lord tells us that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15, 10). This does not prove that the saints in heaven know what happens on earth, but it does prove that some knowledge of that kind can and does reach spirits who have no bodily senses. The Scripture does not explain how everything is done ; it does not explain how Our Lord, after His Resurrection, came and stood in the midst of the disciples, "the doors being shut" (John 20, 26), any more than it explains how the angels of God know that a sinner repents. For Catholics it is enough that, by the power of God, it is possible for the saints in heaven to know all things on earth that God wishes them to know.

(2) The canonising of saints is not making anyone a saint. God alone by His grace can make saints. Canonising is declaring the fact that somebody's life has been marked by such evidence of outstanding holiness that he is certainly in heaven and worthy of public honour for heroic virtue practised during his life. Except in the case of martyrs, canonisation does not normally take place until at least fifty years after death. The purpose of this delay is to give ample time for evidence to be collected and examined. The final proof of holiness which is required for canonisation is the working of miracles by the deceased. A miracle must be something for which no human explanation is possible, such as the instantaneous cure of some organic and long-standing disease. The cure of nervous disease or of functional disease will not even be considered, for this may be cured, as it may be caused, by hysterical imagination.

The principle of canonising saints, that is by the public honouring of holy men after death, is clearly Scriptural, as may be seen from such references to the patriarchs as the following : Deut. 9, 27 ; 2 Chron. 20, 7 ; Isa. 41, 8 ; Matt. 3, 8-10 ; Mark 12, 26-27 ; Heb. 11, 4-40.

In early times, the local Christian communities put the same principle into practice as regards the martyrs and, after persecution had died down, as regards those whose lives had given the highest examples of Christian virtue. From the tenth century onward this official and informal method of canonisation was replaced by a solemn and formal procedure, the veracity of which is guaranteed for Catholics by the Scriptures which assures them that the Church cannot err in teaching religious truth to her members nor in proposing for their veneration and imitation worthy examples of the Christian way of life and death.

Needless to say, no such guarantee exists with regard to the informal canonisations of earlier centuries, though the names of men and women honoured in this way are included in the Church's martyrology or liturgical register of saints. Actually, when lives and calendars of local saints were being compiled in those times, mistakes were frequently made and many names were entered in the lists which had little or no right to appear there. In modern times, hagiologists, or historical experts in the lives of the saints, have done invaluable work in sifting what is true from what is false in these ancient registers. It should be obvious that the infallibility of a Church which patronises the labours of such scholars is not affected by the results of their investigations.

MARRIAGE

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) What is the attitude of your Church to mixed marriages, and is there anything to bind the non-members of your Church before consenting to the marriage?
- (2) What is the difference between a divorce, an annulment and a dispensation, according to your Church?

Our Answers

(1) The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to mixed marriages is defined by canon 1060 of her official Code of Canon Law: "The Church prohibits with the utmost severity the contraction of marriage anywhere between two baptised persons one of whom is a Catholic and the other a member of a heretical or schismatical body." Thus there is, in technical language, an ecclesiastical impediment against mixed marriages. The Church does not relax ("dispense from") this impediment unless:

1. Just and grave causes demand it;
2. The non-Catholic party guarantees not to endanger the faith of the Catholic party, and both parties guarantee to baptise and bring up all the children who may be born to them in the Catholic religion and in no other (Canon 1061, 1°).

Normally these guarantees should be demanded in writing The Church's law is reproduced quite accurately in the N.U.P.'s answer to this question (Questions, page 7). A comment follows: "It is also well known that the Church of Rome has over-ruled the civil law in regard to marriage." Does this mean that every Christian Church should take its marriage laws from the state? If so, then the Church of Ireland stands condemned as well as the Church of Rome. The "table of kindred and affinity" given in her Prayer Book still prohibits marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister, though such marriages were legalised in English civil law by an Act of 1907.

