

day he served at his own table thirteen poor people, and washed their feet. To attend the most loathsome lepers seemed his greatest pleasure. He exerted an episcopal vigour and firmness in reproving obstinate and powerful sinners, and in reforming his clergy, and especially the monastery of St. Valery, though this work cost him a journey to Rheims, and another to Rome. When he celebrated the divine office at the court of Robert count of Artois, held at St Omer's at Christmas, he refused to receive the offerings of all persons, though sovereign princes, who presented themselves with their hair effeminately curled; so that many were obliged to step out of the church to cut off their curled locks with a knife or sword, that they might not be deprived of the holy prelate's blessing. As he was going to Rheims to confer with his metropolitan upon certain matters of importance, he was taken ill of a fever on the road; and, having received the holy sacraments, joyfully departed to our Lord on the 8th of November, in 1118, in the abbey of St. Crispin at Soissons, and was there interred. His name is honoured in the Roman Martyrology.

See his life, written by Nicholas, a monk of Soissons, in the same century.

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## NOVEMBER. IX

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### THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR,

(COMMONLY CALLED ST. JOHN LATERAN.)

FROM the beginning of the world altars were erected for offering sacrifices to God, and the places which were deputed for this supreme act of religion were always looked upon as sacred.

Abel, Noë, Abraham, and the other patriarchs raised altars in retired and sanctified places where they sometimes assembled their families or tribes to pay to God the most solemn religious worship. Abraham, to make the place more awful and retired, planted a grove round his altar at Beersabe,<sup>1</sup> and went thither religiously with his family to offer prayers and sacrifices. Jacob erected an altar of stone at Bethel, pouring oil upon it, called the place the house of God, and vowed to pay to him the tithes of all his possessions.<sup>2</sup> When God gave to the Jews a complete law of religious rites and ceremonies, he commanded a moveable tabernacle to be built and consecrated with oil,<sup>3</sup> and a golden altar for offering incense, and another altar (of holocausts) to be erected, and anointed with oil, by way of consecration.<sup>4</sup> By the divine appointment, a temple was afterward built with the utmost religious respect.<sup>5</sup> Christians had from the beginning chambers or oratories in private houses, set apart for their religious assemblies and sacrifices, as appears from St. Paul,<sup>6</sup> and from the Upper Room, in which the apostles are frequently mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles to have assembled,<sup>7</sup> which seems to have been in the house of John Mark.<sup>8</sup> In the time of Saint John the Evangelist, the place for the assembly of the faithful with the bishop is called the church, or Ecclesia.<sup>9</sup> St. Clement of Rome<sup>10</sup> says, that God had appointed places to be appropriated to his worship. St. Ignatius often mentions one

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxi. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxviii. 18. 22. xxxv. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xl. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. v. 10.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings (or Samuel) vii. and 3. (al. 1.) Kings vi: See Calmet's Dissert. sur les Temples des Anciens, Comm. t. 2. p. 621, prefixed to the third book of Kings.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 22. See S. Aug. S. Bas. S. Chris. &c. ib.

<sup>7</sup> Acts i. 13, &c.

<sup>8</sup> Acts xii. 12.

<sup>9</sup> St. Joan. ap. Clem. Alex. et Eus. l. 3. c. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ep. 1, ad Cor. n. 40.

