

in the Scottish calendars. See his ancient life, Leland de Scriptor. Usher, Ant. c. 15. Hector Boetius, Leslie, &c.

This is also the Octave of the Epiphany.\* The principal object of the devotion of the church on this day is the baptism of our Saviour by St. John in the Jordan. We learn from the great council of Oxford, in 1222,(1) that it was then kept a holiday of the third class, on which all were obliged to hear mass, though they might work afterwards. In France and Germany all servile work was forbidden on it, by the capitulars of Lewis le débonnaire.(2) The emperor Theodosius II. forbids all civil courts and transactions during eight days before the festival of the Epiphany, and as many after it.

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## JANUARY XIV.

### ST HILARY, BISHOP.

From his own writings, and the histories of that age, which furnish the most authentic memoirs of his life. See what Dom Coutant, the Benedictin monk, has recorded of him in his excellent edition of his works; as also Tillemont, T. 7. Cellier, T. 5. and Rivet, Hist. Lit. T. 1. part. 2. p. 139. The two books, the one of his life, the other of his miracles, by Fortunatus of Poitiers, 600, are inaccurate. Both the Fortunatus's were from Italy; and probably one was the author of the first, and the other of the second book.

A.D. 368.

ST. AUSTIN, who often urges the authority of St. Hilary against the Pelagians, styles him *the illustrious doctor of the churches*.(3) St. Jerom says,(4) that he was a *most eloquent man, and the trumpet of the Latins against the Arians*; and in another place, that in *St. Cyprian* and *St. Hilary*, God had transplanted two *fair cedars* out of the world into his church.(5)

St. Hilary was born at Poitiers, and his family was one of the most illustrious in Gaul.(6) He spent his youth in the study of eloquence. He himself testifies that he was brought up in idolatry, and gives us a particular account of the steps by which

(1) Can. 8.

(2) L. 2. de feriis. (3) L. 2. adv. Julian. c. 8.

(4) L. 2. adv. Rufin. p. 415. (5) In Isa. c. 60. (6) S. Hieron. in Catal.

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\* The church prolongs most solemn festivals during eight days, with a daily continuation of the sacred office proper to each such festival. This term is called its octave, and the eighth day is called the octave-day.

God conducted him to the knowledge of his saving faith.(1) He considered by the glimmering or faint light of reason, that man, who is created a moral and free agent, is placed in this world for the exercise of patience, temperance, and other virtues, which he saw must receive from God a recompence after this life. He ardently set about learning what God is; and after some researches into the nature of the Supreme Being, quickly discovered the absurdity of polytheism, or a plurality of gods; and was convinced that there can be only one God, and that the same is eternal, unchangeable, all-powerful, the first cause and author of all things. Full of these reflections, he met with the holy scriptures, and was wonderfully affected with that just and sublime description Moses gives of God in those words, so expressive of his self-existence,(2) I AM WHO AM: and was no less struck with the idea of his immensity and supreme dominion, illustrated by the most lively images in the inspired language of the prophets. The reading of the New Testament put an end to, and completed his inquiries; and he learned from the first chapter of St. John, that the Divine Word, God the Son, is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father. Here he checked his natural curiosity, avoided subtleties, and submitted his understanding to divine revelation, resolving what seemed incomprehensible into the veracity and power of God; and not presuming to measure divine mysteries by his shallow capacity. Being thus brought to the knowledge of faith, he received the heavenly regeneration by baptism. From that time forth he so squared his whole life by the rules of piety, and so zealous were his endeavours to confirm others in the faith of the holy Trinity, and to encourage all to virtue, that he seemed, though a layman, already to possess the grace of the priesthood.

He was married before his conversion to the faith; and his wife, by whom he had a daughter named Apra, or Abram, was yet living when he was chosen bishop of Poitiers, about the year 353; but from the time of his ordination he lived in perpetual continency.\* He omitted no endeavours to escape this

(1) L. 1. de Trin. p. 1—10.

(2) Exod. iii. 14.