The Catholic Church recognises and reverences the authority of the State in its own proper sphere: but she cannot take the civil law as the measure and rule of Christian duty in regard to marriage, since for Christians, marriage is above all a religious matter. It is God, not man, Who joins man and woman together to form one flesh (Mark 10, 6-9),

(2) a) A divorce in the full sense involves the dissolution of a true and validly contracted marriage, leaving one or both of the married parties free to marry again. A "separation" on the other hand—sometimes called a divorce "in a restricted sense—merely means that the married parties do not live together; but they are still husband and wife, and neither is free to marry again. According to Catholic teaching, husband and wife may separate when, as sometimes, there is adequate reason for it; but no power whatever, ecclesiastical or civil—not even the Pope—can dissolve the marriage bond between two baptised people, once they have consummated the marriage by actually living together as

lawful husband and wife.

This principle admits of no exceptions. It is not a rule laid down by ecclesiastical authority for Roman Catholics only, it is a doctrine which the Catholic Church believes to be inherent in Christ's own teaching on the indissolubility of marriage (Matt. 19, 3-12; Mark 10, 2-12; Luke 16, 18) and which she therefore regards as authoritative for all Christians. In her eyes, therefore, the consummated marriage of a Protestant husband and wife who were baptised and married in their own church is as true, sacred and indissoluble a union as the consummated marriage of two Catholics.

b) Sometimes, for one reason or another, a marriage validly contracted between two baptised persons, or between a baptised person and an unbaptised one, is never consummated. Does a marriage of this kind, which has never found its full expression and final sanction in actual marriage union, also possess the quality of absolute indissolubility? No. According to Canon Law (Canon 1119) such a marriage is dissolved or "annulled":

1. if one of the parties takes solemn vows in a Religious Order;
2. if the supreme ecclesiastical authority, for an adequate reason and at the request of one or both of the parties concerned, grants the annulment.

Furthermore, in the case of a marriage between two unbaptised persons, one of whom subsequently becomes a Christian by receiving Christian baptism, the Roman Catholic Church acts on the principle laid down by St. Paul in I Cor. 7, 12-15: "If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman who has an unbelieving husband, if he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband . . . Yet if the unbelieving one departs, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases."

Thus in certain exceptional and well-defined circumstances the Christian law of marriage, as the Catholic Church understands, authorises the annulment or dissolution of consummated marriages and of marriages contracted by unbaptised persons. But, we repeat, there can be no annulment of a marriage validly entered into and duly consummated by two baptised persons. Such a union embodies the reality of Christian marriage in its final form—"the two shall be one flesh" (Matt. 19, 5-6 ; Mark 10, 8 ; 1 Cor. 6, 16, Eph. 5, 31)—so that marriage becomes a "great mystery," an outward symbol of the inward union of Christ and His Church (Eph. 5, 32). No human authority can now nullify the marriage, no change of personal circumstances except the death of one of the parties can dissolve it. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19, 6; Mark 10, 9). This principle, so emphatically taught by Christ Himself, explains the Roman Catholic Church's objection to the divorce laws which have been put into force in many modern countries and which authorise the dissolution of marriage; without regard to Christian ideals or principles, for all kinds of reasons, often for very trivial ones.

"Annulment," in the sense in which we have here explained it, should be distinguished from a "declaration of nullity," though the two are frequently confused in practice. Strictly speaking, an annulment involves the dissolution of an existing marriage bond; a declaration of nullity merely states that two who are apparently married were never truly and validly married at all. Such a declaration is granted by ecclesiastical authority on clear proof that force or mistaken identity or bigamy or some such factor has intervened to make a marriage null and void from the start. Here, for instance is a case that was tried, not in the Roman courts, but in the English ones. A man named Sebright forced a certain Miss Scott to marry him, first under threat of ruining her financially and finally of shooting her. The judge did not give Miss Scott a decree of divorce; there could be no divorce because there had been no marriage. Instead he gave her exactly what she would have got in the Roman courts: a decree of nullity based on the principle that where there has been no true consent there has been no true marriage. (See Nullity of Marriage, by F. J. Sheed, pp. 39-41).

GAMBLING AND DRINKING

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) What is your attitude to members of your Church who are bookmakers and gamblers?
- (2) Does your Church condone its members who are publicans and habitual drunkards?

Our Answers

(1) The word "gambling" is commonly taken to mean reckless betting, playing at games of chance with the risk of losing more money than one can afford. The Church condemns this as sinful. The Church does not condemn betting or games of chance in which the amount of money risked is not more than the persons concerned could afford to spend

for recreational purposes, without prejudice to their duty of providing for themselves or their families or others who may be dependent on them, according to their state in life. Bookmaking is a lawful trade for Catholics in so far as it provides a means for betting as a reasonable form of recreation. If individuals misuse these means, that is wrong for them; not for honest bookmakers.