altar in every church, and one bishop.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian calls the place of the assembly in which the baptismal renunciations were made, the Eucharist offered, &c. Ecclesia, or the church, and the house of God.<sup>2</sup> The heathen author of the dialogue called Philopatrís, mentions the Christians' place of religious assemblies. Lampridius, in the life of Alexander Severus, reports that that emperor adjudged to the Christians a place for their religious worship, which the victuallers claimed. Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus built many churches, as St. Gregory of Nyssa relates in his life. That ancient doctor, in his canonical epistle,<sup>3</sup> and St. Dionysius of Alexandria,<sup>4</sup> distinctly mentions the church. St. Cyprian often speaks of the church, which he sometimes calls the Lord's house, or *Dominicum*. Eusebius says,<sup>5</sup> that, during the peace which the Church enjoyed, from the persecution of Valerian to that of Dioclesian, the ancient churches were not large enough to contain the faithful, "and therefore they erected from the foundation new ones more ample and spacious in every city." Origen, indeed,<sup>6</sup> Minutius Felix, and Lactantius<sup>7</sup> says, Christians had no temples or altars; but evidently mean for idols and bloody sacrifices, like those of the heathens. Lactantius himself<sup>8</sup> speaks of a Christian church in Phrygia, which the heathens burnt with the whole assembly in it. And he not only mentions the demolishing the stately church of Nicomedia,<sup>9</sup> but says that even in Gaul, where the mild Constantius ruled, the churches were pulled down;<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ad Magnes. et ad Philad. &c.

<sup>2</sup> De Cor. c. 3. De Pud. c. 4. De Idol. c. 17. adv. Valen. q. 2.

<sup>3</sup> C. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. Canon. c. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Hist. l. 8. c. 1.

<sup>6</sup> L. 8. contr. Cels.

<sup>7</sup> Instit. l. 2. c. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Institut. l. 5. c. 11.

<sup>9</sup> L. de Mort. Persec. c. 13.

<sup>10</sup> lb. c. 15.

in which he could not have been mistaken, who was in Gaul at that time with Crispus Cæsar. So that when Eusebius says, "Constantius destroyed no churches,"<sup>1</sup> he could only mean that he gave no positive orders to destroy any; but that prince durst not oppose the other emperors, so far as not to allow officers or magistrates, so disposed, to put in execution the edicts of Dioclesian. Gildas<sup>2</sup> and Bede<sup>3</sup> testify that the churches were demolished in Britain, in the persecution of Dioclesian, and rebuilt when it was over. St. Optatus says, there were forty churches in Rome before the last persecution,<sup>4</sup> which were taken away, but restored to the Christians by Maxentius.<sup>5</sup> It is a very ancient tradition at Rome that the house of the senator Prudens was converted into a church by St. Peter, or rather that he established an oratory in that palace.<sup>6</sup>

Constantius the Great, by his victory over Maxentius, gained on the 28th of October, in 312, became master of Italy and Africa, and under his protection and the favour of Licinius, who reigned in the East till the year 323, the Christians began to build every where sumptuous churches. That of Tyre, begun by the citizens, under the direction of Paulinus, their bishop, in 313, is minutely described by Eusebius. The persecution, which Licinius renewed in 319, put a stop to such works in the East; but, after his defeat, and especially after the council of Nice, Constantine built and adorned many churches at his own expense. Among these Eusebius mentions a most magnificent one at Nicomedia, another at Antioch in the form of an octagon, which, from its rich ornaments, was called the Golden Church: others at Jerusalem, and in

1 Eus. l. 8. c. 13.

2 Gild. de Excid. Brit. initio.

3 Bede, l. 1. c. 6 et 8.

4 Optat. l. 2. p. 49.

5 See Aug. in Brevic. Collat. 3. diei, c. 18, &c.

6 See the lives of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedes.

several other parts of Palestine, and at Constantinople. The great church of Sancta Sophia there, dedicated to Christ, the increased Wisdom, which was magnificently rebuilt by Justinian, was first founded by Constantine,<sup>1</sup> and finished by Constantius, in 360. Constantine built also at Constantinople the beautiful church of the twelve apostles, which as Eusebius<sup>2</sup> describes it, "was vastly high; yet had all its walls covered with marble, its roof overlaid with gold, and the outside covered with gilded brass instead of tiles." Among a great number of churches which this pious emperor built, the principal is that of our Saviour, which he founded on mount Cœlio in Rome. It stood upon the spot, and was built in part with the materials of the palace of Lateran, which gave name to that part of the hill, and which had been the house of Plautius Lateranus, a rich Roman senator, whom Nero put to death as an accomplice in Piso's conspiracy. Constantine inherited it by his wife Fausta; whence it was called Faustina, and more frequently the Constantinian Basilic. The founder built a chapel within the inclosed area of of this church, and dependant upon it, dedicated in honour of St. John Baptist, with a second altar dedicated in honour of St. John Evangelist. This chapel was the Baptisterion, a fine structure, and most richly ornamented. Upon the font was placed an image of St. John Baptist. We find by the ancient memorials of the Church of Rome, that Constantine gave to this Baptisterion or chapel thirteen thousand nine hundred and thirty-four golden pence yearly income, in houses and lands, not only in Italy, but also in Sicily, Africa, and Greece,<sup>3</sup> which amounts to about ten thousand

