

**~Other Speakers M-R: Ian Paisley:**

THE worship of the Virgin Mary throughout the Romish Church, is one of those things which there is no denying, any more than that the sun is in the firmament. It is a prime element of the system; and were it to be taken out of her literature, her conversation, and her devotions, it would leave a void that would look like desolation. Throughout the whole of the Popedom, wherever the eye falls it lights on images of the Virgin and her child.

These stare you in the face at every corner of every street; they occupy a place in every room of every house, and are prominent at every altar; they are stamped on everything. These facts are not, and cannot be denied; there is, indeed, no hesitation on the part of the priests and people in confessing them. A Papist is no more ashamed to confess that he worships the Virgin, than that he looks at the sun or treads the earth.

A most intelligent and penetrating clergyman of the Church of England, Mr. Hobart Seymour, who recently visited, and for a season sojourned at Rome concerning which he has published a valuable book, declares that "the religion of Italy ought to be called not the religion of Jesus Christ, but the religion of the Virgin." The Son of God is in a great measure lost and forgotten amid the glories which surround his Mother, among the ignorant multitude.

The Virgin, ever in the heart, the eye, and on the lip, is adored as their Alpha and Omega. She is, however, not merely the object of adoration; prayers are addressed to her in order to obtain all mercies of all sorts, for both worlds. She is supplicated for every thing that the sinner requires, or that the Most High Himself can give, and constantly takes precedence of the Messiah. The pattern prayer of. Pope Innocent thus addresses her: "I humbly and devoutly beg that with all the saints and elect of God, thou wouldst come and hasten to my direction and assistance, in all my difficulties, necessities, and in all my prayers." "Oh Mary, the most sweet patron of the distressed! The most learned advocate of the guilty, and the only hope of those who despair' the illustrious SAVIOUR OF SINNERS--hear and assist ' me, most benignant Mother of God and mercy!"

What says the reader to this? Was he really ' aware that this daughter of Abraham was viewed and adored as the "illustrious Saviour of Sinners?" Does he observe its impiety? Let him but compare the language with that of the New Testament, and see how the spirit which pervades the references which are there made to Mary, correspond with it. Nothing can be more natural than the place there assigned to "the highly honoured among women;" but surely nothing can be less congruous with the notion that she was to be viewed as a Divine person, who was to determine the life and death of the human race! There is most assuredly nothing there from which it could be imagined that she was to become the object of divine worship.

The Popish fiction in this case, is the most extraordinary, since, as in the case of images, there is not even the usual fragment of Scripture on which, by the aid of perversion, combined with falsehood and forgery, a sort of foundation maybe laid for the act. Beyond Luke I. 28, nothing is said, or pretended; and there, the angel, so far from worshipping, only addressed the trembling woman with a respectable salutation, "Hail;" and is it so that Virgin Worship has no other foundation than these few simple words; and yet in spite of this, the creative spirit of the Vatican, has actually raised her into a divinity, changed the truth of God' into a lie, and "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. "This is another reason for, withholding the Word of God from the people.

Were a Papist perusing the Sacred Scriptures to' investigate them for guidance on the subject of Virgin Worship; he would very speedily discover the impious deception which had been practised upon him, and with grief and scorn, rid himself of the imposture. As it is, he walks in darkness, delights, himself in fiction, and builds all his happiness upon a frail human creature like himself, and as much dependent as he on the blood and righteousness of her own son! Yet such is the principal object of Roman worship. By the young and old, rich. and; poor, on earth and ocean, she is everywhere worshipped, morning, noon, and night.

Protestant travellers, in Popish countries, have all to record the infatuated perversion with which the populace give themselves up to the worship of the Virgin. The first lesson communicated to a Popish child is the duty of worshipping the Virgin, of whom he is taught to think as a sort of royal grandmother, wonderfully rich, astonishingly compassionate, and very fond of him; that constantly repeated throughout the rest of his days, and to obey it becomes his main business on earth. The Catholic schoolbook thus enjoins the duty upon every reader: "Have recourse to her in all your spiritual necessities, and for that end, offer to her daily some particular prayers, as you can find no succour more ready and favourable than hers."

No fewer than five festivals are every year observed in her honour. All claim her friendship; the thought of it nerves the foot-pad to commit robbery, and when he deems it necessary, to shed blood. The heart and the picture of Mary, are as necessary to him for his daily vocation, as his poignard and his pistol! These he will kiss on the scaffold, avowing that they have the power to make death easy!

Is the reader, in the exuberance of his charity, tempted to think that surely such things must refer to an age long gone by, and can have no existence now? Let him be assured that at no period of the history of the Popedom was Mary-worship more rampant than at this moment. This is one of those j things which there has not been an attempt to veil or modify for the sake of decency, or to conciliate Protestants for purposes of Proselytism. It was but j a few years back, for example, that Pope Gregory, addressing the Papal world, expressed his entire dependence of himself, and what he called his "flock," upon her "heavenly influence," and not satisfied with that, with his own pen, he indited the following language: "That all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, our entire ground of hope."

Here then, the Great Infallible places himself entirely at the mercy of the Virgin, and looks to her for the supply of every want; but shocking as this language is, it is by no means the worst. This famous document avows the doctrine in a manner which at once gives to Mary the precedency over her Son. Nor should it be thought a strange expression; it is in perfect harmony with all the deliverances of previous and subsequent Popes. Mary shares the glory of redemption, for example, with the Lord Jesus Christ! The language is intolerably shocking, but it is not the less true. According to the same Pope Gregory XVI, "She was elected among the daughters of Zion to be the mother of the Eternal Word of Divine Life. She was preordained to be the co-redeemer of the world!"

While in the work of redemption then, she is his equal, in that of intercession, she is his superior; and hence both saints and sinners are told that they will find. their account in dealing with the Mother rather than with the Son. According to the "Popish Rambler," in its recent review of Mr. Seymour, "She is all mercy; He is both mercy and justice;" her office towards men, is purely one of "pity;" so that "a sinner's prayers are more sure to be heard by her than by her Son!"

Again, where haste is any object, she is the party with whom it is expedient to deal. We are told by Alphonsus Liguori-a great favourite, by the way, with the late Cardinal Wiseman-that prayers will often be more speedily heard in invoking her name, than in calling on that of Jesus Christ

Such then, reader, is a glimpse of a subject that might be extended to a volume; assuming that you are satisfied, we have only to ask you whether the infatuation and the impiety here manifested, be not equal to anything of the sort that has ever been brought before you? Say if darkness be not essential to the Popedom; and whether the spirit of prophecy has not most correctly designated it "a kingdom full of darkness!"

Would not the spread of the Sacred Scriptures be utter destruction to this, as well as its other tenets? Again then, we ask, is it a wonder that the priesthood should cherish such an aversion to the Word of God? But is it not, in very deed, a wonder that Protestants should be so indifferent to the presence and the spread of this most impious system in the British Isles? Is it not passing strange that while it comprises so much that ought to fill all good men's hearts with grief and indignation, that they should be so apathetic, so little disposed to make adequate efforts for its check, and its overthrow? Does not Popery combine all that I, is most destructive on earth, with all that is insulting to heaven, and is it not strange that it should be viewed, not only with indifference, but even with complacency, actually finding advocates among so called Protestants, and receiving imperial endowments from the exchequer of a Protestant state? Is it not dreadful that this system, both at home and abroad, should be petted and pensioned by the Government of England? Are not these things meet subjects for a lamentation?