(2) The same rule applies to publicans as to bookmakers. Drunkenness is a mortal sin and habitual drunkards are not admitted to Holy Communion unless they have a sincere purpose of amendment and have been absolved in Confession. But drinking intoxicating liquor in moderation is quite lawful, as is clear from John 2, 7-11 and I Tim. 5, 23. Accordingly the trade which a publican exercises is in itself a lawful one, but he ought not to supply drink to anyone who has obviously had quite enough already; still less ought he to encourage drinking to excess.

THE CHURCH

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *What is the interpretation of the word "church" according to your faith?*
- (2) *What is the meaning of the word "Catholic" and has any religious denomination the exclusive right to use this word?*
- (3) *What is the Scriptural foundation of your Church?*

Our Answers

(1) A Church, in the most general sense of the term, is any religious organisation the members of which are united in the profession of a common religious faith, particularly of some form or other of the Christian faith, the "foundation and focus" of which is "the doctrine of Our Saviour's divinity" (Pope Pius XII, October 20, 1939).

**New Testament texts occurring in these answers are quoted according to accurate English versions of the original Greek. The Protestants, Revised Version is, from this point of view, much superior to the popular Authorised Version. See the answer to the question: "Why has your Church banned even burned, the Holy Scripture in many parts of the world?"*

Among the various Churches professing faith in Our Saviour's divinity, the Roman Catholic Church believes that she and she alone corresponds to the actual religious organisation originally established by Christ. In other words, she claims to be the one true Church of Christ, entrusted by Him with the task of translating the full measure of His saving truth to mankind.

This is the meaning of the principle: "Outside the Church there is no salvation. It does not mean that every man or woman who rejects the claims of the Roman Catholic Church will be damned. Believing as she does that her claims are true, the Church must believe also that the wilful rejection of these claims is always gravely sinful. But wilful rejection is one thing, honest ignorance or sincere denial another. "Those who are inculpably ignorant of our holy religion," wrote Pope Pius IX in 1868, "who live an honourable and upright life, carefully observing the law and commands of nature, which are imprinted by God on the hearts of all, and who are ready to obey God, can attain eternal life by the operation of the power of divine light and grace."

(2) "Catholic," from the Greek *kath holon*, means "universal." As a description of the Church of Christ, the word is first found in the Letter to the Smyrnans of St. Ignatius of Antioch, who died about 110 A.D. The special function of the term "Catholic Church" in ancient times was to distinguish the one, true, visible Church of Christ from the heretical party-churches. Thus St. Cyril of Jerusalem tells those who are under instruction for baptism that if they go into a strange town they should not merely ask: "Where is the place of worship?" since the heretical bodies have places of worship also; not even: "Where is the Church?" but "Where is the Catholic Church?" "For that," he says, "is the proper name of the Holy Church, the Mother of us all, the Spouse of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (Catech. 18, 26: about 350 A.D.).

In virtue of her exclusive claim to unbroken continuity with the one true Church of the first centuries, the Roman Catholic Church believes that she alone has a strict right to call herself "Catholic." In popular usage too "Catholic" and "Roman Catholic" are largely interchangeable terms. As for the term "non-Catholic": when individual Catholics apply it to their Protestant fellow-Christians, they do so on the assumption that those who base their faith on the written

Scriptures alone will not object to being called "non-Catholics"—just as Roman Catholics would not object to being called "non-Protestants"—since the term "Catholic" is not found in Scripture but is derived from Tradition.

In practice, however, few Protestants would care to think of themselves as strangers to "the holy Catholic Church" of the ancient Creeds. In deference to such feelings we refrained from describing our lectures of Lent 1949 as a "Mission to Non-Catholics," which was the term used to describe those of Lent and Advent 1948. Instead, we invited the public to a series of "Lectures for All Denominations," in which we spoke of the Catholic or the Roman Catholic Church indiscriminately (the two terms mean the same thing to us), while leaving others free to understand the word "Catholic" in their own sense.