<sup>1</sup> See the history and description of the magnificent church of Sancta Sophia, in the learned Du Fresne lord Du Cange's *Constantinopolis Christiana*, l. 3. p. 4. ad p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. in vit. Constant. l. 4. c. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Anast. in Sylvestr.

four hundred and fifty pounds, for the golden penny at that time was worth fifteen shillings of our money. But if we consider the difference of the prices of things, the sum would be now of a much greater value. This chapel having always been a place of great fame and devotion, from it the whole church, though dedicated to our Saviour, has been generally called the church of St. John Lateran. The popes usually resided at this church, till Gregory IX. returning from Avignon, began to reside at St. Peter's, or the Vatican. This church nevertheless retains the pre-eminence, above all other churches in Rome, or in Christendom, which has been confirmed to it by the bulls of Gregory IX. and Pius V. when the precedence was contested by the canons of St. Peter. The popes officiate here on certain great festivals of the year; and their stately Lateran palace, contiguous to this church, was repaired by Benedict XIII. though, on account of the remarkable unwholesomeness of the air in this part,<sup>1</sup> the popes usually reside either at the great Vatican palace, or more frequently at that of Monte Cavallo. The Lateran church is styled the head, the mother, and the mistress of all churches, as an inscription on its walls imports. It would be too long to enumerate the precious relics of our divine Redeemer's passion, and of innumerable martyrs with which it is enriched. Pope Leo I. established among the canons of the Lateran basilic the regular observance which St. Austin had instituted in Africa. Alexander II. placed here reformed regular canons, which he called from St. Frigidian's at Lucca, in 1061, and declared this church the head of that reformed congrega-

<sup>1</sup> The unhealthiness of this quarter of the city, now filled with stately ruins, and of the Campagna of Rome toward Civita Vecchia, &c. is ascribed by the best judges to its ancient excessive populousness, and the present thinness of inhabitants, and want of fires to purify the air from noxious exhalations. Some quarters of the city are very healthful.



tion, which still bears the name of the regular canons of St. John of Lateran; though these canons have been removed hence to the church of our Lady *della pace*, and secular canons with the title of prelates serve this basilic according to the constitution of Sixtus III. in 1456, and Sixtus IV. in 1483.<sup>1</sup>

1 As the ancient Christians frequently turned their faces to the east at prayers, as an emblem of their hope of a resurrection; so churches were usually built with the high altar towards the east, and the front or great entrance to the west, as the apostolic constitutions direct. (l. 2. c. 57.) Yet this rule admitted frequent exceptions, as conveniency or necessity required, as Bona takes notice. (Liturg. l. 1. c. 20. n. 4.) Socrates observes, that in the great church at Antioch, the altar did not look toward the east, as was customary, but toward the west. (Socr. l. 5. c. 22.) The ancient churches had a court or yard inclosed with a wall. frequently before the great door a fountain or cistern, in which persons washed their face and hands before they entered the church, as an emblem of the interior purification of the soul. (Tert. de Orat. c. 11, S. Paulin. ep. 12, &c.) Before the entrance were a porch, an open court, (where the first class of penitents stood in the open air.) and often on each side porches or cloisters, raised on pillars. The council of Nantes, in 658, allows the dead to be buried in the church-yard, porch or *exedrae*, that is, out-building, but never in the church, (c. 6.) The inner parts of a church were anciently distinguished as follows. The first was called *Narthex*, next the door, in which the catechumens and the penitents, called *Audientes*, were admitted: the name *Narthex* signifies a ferula, rod, or staff, which the oblong figure of this part resembled. Next to this was the *Naos* or nave, or body of the church, where the rest of the laity prayed; at the bottom of it was placed the rank of the penitents called *Substrati*; in the middle stood the *Ambo* or pulpit, large enough to contain several readers, or singers. But bishops most frequently preached from the rising steps of the altar, though St. Chrysostom preferred the *Ambo*. (See Vales in Socr. l. 6. c. 5.) Above the *Ambo* stood the fourth class of penitents called *Consistentes*: also the laity: each sex in separate places; usually the women on each side behind the men. (See Const. Apost. l. 2 c. 57. S. Cyril, Præf. Catech; c. 8. S. Chrys. Hom. 74. in Mat. S. Aug. de Civ. l. 2. c. 28. et l. 22. c. 28, Even St. Helen submitted to this discipline, praying with

