

IN MEMORIAM.

In loving memory of Michael Barry, who died May 3rd, 1899, at Orepuki; aged 14 years.

However long our life may be,
Whatever land we view,
Whatever joy or grief be ours,
We will remember you.
No more upon this earth we'll see
Your gentle, loving face;
There is no one on this wide world
Can ever fill your place.

Inserted by his loving parents.

DEATH.

OWENS.—On March 28, 1899, at the residence of her son-in-law, Mr. M. Ryan, Doonass, after a long illness, Mary, the loved wife of the late James Owens, Frederick street, Limerick.—R.I.P.

The New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1899.

'THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN:' A CONTROVERSIAL TRICK.

IT was 'old HOBBS,' who said, in his *Leviathan*, that 'words are wise men's counters: they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools.' Logicians tell us that most disputes and misunderstandings arise out of an abuse or misuse of words. Two centuries ago BOSSUET pointed out that the dispute between Catholics and Protestants on the subject of the 'worship' of images and the Blessed Virgin and the saints is to some extent a dispute rather about words than things. This is true even at the present day. The very word 'worship' itself is one that readily lends itself to verbal jugglery and controversial legerdemain. Reference to any standard dictionary will show that it includes two such hopelessly and generically different meanings as (1) the mere respect or honour which a man may show to his fellow-man, and (2) the supreme adoration, which is due to God alone. A class of callow pulpiteers and small controversialist pamphleteers avail themselves of this ambiguity of meaning to fix the tradition of an odious charge upon the Catholic body. The rank and file of their hearers and readers have no practical acquaintance with any but one—namely, the divine—form of *religious* worship. We have, of course, been frequently charged in coarser and more direct fashion with the monstrous crime of giving divine honour to our Lady. But the great tradition of the Protestant masses has been fed in no small degree (1) by the ambiguity of the term 'worship'; (2) by the limitation of its meaning, as stated above; and (3) by the deadly ding-dong persistency with which this comparatively new idea of its meaning has been for some centuries associated, in their minds, with the legitimate honour shown by Catholics to her whom God's angel found 'full of grace.'

It is only within comparatively recent times that the word 'worship' has come to acquire the meaning of supreme adoration, as of the Godhead. The scholarly Protestant writer, Archbishop TRENCH, in his *English Past and Present* (6th ed., p. 245) shows that the word was originally written 'worthship,' and that it meant 'honour' only. It retained that meaning exclusively for centuries. It retains it still, though not exclusively. We recommend to the notice of a certain Devonport preacher a number of old English reprints which were issued in London and Birmingham in 1868-1869. Notable among them is the *Revelation of the Monk of Evesham*, written in 1196, and first typed by WILLIAM DE MACHLINIA in 1482. Throughout the whole of this curious work—which is an English forerunner of DANTE'S *Divina Commedia*—the word 'wor-

ship' is used exclusively in the sense of 'honour.' Thus, a certain abbot is described as a man of 'worschippful [i.e., honourable] conversation'; a monk is represented as being punished in purgatory for having unduly sought 'worschippe' [or honour] at the hands of the people; and the writer describes how 'oure Lord did worschyppe [i.e., honour] his servante'—a holy bishop—by bestowing upon him the gift of miracles. And so on and on in a score of other passages throughout the work.

The Bible improperly attributed to WYCLIF—and dating from about the year 1382—translates *Matthew* xix., 9, as follows: 'Worschippe [i.e., honour] thi fadir and thi modir'; and our Saviour's words in *John* xii., 26; thus: 'If any man serue me, my Fadir schal worschipe [i.e., honour] him.' A precisely similar meaning is given to the word in *The Babie's Book* (p. 37), published by the Early English Text Society; and in LANGLAND'S *Piers Plowman* and CHAUCER'S *Canterbury Tales*. The two last-named works were written in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and are easily procurable by the general reader. We have counted no fewer than nine different places in which SHAKESPEARE uses the word 'worship' in the sense of mere honour, and without any reference whatever to that supreme worship or adoration which is due to God alone. The Authorised Version of the Protestant Bible thus translates our divine Lord's words in *Luke* xiv., 10:—

But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee: Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have *worship* in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

In the Church of England marriage service the bridegroom says to the bride: 'With my body I thee *worship*' (meaning, of course, to 'honour.'). In CARDWELL'S *History of the Conferences* (p. 200) exception is stated to have been made to these words by Dr. REYNOLDS. Thereupon

His Majesty looked upon the place. 'I was made believe (saith he) that the phrase did impart no lesse than divine worship and adoration, but by the examination I find that it is an usual English term, as "a gentleman of worship," etc., and the sense agreeable unto Scriptures, "giving honour to the wife," etc.' But turning to Dr. Reynolds, with smiling said his Majesty: ". . . If you had a good wife yourself you would think all the honour and worship you could do to her well bestowed.

Nobody misunderstands TENNYSON when he urges a young man to 'worship her [a maiden] with years of noble deeds'; nor CARLYLE when he writes of the 'hero-worship' offered to MIRABEAU, CROMWELL, NAPOLEON, JOHNSON, ROUSSEAU, MADAME DE STAEL, and ROBBIE BURNS. Here in the very midst of this Protestant land, mayors and magistrates are still addressed as 'your Worship'; the Master of an Orange lodge is styled by the brethren 'Worschippful,' and the Grand Master the 'Right Worschippful.' A glance at WEBSTER'S or any good dictionary will show that 'worship' still retains its original meaning of simple honour or respect. But it has also in the course of time acquired the later and far different signification of supreme divine adoration. It is needless to say that the merely relative 'worship' or honour paid to a creature—even to the spotless Virgin-Mother—differs not only in degree, but in kind, from the supreme 'worship' of adoration which must be given to God alone. With Catholics the meaning of the word 'worship' is defined and safeguarded by the terms of the Church's known teachings. It is quite another matter when the term is used of us, with hostile or controversial intent, and in the sense already indicated, by Protestant preachers or writers. Without due explanation and definition the word, as applied to our veneration of the Blessed Virgin, etc., is tolerably certain to mislead. It insinuates a gross and monstrous charge of idolatry. In the circumstances, an honest man's plain duty is either to explain his meaning of the term, or to seek a better one. Those who knowingly decline both alternatives ought to revise their moral code. Those who are ignorant of the the slippery character of the term would do well to go to school again.

The teaching of the Catholic Church on the so-called 'worship of the Virgin MARY' is well and tersely expressed in the following words of one of our great divines: 'The Church condemns the least expression which oversteps that clear line, never to be crossed, dividing supreme worship of GOD from the highest honour paid to His highest saint.' We accord the Blessed Virgin peculiar veneration, just-