(3) When Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gathered His disciples round Him long ago in Palestine, He formed them into a visible fellowship or brotherhood of which He Himself was the divine Head. The core of this brotherhood was made up of the Apostles or "the twelve," as they are called in twenty-nine passages of the Gospels—twelve particular men who were recognisable to all the world as the first disciples or followers of Christ. "To one of them, Simon Bar-Jona, He gave a new and special name, Peter: in Greek *Petros*, in Aramaic *Kepha*, the Rock" (cf. Mark 3, 16; John 1, 42).

At Caesarea Philippi Christ asked His disciples the question: "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It was then that Christ first promised, in express terms, to found a "church" (in Greek *ecclesia*, in Aramaic *kenishta*) and to found it on Peter: "Thou art *Kepha* and upon this *kepha* I will build my Church"⁽¹⁾ He added that nothing should ever be able to undermine this Church: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16, 13-18).

Before His Ascension into Heaven, Christ laid down the whole future programme of their activity for the Apostles: "Go therefore, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of, the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28, 19-20).

Thus the essential task imposed on the Apostles was not that of compiling a written record of Christ's teaching but that of "teaching all nations," transmitting to them the teachings of Christ Himself. In the carrying out of this task the Apostles would not be left to their own feeble and fallible resources. He to Whom "all power has been given in heaven and on earth" would be with them to the end of time, ensuring the fidelity of His Church's teachings to His own: "Behold I am with you all days even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28, 18-20).

On the day of Pentecost, the "men of Galilee" (Acts 1, 11), Christ's visible fellowship presided over by Peter (1, 15), were "baptised with the Holy Ghost" (1, 5). Immediately the Apostles began to fulfil their task of teaching mankind, Peter again taking the lead (2, 14-36, 38-40), and the Church, the visible brotherhood, increased its membership day by day (2, 47).

Thus the Church of Christ's first disciples was

- (a) a distinct, visible fellowship of men and women;
- (b) a fellowship of which Peter was the visible head;
- (c) a fellowship based on an infallible apostolic teaching authority. "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers" (Acts 2, 42: Revised Version).

As time went on the teaching of the Apostles was carried farther and farther afield, especially by St. Paul, in whom it found its greatest single propagator. Soon the Christian fellowship reached from Jerusalem to Rome. Did this new and universal Church differ in its essential structure from the Church of the first disciples out of which it had grown? No. It was still a distinct, visible fellowship, though it was now world-wide. It was still based, on the teaching authority of the apostles. It still recognised the headship of Peter. True, St. Paul had to "withstand him to the face" on one occasion because he had given up his practice of eating with the Gentiles (Gal. 2, 11-12). But this was only a case of recalling Peter to the full observance of the principle laid down by himself at the Council of Jerusalem that there was now "no difference" between Jew and Gentile (Acts 15, 7). *At the Council of Jerusalem it was the Apostle James who presided, although Peter was present (Acts 15, 18-19)" Questions. p.8) Peter was not merely present at the Council; he addressed it first and his was the decisive speech. "And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up and said to them: Brethren . . . why do you tempt God that you should put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? . . . And all the multitude kept silence" (Acts 15, 7-12). James is*

nowhere represented as having presided at the Council. He put forward a personal "judgment" (Acts 15, 19, Revised Version: not "sentence" as in the Authorised Version) which:

(a) endorsed the principle already formulated by Peter:.

(b) added to it a practical proposal to the effect that the Gentile Christians should be required to abstain from certain practices repugnant to Jewish sentiment. This was also accepted by the Council (Acts 15, 15-29).

St. Paul himself nearly always refers to Peter as Kephas, a Greek adaptation of kepha, the rock. Thus he names Kephas first among the witnesses to the Resurrection (I Cor. 15, 5), though, as the Gospel narratives clearly show, Our Lord had not appeared to Peter first in order of time.

Peter and Paul, the Apostles and the first disciples, all passed away long centuries ago. Did the Church which they constituted pass away with them? Or did it only survive in an entirely altered form, no longer based on a living teaching authority safeguarded from error by the power of God but on the private and fallible interpretation of the written New Testament which, divinely inspired as it was, did not begin to come into existence for several years after the foundation of the Church and was not completed until the closing years of the first century? If this fundamental change did really take place in the essential structure of the Church, then Christ's promise that His Church—the Church of the first disciples, the Church of the Apostolic age—should endure to the end of time was made in vain. Therefore His Church must be still in existence, possessing the same essential form as it had from the beginning. Where then shall we find it in the world of today?