Solomon's temple was dedicated to the divine worship, by the most solemn religious rites and prayers. The Christians who blessed their food, their houses, and whatever they used, could not the women. (Socr. l. i. c. 17.) This custom St. Charles Borromeo restored at Milan. The emperor in the East prayed within the chancel, till Theodosius was reprov'd for it by St. Ambrose at Milan. From that time the emperors had their Solium or throne in Sancta Sophia, in the upper end of the men's apartment next to the chancel, and the empress in the women's apartment. (Sozom l. 7. c. 25.) The Bema, sanctuary or choir (called by us chancel, because separated from the rest by *Cancelli* or rails, and a curtain that was drawn before the door) contained the altar, and behind it the *Bema*, or thrones of the bishop and priests, usually in the semicircular upper end called *Apsis*. The curtain or veils before the folding doors of the chancel hid the prospect of the altar from catechumens and infidels, and covered the sacrifice of the eucharist, in the time of consecration. Of this St. Chrysostom says, (Hom. 3. in Ephes.) "When the sacrifice is brought forth, when Christ the Lamb of God is offered, when you hear this signal given let us join in common prayer: when you see the veil withdrawn, then think you see heaven opened and the angels descending from above."

The word altar (*Θυσιαστήριον*, *ara*, and *altare*) is used by St. Ignatius, (ep. ad Ephes. n. 1. ad Trallian. n. 7. ad Philad. n. 4. ad Magnes. n. 7.) by St. Irenæus, (l. 4. c. 34.) Origen, (hom. 10. in Num.) Tertullian, (de Orat. c. 14. ad Uxor. l. 1. c. 7. Exhort. Castit. c. 10.) St. Cyprian very often: St. Optat, l. 6. St. Austin, St. Chrysostom, &c. though the latter more frequently calls it the mystical, or the tremendous table. Altars were first of wood, St. Optat, (l. 6.) St. Aug. (ep. 50. ad Bonif. p. 84.) St. Athanasius, (Ep. ad solit. vitam agentes, t. l. p. 847.) Some say St. Sylvester decreed they should be always of stone. This at last was commanded by the council of Epone in France, an. 506. (can 26.) St. Gregory of Nyssa (de Bapt. Christi, t. 3. p. 369.) describes them of stone. The Roman altar is open on all sides, and of a single stone or slab. *Ciborium*, originally a Greek word, was used anciently by the Greeks for a spiral magnificent canopy, hanging over the altar upon four pillars, and at the top rising in the form of a turret, as Du Cange demonstrates (Not. in Paul. Silent. p. 569.) against Durandus and some others, who think it always signified the *Pyxis*, in which the eucharist was kept, for which it has



fail to consecrate or bless oratories which they députed for divine service: though during the persecutions they celebrated the sacred mysteries in houses, prisons, private places, &c.<sup>1</sup> It was doubtless from apostolic tradition, that the consecration of churches was performed with the utmost devotion and solemnity. To assist at this ceremony a synod of the neighbouring and provincial bishops usually met. To perform the dedication of the church of Tyre, and that of the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, in 335, bishops were convened by Constantine out of all the East.<sup>2</sup> St. Ambrose relates a prayer used at the consecration of a church.<sup>3</sup> In the writings of the fathers we have several sermons or discourses which they made on the festivals of the dedication of churches.<sup>4</sup> It was always severely forbid by the canons under pain of deprivation, for any priest to found a church or monastery without the