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\* The contrary is certainly a mistake in Dr. Cave: for Saint Jerom, writing against Jovinian, says, in l. 1. p. 175, that though the church was sometimes obliged to make choice of married men for the priesthood, because virgine, or unmarried, could not always be found, they notwithstanding lived ever after continent. *Certè confiteris, non posse esse episcopum qui*

promotion; but his humility only made the people the more earnest to see him vested with that dignity; and indeed their expectations were not frustrated in him, for his eminent virtue and capacity shone forth with such a lustre, as soon drew upon him the attention not only of all Gaul, but of the whole church. Soon after he was raised to the episcopal dignity, he composed before his exile, elegant comments on the gospel of Saint Matthew, which are still extant. Those on the Psalms he compiled after his banishment.(1) On these comments on the Psalms, and on St. Matthew, we are chiefly to understand St. Jerom, when he recommends, in a particular manner, the reading of the works of St. Hilary to virgins and devout persons.(2) From that time the Arian controversy chiefly employed his pen. He was an excellent orator and poet. His style is lofty and noble, beautified with rhetorical ornaments and figures, but somewhat studied; and the length of his periods renders him sometimes obscure to the learned,\* as St. Jerom takes notice.(3) It is observed by Dr. Cave, that all his writings breathe an extraordinary vein of piety. Saint Hilary solemnly appeals to God,(4) that he held it as the great work of his life, to employ all his faculties to announce God to the world, and to excite all men to the love of him. He earnestly recommends the practice of beginning every action and discourse by prayer,† and some act of divine praise;(5)

(1) S. Hilar. in Ps. 53. n. 8. in Ps. 67. n. 15. and Coutant, Armon. in S. Hilar. in Psalmos, p. 165.

(2) Ep. ad Lætam.

(3) Ep. 49. ad Paulinum, T. 4. p. 567.

(4) Lib. 1. de Trinit.

(5) In Ps. 64.

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*in episcopatu filios faciat: aliqui si deprehensus fuerit non quasi vir tenebitur, sed quasi adulter condemnabitur, ib.* And in his book against Vigilantius, p. 28, he observes, that in the churches of the East, in Egypt, and in the apostolic see of Rome, those only were made clergymen, who were virgins, or single; or if they were married, they ceased to live as husbands. *Aut virgines clericos accipiant, aut continentes; aut si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desinunt, p. 281.*

\* On the interpretation of certain obscure passages of the works of Saint Hilary, see Dom Coutant, in an excellent preface to his edition of this father's works; also Witasse de Incarn. t. 2, &c.

† Doubtless his love of prayer, and the assiduous application of his mind to that holy exercise, moved him to make the Psalms a main object of his sacred studies and meditation. His comments are elegant; though in them he dwells much on the literal sense, he neglects not the mystical and allegorical, every thing in these divine oracles being prophetic, as he takes notice (in Ps. 142. n. 1.) Often he finds the immediate literal sense clear; in other passages, he shows Christ and his church to be pointed out. The true sense of the holy scriptures he teaches, only to be opened to us by the spirit of assiduous prayer, (in Ps. 125. n. 2, &c.) The fatal and opposite

as also to meditate on the law of God day and night, to pray without ceasing, by performing all our actions with a view to

errors, which the overweening spirit and study of a false criticism have produced in every age, justify this general remark of the fathers, that though the succour of reasonable criticism ought by no means to be neglected, a spirit of prayer is the only key which can open to us the sacred treasures of the divine truths, by the light which it obtains of the Holy Ghost, and the spirit of simplicity, piety, and humility, which it infuses. In this disposition, the holy doctors of the church discovered in the divine oracles that spirit of perfect virtue, which they imbibed and improved from their assiduous meditation. Saint Hilary remarks, that the first lesson we are to study in them is that of humility, in which "Christ has taught, that all the titles and prizes of our faith are comprised:" *In humilitate docuit omnia fidei nomina et præmia contineri.* (in Ps. 118. l. 20. n. 1. p. 358.) Whence the royal prophet entreats God, to consider nothing in him but his lowliness of heart. (v. 153. *ibid.*) This holy father hesitates not to say, humility is the greatest work of our faith, our best sacrifice to God; (in Ps. 130. n. 1. p. 442.) but true humility is accompanied with an invincible courage, and a firmness and constancy in virtue, which no fear of worldly power is ever able to shake. (in Ps. xiv. p. 66.) Saint Hilary laments, that even several pastors of the church thought it a part of piety to flatter princes. But true religion teaches us (Matt. x. 28.) only to fear things which are justly to be feared; that is, to fear God, to fear sin, or what can hurt our souls: for what threatens only our bodies is to be despised, when the interest of God and our souls is concerned. We indeed study, out of charity, to give offence to no one; (1 Cor. x. 32, 33.) but desire only to please men for God not by contemning him. (in Ps. 52. p. 89, 90.) Prayer is the great christian duty, which this holy doctor was particularly solicitous to inculcate, teaching, that it consists in the cry of the heart, not in the lips, as David cried to God in his whole heart. Ps. cxviii. v. 145. (in Ps. cxviii. l. 19. p. 352.) We are to pour forth our souls before God, with earnestness, and with abundance of tears. (in Ps. 41. *apud* Marten. t. 9. p. 71.) Amidst the dangers and evils of this life, our only comfort ought to be in God, in the assured hope of his promises, and in prayer. (*Ib.*) That prayer is despised by God, which is slothful and lukewarm, accompanied with distrust, distracted with unprofitable thoughts, weakened by worldly anxiety and desires of earthly goods, or fruitless, for want of the support of good works. (in Ps. liv. p. 104.) All our actions and discourses ought to be begun by prayer, and the divine praise. (in Ps. lxiv. p. 162.) The day among Christians is always begun by prayer, and ended by hymns to God. (*ib.* n. 12. p. 169.) By this public homage of the church, and of every faithful soul in it, God is particularly honoured, and he delights in it. (St. Jerom. in eund. Ps.) St. Hilary takes notice, that the night is of all others the most proper time for prayer; as the example of Christ, David, and other saints, demonstrates. (in Ps. cxviii. l. 8. p. 292.) He observes, that it cannot be doubted, but among all the acts of prayer, that of the divine praise is in general the most noble and most excellent; and that it is for his infinite goodness and mercy, in the first place, that we are bound to praise him. (in Ps. cxxxiv. p. 469.) Next to this, he places the duty of thanksgiving. (*Ib.*) To be silent in the divine praises, he calls the greatest of all punishments; and takes notice, that every one makes what he loves the chiefest object of his joy: as we see in the drunkard, the covetous, or the ambitious man: thus the prophet makes the heavenly Jerusalem the beginning of his joy; always bearing in mind, that this is his eternal country, in which he will be associated with the troops of angels, be received into the kingdom of God, and put in possession