It must be found, if it is to be found at all, in a Church which is: —

(a) a distinct, visible fellowship of men and women;

(b) a fellowship of which a legitimate successor of Peter is the visible head;

(c) a fellowship based on an infallible teaching authority guaranteed, as that of the Apostles was, by the divine power of the living Christ.

There is only one Church in the entire world which even claims to possess these three characteristics. It is the Roman Catholic Church.

Such, in the briefest possible outline, is the Scriptural foundation on which the Roman Catholic Church bases her claims.

IMAGES

N.U.P. Questions

(1) *How do you explain the Commandment of God regarding the worship of images as recorded in the following Scriptures: Exod, 20, 4; Lev. 26, 1; John 4, 24; Acts 17, 25; I Cor. 10, 20?*

(2) *Is it not a fact that your church officially teaches the veneration of Mary and the saints, and also teaches that the nails and wood of the Cross are to be adored?*

Our Answers

Question (2) should logically precede question (1), so we will take it first.

(2) (a) Yes, the Catholic Church officially teaches that it "is good and useful" to venerate Mary and the saints. This does not mean that we give them the divine worship which is due to God alone; that would be idolatry, one of the greatest of all sins. We give them merely the affectionate veneration which is, we believe, due to them as friends and faithful followers of Christ. Moreover, we ask them to pray to God for us, believing that He does not take from the power of His saints when He calls them from earth to Heaven. Now on earth men can pray for and ask prayers of each other (e.g., 2 Thess, 1, 11; James 5, 16). St. Paul constantly prayed for his fellow-men while he was on earth (e.g., I Thess. 5, 25); it is difficult to see why he should have ceased to be able to do so when he went to Heaven. The argument that if the saints in Heaven do actually pray for us, the only Mediator, Christ, becomes merely one mediator among many, will not hold water. Christ is the Mediator of redemption and the only one; without His essential mediatorship there would be no grace at all. When we pray for others during our years on earth we do so in dependence on this essential mediatorship, begging God for the sake of His beloved Son to bestow His grace more abundantly on those for whom we pray. This is exactly what, according to Catholic teaching, the saints do in Heaven;

this is all we ask them to do for us. Why then should the Catholic doctrine of the invocation of saints be regarded as a denial of the Mediatorship of Christ?

St. John's revelation explicitly teaches that angelic intercessors present "the prayers of the saints" to God in Heaven (5, 8; 8, 3). The doctrine that the angels and saints in heaven can pray for us and that we may ask them to do so is further attested by early Christian tradition. Thus, during the first decade of the second century (about 110 A.D.), St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the Trallians on the eve of his martyrdom: "My spirit is offered up for you, not only now, but also when I shall attain unto God" (Ep. ad Trail. 13).. In the next century we have the words of St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (d.'258), written to Cornelius of Rome: "If one of us shall, by the speediness of the divine mercy, depart hence the first, let our love continue in the presence of the Lord; let not prayer for our brethren and sisters cease in the presence of the Father" (Ep. ad Cornel. 57).

It may be replied that this exposition of Catholic theory sounds quite reasonable but that in practice Catholics often pray to the saints, especially to the Virgin Mary, as if they were divine beings. Does not St. Alphonsus Liguori use the most exuberant language about the power of Mary in his book *The Glories of Mary*? Do not Catholics say in one of the commonest of their prayers: "Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope!"?

So they do in the sincerity and tenderness of their love for God's Mother to whom they speak in the unaffected language of the heart. Why should they not do so when Elizabeth, the mother of the Baptist, spoke in the same way to Mary while she was still on earth: "Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And when is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1, 42-43). To those who do not understand it, the language of love always sounds extravagant. If Protestants who object to the "extravagance" of *The Glories of Mary* would only read another of St. Alphonsus's works, *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ*, they would find the same "extravagance" there; only this time it would be the extravagance of his love for the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

(b) Catholics reject as a complete misrepresentation of their belief and practice the idea that they "adore" the nails and wood of the Cross *in themselves*. Nails and wood are nails and wood, nothing more; similarly paper is paper and nothing more. Yet a child will kiss its mother's photograph, not because it loves and respects the paper of which the photograph is made, but because it loves and respects its mother who is represented by the photograph. In the same way we Catholics "adore the Cross," not as though we adored the material of which it is made, but because it represents to us Christ Our Saviour Who was crucified on the Cross for our sins; it is to Him and to Him alone that our adoration is given.