Eus. Hist. l. 7. c. 22. Ruinart, in Actis Martyr. in S. Luciano, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. de Vit. Constant. l. 4. c. 43. Socrates, l. 1. c. 28. Sozom. l. 2. c. 26. Theodor. et Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Exhort. ad Virgines, l. 5. n. 94. t. 3. p. 302. ed Ben.

<sup>4</sup> Eus. l. 10. Hist. c. 4. De Vit. Constant. l. 4. c. 45. S. Gaudentius, Serm. 17. in Dedicacione Basilicæ. S. Ambrose, Serm. 89.

been long used. The blessed sacrament was anciently kept in a silver dove hanging over the altar, called from the Greek word *Peristerion*, or in a decent *Armarium* at a distance from the high altar, as it is still in some abbeys, &c. The second council of Tours, in 567, ordered it to be kept in an ark or *Pyxis* at the bottom of the cross on the altar. *Baptisteries* were at first spacious outer buildings, within the church-yard, as appears by Constantine's churches: also from Paulinus, (ep. 92. ad Sever.) St. Cyril, (Cat. Mystag. l. n. 2.) Sidonius. (l. 4. ep. 15.) St. Ambrose, (ep. 33.) &c. This continued to the sixth century. See St. Greg. of Tours, (l. 2. Hist. c. 21.) Tertullian says, the adult person who was to be baptized, made his renunciations before the altar; then was led forth to the water, (de Cor. c. 3.) See Bona, Rer. Liturg. Le Brun, S. Expos. des Cérém. de la Messe; Bingham, Antiquities of the Church, p. 8. vol. 3. Bocquillot, Tr. Historique de la Liturgie, l. 1. et. 2.

approbation of the bishop.<sup>1</sup> The emperor Justinian orders that the bishop fix a cross upon the spot, and pray there. St. Cuthbert, St. Chad, and other English bishops used to spend whole nights, or sometimes forty days in fasting, watching and prayer upon the place, before the church or monastery was there founded, as Bede recounts of them. Nor can any church or altar be consecrated without the relics of martyrs.<sup>2</sup> Some portion is deposited on the altar-stone, or under the altar. Churches are properly dedicated only to God, though under the title and invocation, and in honour and memory of the saints.<sup>3</sup> Altars also are memorials of martyrs, but dedicated to God. The ancient councils order them to be consecrated by the unction of chrism, and the blessing of priests.<sup>4</sup> This was an imitation of the ancient holy patriarchs, and of what the Jews did by divine appointment. The world is defiled, and is the seat of the devil, who is become its ruler.<sup>5</sup> Creatures in it groan under his empire, and are made the instruments of sinners and sin. Hence the Church orders every thing to be blessed before it is used in the church for the divine service. God strictly forbade in the old law, sacrifice to be offered to him in any place, except such as should be chosen by Him, which were afterwards consecrated for that purpose.<sup>6</sup>

Hence churches have been usually consecrated by solemn rites and prayers: and it is a grievous

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Bracar. l. c. 27. an. 563. Conc. Hibern. S. Patricij, can. 23. Conc. t. l. p. 140. Conc. Calced. can. 4. Justinian's Novels, novel 131. c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> De Consecr. dist. l. c. Altaria, and c. Placuit. See Azorius, l. 10. c. 27. Barbosa, &c. Also S. Hieron. adv. Vigilant. t. 4. p. 284. ed. Ben. Codex. can. Eccl. Afric. can. 83. S. Gaudent. Serm. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Ambrosius, ep. 22. als. 54. vel. 84. ad Soror. n. 1. et 13.

