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The Papal Question by George Bayfield Roberts

Review by: J. B. S.

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means of these tables that he has been able to establish the approximate date of the manuscript.

The Lament of Ricemarch must have been written during the Norman invasion of 1094 or a little later. Besides this poem, there are also some other verses, on the Psalter—*Versiculi Ricemarch*—which, although not evidencing any great poetical power, are at least a proof of the patristic learning of their author. Finally, a few words may be said regarding the way in which the editor has conceived and carried out his task. His work gives evidence of the greatest patience, care and erudition. His object was not to bring out, after De Rossi and Duchesne, another edition of the Hieronymian Martyrology; he has contented himself with giving the exact text of R, comparing its principal readings with other manuscripts, and proposing, at the same time, certain corrections of the text.

One small criticism of this edition may be permitted. Dr. Lawlor has considered it advisable to put the various readings as well as his notes at the end of his volume. It would have been better—at least as regards the variants and the shorter notes—to have placed them at the foot of the page. We also regret that instead of giving a new edition of the Psalter of Ricemarch, the author has restricted himself to a mere collation. In this case, however, he may not have been free to choose.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, we cannot but be deeply grateful to Dr. Lawlor for having devoted his time to this work, and also to the Henry Bradshaw Society for its excellent reproduction of the manuscript. The illuminations on certain of its pages are of interest for the history of the art of Calligraphy in the eleventh Century.

F. CABROL.

THE PAPAL QUESTION. By George Bayfield Roberts, B.A.  
"The St. Paul Handbook Series" (Isaac Pitman and Sons).  
2s. 6d.

The attitude of the third century African Bishops towards the Bishops of Rome would seem to afford a perpetual source of interest to a certain type of mind. Since Newman's time in particular there seems to be a feverish desire to find Cyprian on one's side. Those who have read Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims* and Chapman's reply will be prepared for this attitude of mind; and now we have this very satisfactory contribution to the controversy from the pen of Mr. Roberts. So far as it goes the

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<sup>1</sup>On p. 55, *Sollemniacum* should be translated not by *Solesmes* but by *Solignac*—in the diocese of Limoges. Again, Tillo was most probably not the Abbot but a simple monk.

work is well done. The reasoning is clear. The context is usually given for each disputed text, and the conclusion is (as Newman would say) "such as our present position demands." It reminds the present reviewer of an Old Age Pensions candidate who came to him some time ago and said: "Please give me a certificate that I was born in 1839, for that is what is required at present."

Frankly, we do not see the overwhelming importance of this controversy. Of course, Cyprian said in effect that he was as good a Bishop as the Bishop of Rome; that his chair was also the Chair of Peter; that all Bishops were of equal standing in the Church *jure divino*. But the Romanist will say, "seeing that Cyprian was fallible, and the Pope infallible, what weight can Cyprian's opinion have as against the Pope's?" None verily. "I did not care much for a bench of bishops," says Newman (*Apologia*, cheap ed., p. 32), "My own bishop was my Pope; I knew no other, the successor of the Apostles, the Vicar of Christ." That is, one bishop was infallible, but a collection of bishops was fallible! Of what possible use can argument be in the face of caricatures of Episcopacy like this?

There are three questions raised by Mr. Roberts which we venture to think ought to be answered before the relative status of bishops in the third century can be profitably discussed: first, the beginnings of the Roman claims; secondly, a sane definition of the term "Catholic Church," and thirdly, the terms of communion in that Church. Was St. Peter bishop of Rome? Was he a bishop at all? Was he primate of the whole Church? Could he (even if he wished to do so) transmit his primacy? Again "the argument on which St. Cyprian relied. . . . the argument St. Augustine employed. . . . was that of the visible 'oneness' of the Church throughout the world" (p. 13). Where is that visible oneness to-day? Nowhere. And thirdly, those who do not hold the seven Romish sacraments "have neither part nor lot in the one body" (pp. 10, 11). Of what avail is it then to a member of the Church of England to hold Cyprian's episcopal theories, when the standards of his faith reject five of those "seven mysteries" scraped together by Peter Lombard?

In short, admirable as some parts of this little book are, we think that the Roman question must be dealt with at its source. Cyprian is a dam too far down the stream. He may prove a help or a hindrance: to us who hold by Christ as the Head, it does not matter much. Nor do we greatly fear heretical teaching on the Sacraments, as we are accustomed to it, but think it a pity that it should be foisted upon us by men who imagine themselves our own champions.

J. B. S.