The whole Catholic doctrine of the veneration of images, whether of Christ or of the saints, is summed up in the definition of the Sacred Council of Nicaea (787). "We define with all certainty and care that both the figure of the sacred and life-giving Cross, as also the venerable and holy images...are to be placed suitably in the holy churches of God...; that is to say, the images of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our immaculate Lady the holy Mother of God, of the honourable angels and all saints and holy men. For as often as they are seen in their pictorial representations, people who look at them are ardently lifted up to the memory and love of the originals and induced to give them respect and reverential honour, but not real devotion which, according to our faith, is due only to the Divine Nature. So that offerings of incense and lights are to be given to these as to the figure of the sacred and life-giving Cross, to the holy Gospel-books and other sacred objects in order to do them honour, as was the pious custom of ancient times. For honour paid to an image passes on to its original; he who venerates an image venerates the reality of him who is painted on it" (Mansi, Concil, XIII, 378-9).

(1) (a) Three points emerge from a careful study of the Old Testament regulations concerning the making of images (Exod. 20, 3-5); Lev. 26, 1: to which should be added Exod. 34, 17; Deut. 4, 15-19; 23, 25-26; 5, 6-9; 27, 15):

1. God forbids any representation of the divinity, even of the true God;
2. God forbids the making of an image of any creature *for the purpose of adoring it*;
3. God does not forbid the making of every kind of image. In fact He ordered Moses to place "two cherubim of gold" in the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 25, 18; cf. 26, 1. 31). Again He ordered the brazen serpent to be erected, in the wilderness (Num. 21, 8). When, however, the Israelites began to treat the brazen serpent as an idol, Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Kings 18, 3-4).

The underlying principle of the Old Testament legislation of image-making is obvious. The making and veneration of images were not regarded by the Jews as evil in themselves but precautions were laid down in view of the circumstances of the times, to prevent the people of God from lapsing into the idolatrous practices of their heathen neighbours.

Was it the intention of God that these precautions should hold good for all times and places, so that Christians under "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6, 2) should be bound by them as the Jews were under the laws of Moses? If so, then it follows logically that Christians are bound by the whole ceremonial code of Israel, of which these precautions formed a structural part. But the New Testament repeatedly declares that Christians are not bound by this code (Rom. 8, 1-2; Gal. 3, 23-25; Acts 15, 28-29), though they are, of course, bound by the eternal principle of right and wrong which finds expression in many parts of it (cf. Gal. 5, 19-21). Thus idolatry and impurity are always and everywhere wrong; not so the veneration of images or the non-observance of the seventh day of the week as "a sabbath unto the Lord thy God" (Exod. 20, 10). It is inconsistent on the part of Protestants to accept the modification which Christian Tradition has sanctioned as regards the weekly day of rest—we now keep it on Sunday, not on Saturday—and to reject the modifications which the same Tradition has sanctioned, in view of altered circumstances, as regards the veneration of images.

(b) John 4, 25 ("God is a spirit: and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth") does not forbid the legitimate use of material things as means of raising the human mind to God. Otherwise we should have to burn our Bibles!

(c) In Acts 17, 25 St. Paul, preaching to the Athenians, protests against the pagan idea that God "is served by men's hands, as though he needed anything." Assuredly God does not need anything, but men need a lot of things. It is the human need of, images as reminders of those whom they represent that provides a living for every photographer—and also for every religious artist from Bezalel and Oholiab, "in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom" (Exod. 36, 2), to Harry Clarke and Evie Hone.

(d) If I Cor. 10, 19-20 ("Is an idol anything?") condemns Catholics for praying before the Crucifix, it also condemns the Jews for "looking into the serpent of brass" when they were dying of snake-bite. Yet it was God Himself. Who had said to Moses: "Make thyself a fiery serpent and set it on a standard: and it shall come to pass that everyone who is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live" (Num. 1, 6-9).