<sup>4</sup> Council of Agde in 506. can. 14. Council of Epone in 517. an. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Apoc. xviii. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Deut. xii. 13.

sacrilege to profane them, or do in them any thing but what has an immediate relation to the divine service: the church being the house of God. Though he be every where, he is said to reside particularly in heaven, because he there displays his presence by his glory and gifts. In like manner he honours the church with his special presence, being there in a particular manner ready to receive our public homages, listen to our petitions, and bestow on us his choicest graces. How wonderful were the privileges which he annexed, how magnificent the promises which he made to the Jewish temple! With what religious awe did his servants honour it! how severely were they punished, who sacrilegiously profaned it or its sacred vessels! There was then but one temple of the true God in the whole world; and his temple no infidel was ever suffered to enter farther than the outer inclosure, or court of the Gentiles. Pompey's boldness and presumption in viewing it all over when he had conquered the country, was, in the opinion of the Jewish historians, the cause of all the misfortunes with which he was afterward overwhelmed. The Jews, that is, the faithful, had an inner court allotted to them, where they beheld the offering of the sacrifices, and performed their devotions at a distance from the holy place: but were never permitted to go any farther, nor even to enter this court till they had been purified from all legal uncleannesses, by the ablutions and other rites prescribed by the law, an emblem of the interior purity of the soul. It is recorded by the Rabbins,<sup>2</sup> that it was not lawful for any one to spit on any part of the mountain where the temple stood, ever to go through it to another place, or ever to gaze about in it: but entering it with trembling and gravity,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. or Paralip. vii. 2. 14, 15, '6.

<sup>2</sup> See Lamy, in Apparetu Biblico.

they went to the place where they performed the prayer. The Levites, though devoted to the divine service, were not admitted beyond the part allotted for the bloody sacrifices. None but priests could enter the sanctuary or holy place, and of these but one a-week, by lot, could approach the golden altar to offer the daily sacrifice of frankincense. As for the holy of holies, or innermost sanctuary, which God sanctified by his more immediate presence, and where the ark, the tables of the law, and Aaron's rod were kept; this no one could ever enter on any account, except the high priest alone, and he only once a year, on the solemn feast of expiation, carrying the blood of victims sacrificed. Neither was he to do this without having been prepared by solemn purifications and expiations; and the smoke of perfumes was to cover the ark, and the propitiatory or oracle, called the Seat of God, before the blood was offered. Yet, the temple of Solomon and the holy of holies were only types of our sacred tabernacles in which is offered, not the blood of sheep and goats, but the adorable blood of the immaculate Lamb of God, *Verily, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.*<sup>1</sup> When the Jewish temple was consecrated, to inspire the people with an awe for the holy house, *God filled it with a cloud; nor could the priest stand and minister, by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.*<sup>2</sup> This miracle was repeated when the holocausts were first offered in it.<sup>3</sup> The like wonder had often happened when Moses and Aaron entered the tabernacle. When God came to give the law, Moses himself was affrighted and trembled,<sup>4</sup> and the people, being terrified, stood afar off.<sup>5</sup> Yet all

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxviii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. or Par. v. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. vii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. xi. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Exod. xx. 18.

these things were but shadows to our tremendous mysteries, in which we are sprinkled with the precious blood of our Redeemer; and it is offered by our hands,<sup>1</sup> and we are thereby associated to the *company of many thousands of angels, &c.*