THE BIBLE

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *What position do the Holy Scriptures hold in your Church?*
- (2) *Why has your Church banned, even burned, the Holy Scriptures in many parts of the world?*

Our Answers

(1) The position of the Holy Scriptures in the Catholic Church is that they are one of the two primary sources of God's revelation to men, the other being Tradition. Catholics believe that the Holy Scriptures have God for their author and that, therefore, every word in them is true. As truth cannot contradict truth, nothing in Tradition can contradict what is in Holy Scripture. If there is an apparent contradiction, it arises from misunderstanding either of the text of Holy Scripture or the teaching of Tradition. Protestants seem frequently to misunderstand the teaching of Tradition either because they read Catholic booklets without a proper knowledge of the background of Catholic teaching, familiar to Catholics, which puts what they read in its proper setting; or because they mistake for the official and infallible teaching of the Church some statement of Catholic private opinion. Even the Pope's private opinion is not infallible and must not be taken as a sure indication of Catholic belief. Where the text of Holy Scripture is obscure, Catholics may use their private judgment to interpret it, but they must not interpret it in any way contrary to the official teaching of the Church; again, because *truth cannot contradict truth*. Catholics are encouraged to read the Holy Scriptures, but unauthorised versions are forbidden.

According to the N.U.P., Rome "has continually tried to destroy the Word of God since the glorious Reformation" (Questions, p.10). Here on the other hand is a passage from Pope Pius XII's Letter on Biblical Studies (September 30,

1943): "Let Bishops take every measure to foster and increase veneration for Holy Scripture among the faithful committed to their charge ... Let them favour and assist those religious societies whose object is to circulate copies of the Bible, and especially of the Gospels, among the faithful and to encourage Christian families in the habit of reading them devoutly every day."

(2) The reading of the Holy Scripture is never forbidden by the Church provided that two conditions are guaranteed: that the text is genuine; that in vernacular versions safeguards against misinterpretations are provided in notes. It is the duty of bishops to certify that these conditions are observed. Bibles printed without this certificate are forbidden, because there is no guarantee that they would not spread error as well as truth. The Church has never burned Bibles as an act of disrespect to God's Word which is in every version of the Holy Scriptures, but Bibles in which there was a large proportion of obvious error, due to mistranslation or defective manuscripts, may have been disposed of in this way, in order to prevent the further spread of error contained in them. The preface to the Protestant Revised Version says that the Authorised Version was "founded for the most part on manuscripts of late date, few in number and used with little critical skill"; that the translators "adopted a variety of expressions which would, now be deemed hardly consistent with the requirements of a faithful translation"; that it renders God's word in beautiful English, but with only "general accuracy"; that it contained "many inconsistencies" and that in view of the haste with which the work of translating was done "we may wonder that the incongruities which remain are not more numerous." If an official Protestant body of such high standing as the Revisers appointed under the Resolutions of the Convocation of Canterbury, May 3, and 5, 1870, found such defects in that version of the Holy Scriptures used by English-speaking Protestants for nearly three centuries, it cannot be denied that the, faults were there, and it cannot be wondered at if Catholics took a poor view of the version of the Bible which admittedly contained them. Dr. J. B. Lightfoot, Hulsean Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, in his book *On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, has a list *one hundred and sixty-six* pages long, headed "Errors and Defects" which he finds in the Protestant Authorised Version. Some of his sub-headings are: "False Readings," "Distinctions Created," "Distinctions Obliterated," "Ambiguities" and so on. He was only one of many Protestant scholars and divines whose well-founded criticisms of the Authorised Version of the Bible at long last persuaded the Church of England to produce a new and better version. This Revised Version has been before the Protestant public for nearly sixty years, yet the Authorised Version, with all its faults, seems to retain its popularity. If Protestants were told the truth about the Authorised Version's numerous defects, they would not be surprised that the Catholic Church does not acknowledge it as the "pure and unadulterated Word of God."

THE BLESSED VIRGIN

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *Can a member of your Church obtain salvation without ever praying to Mary or seeking her aid?*
- (2) *What power has Mary according to your Church and is there any power given to her according to the Scriptures; and if so, what is it?*

Our Answers

(1) A Catholic can obtain salvation without ever praying to Mary or seeking her aid, provided he believes in the Church's teaching that prayer to Mary is permitted and praiseworthy. In practice, however, a Catholic who believes that Mary is "blessed among women" (Luke 1, 42) and who knows what those words imply will not fail to venerate her and to ask her to pray to her Divine Son on his behalf unless his love of the Son also is feeble and faltering. What opinion should we form of a man who professed loyalty and devotion to the King of his country but who disregarded or ignored the King's mother?

It is widely believed in the Church, though it is not defined as infallible doctrine, that Mary prays for all for whom her Son died, and that all who are saved obtain salvation with the help of her prayers, even though they may not pray to her. This would certainly apply to Protestants who honestly believe that prayer to Mary is wrong; she prays for them all the same.

- (2) The Catholic doctrine on the power of Mary is that it is nothing more or less than the power of her prayers.

Therefore the Church's prayer to Mary is: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, *pray for us sinners*, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." We do *not* ask her to *pardon us* sinners, for only God can pardon us. We believe that, because of her close relationship with our Saviour and because of her outstanding personal holiness, her prayers fulfil the conditions of perfect prayer laid down in the Scriptures, as the prayers of no Christian fulfil them. Catholics, therefore, ask Mary to pray for them in all their needs of soul and body, not because they doubt the power and mercy and loving-kindness of God, but because they humbly acknowledge the imperfect fulfilment by themselves of the conditions of prayer, such as faith, trust, perseverance, humility.

It is on this account that St. Alphonsus Liguori declares that "we shall sometimes be more quickly heard and saved" by praying to Mary than by praying directly to Christ. This and similar sentences from St. Alphonsus's book, *The Glories of Mary*, are often quoted, without reference to the original contexts, against the Catholic practice of venerating the Virgin Mary, as though they proved that we attribute to her a power superior to that of Christ (cf. N.U.P. Questions, p.8). But St. Alphonsus himself expressly provides against any such misunderstanding of his teaching. "Not," he writes, "as if Mary were more powerful than her Son to save us, *for we know that Jesus is our only Saviour and that He alone by His merits has obtained and obtains salvation for us*. But when we have recourse to Jesus and remember that He is also our Judge Who must punish ungrateful sinners, *we may fail to have the confidence which is necessary for us in order to be heard*. But Mary, the mother of mercy, has no other task than to compassionate us; Mary, our advocate, has no other task than to defend us. Accordingly, when we go to her, our confidence may be increased and strengthened" (*Glories of Mary*, I, cap. iv; italics ours).

That Mary did, effectively intercede with her Son on earth to obtain for others a favour which He was not at first disposed to grant is clear from the story of the Marriage-feast at Cana (John 2, 1-11). Those who assert that she lost that power when she went to Heaven have no Scripture to prove their assertion.

SUNDAY

N.U.P. Questions

- (1) *What is your Church's attitude to keeping holy the Lord's Day?*
- (2) *Why does your Sunday terminate at 12 noon, and what Scripture have you for this?*

Our Answers

(1) The Catholic Church insists that the Lord's Day should be kept holy. All Catholics must attend Mass on that day and are recommended to attend evening service as well. Religious booklets and papers, are put on sale in our Irish Churches—in some dioceses they are sold at a loss, the deficit being made up out of the diocesan fund—so that people may be induced to give some time to religious reading on Sunday.

Indulgence in a reasonable amount of suitable recreation is not regarded by the Church as contravening the sanctity of the Lord's Day. In Ireland, Sunday "horse-racing, greyhound racing, whippet racing, coursing, or any sports which include one or other of these" are prohibited (Maynooth Synod 1927, statute 333). The reason is that most people who take part in these highly commercialised pastimes have an eye on making money out of the events as well as of enjoying themselves. This is not true of the majority of those who go to Sunday dances, cinema-shows or football matches, especially amateur ones. Indeed, many people, especially in country places, would be deprived of these pastimes altogether if they were forbidden to go to them on Sundays. The only result of such a prohibition would be to drive them to other and perhaps less innocent pastimes behind closed doors. The Catholic Church is nothing if not practical. She does not need to be told that it is a noble Christian ideal to devote the whole of the Sunday to prayer and worship; but she also knows that if you ask too much of ordinary men and women you may end by getting nothing.

- (2) Our Sunday does not terminate at 12 noon but at 12 midnight.