If Christians fill the taverns and worldly assemblies with their impieties, let them at least spare and respect God's holy place, which he has commanded to be kept undefiled for his own sake, and where Christ is daily offered, and presents his blood to his Father in propitiation for our sins. If even infidels polluted these sacred places, we should shudder with horror: but is it possible that Christians themselves should be guilty of such sacrileges, by which they expose our most holy mysteries to the blasphemies of these infidels? How astonishing is the respect which the Mahometans and the most savage idolaters have for their mosques and pagodas! Is it only those who possess the truth, and know the divine mysteries, that lose all sense of awe and respect for what is most sacred in religion? Christ, who received meekly the greatest sinners, and bore all injuries in silence, twice exerted his zeal and indignation in expelling the buyers and sellers out of the temple,<sup>2</sup> once, soon after he had entered upon his public ministry, and once before he closed it.<sup>3</sup> And let Christians, agreeably to the holy name they bear, exert their zeal to defend the churches from profanations: if they have not authority to prevent them, let them at least weep over such abuses, which tend to extirpate all sense of religion. A ray of the divine presence ought to pierce our souls when we approach the sanctuary, and we ought with trembling to say to ourselves: *How terrible is this place! this is no other than the house of God, and the gate*

<sup>1</sup> Hebr. xi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> John ii.

<sup>3</sup> Mat. xxi.

of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Do we not enter the awful gates as we should have done the miraculous cloud? Do we not seem to hear with Moses that voice from the bush: *Approach not hither: put off the shoes from thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is holy?*<sup>2</sup> Do we not put away all earthly thoughts and affections? Do we not veil our faces by the awe with which we are penetrated and the strict guard we place upon our senses when we appear before him in his holy place, before whose face the heavens and the earth withdraw themselves, and their place is not found?<sup>3</sup> The seraphims tremble in his presence, and veil their faces with their wings.<sup>4</sup> Cassian mentions<sup>5</sup> that the Egyptian monks 'put off their sandals whenever they went to celebrate or receive the holy mysteries. As the Jews upon entering the temple bowed themselves toward the mercy-seat, so it seems to have been derived from them in the beginning of the Church, as Mr. Mede and Mr. Bingham observes, that the Greek and all the Oriental Christians took up the custom which they still retain, of going into the middle of the church at their ingress, and bowing toward the altar, repeating those words of the Publican in the gospel: *God be merciful to me a sinner:* which all know who have visited any of their churches at Rome, Ancona, or in the East. The custom of sprinkling the forehead with holy-water in entering the church, is of primitive antiquity; and the use of holy-water is recommended by tradition and miracles.<sup>6</sup> In taking it as an emblem of interior purity, we pray in sin-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxviii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. iii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Apoc. xx. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Isai. vi. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Instit. l. i. c. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Constit. Apost. l. 8. c. 29. S. Epiphan. hæc. 30. in vita Josephi Com. sub Constantino. S. Hieron. in vita S. Hilarion. Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. l. 6. c. 2 et 12. Beda de S. Germano Antis. Hist. l. 1. c. 17.



cere compunction and holy fear, that God in his mercy sprinkle us with hyssop dipped, not in the blood of goats and calves, which could not take away sin, but in the adorable blood of Christ, which may perfectly cleanse our souls, that we may present ourselves spotless in his holy house, and divine presence. From the ancient custom of celebrating the festival of the dedication of each parish church, during an octave, with watching and great solemnity and devotion, are derived our Wakes.

### ST. THEODORUS, SURNAMED TYRO, M.

ST. GREGORY of Nyssa begins the panegyric which he pronounced upon this martyr on his festival, at his tomb near Amasea, by gratefully ascribing to his intercession the preservation of that county from the inroads of the Scythians, who had laid waste all the neighbouring provinces. Imploring his patronage, he says, "As a soldier defend us; as a martyr speak for us—ask peace: if we want a stronger intercession, gather together your brother martyrs, and with them all pray for us. Stir up Peter, Paul, and John, that they be solicitous for the Churches which they founded. May no heresies sprout up: may the Christian commonwealth become, by your and your companions' prayers, a flourishing field." The panegyrist testifies, that by his intercession, devils were expelled, and distempers cured: that many resorted to his church, and admired the stateliness of the buildings, and the actions of the saint painted on the wall; approached the tomb, being persuaded that the touch thereof imparted a blessing; that they carried the dust of the sepulchre, as a treasure of great value, and if any were allowed the happiness to touch the sacred relics, they respectfully applied them to their eyes, mouth, ears, and other organs of their senses. "Then," says the