God their ultimate end, and to his glory.(1) He breathes a sincere and ardent desire of martyrdom, and discovers a soul

(1) In Ps. i. p. 19, 20.

of its glory; he therefore finds all other things insipid, and knows no other comfort or joy, but in this hope, bearing always in mind, that the glorious inhabitants of that kingdom, never cease singing the divine praises, saying, Holy, holy, holy, &c. (in Ps. cxxxvi. n. 11. p. 494.) In another place he tells us, that the prophet bears not the delays of his body, (*moras corporis sui non patitur*;) sighing with the apostle to be dissolved and clothed with immortality; but earnestly praying, that he may find mercy, and be delivered from falling into the lake of torments. (in Ps. cxlii. n. 8, 9. p. 549.) During this exile to meditate on eternity, and on the divine law and judgments, ought to be our assiduous occupation, (in Ps. cxlii. n. 6. p. 548.) especially in time of tribulations and temptations. (in Ps. cxviii. l. 12. n. 10. p. 313.) The world is to be shunned, at least in spirit; first, because it is filled on every side with snares and dangers; secondly, that our souls may more freely soar above it, always thinking on God; hence, he says, our souls must be, as it were, spiritual birds of heaven, always raised high on the wing; and he cries out, "Thou art instructed in heavenly science: what hast thou to do with anxious worldly cares? thou hast renounced the world, what hast thou to do with its superfluous concerns? Why dost thou complain if thou art taken in a snare, by wandering in a strange land, who oughtest to restrain thy affections from straying from home? Say rather, Who will give me wings as of a dove, and I will fly, and will be at rest?" Ps. liv. 7. (in Ps. cxviii. l. 14. p. 328.) To build a house for God, that is, to prepare a dwelling for him in our souls, we must begin by banishing sin, and all earthly affections; (in Ps. xxxi. p. 73.) for Christ, who is wisdom, sanctity, and truth, cannot establish his reign in the breast of a fool, hypocrite, or sinner. (in Ps. xli. p. 60. ap. Marten. t. 9.) It is easy for God, by penance, to repair his work, howsoever it may have been defaced by vice, as a potter can restore or improve the form of a vessel, while the clay is yet moist: (in Ps. ii. p. 47.) but he often inculcates that repentance, or the confession of sin, is a solemn profession of sinning no more. (in Ps. cxxxvii. p. 498. in Ps. li. and cxviii. p. 263, &c.) Every thing that is inordinate in the affections must be cut off. "The prophet gave himself entirely to God, according to the tenor of his consecration of himself. Whatever lives in him, lives to God. His whole heart, his whole soul is fixed on God alone, and occupied in him, and he never loses sight of him. In all his works and thoughts, God is before his eyes." *Totum quod vivit, Deo vivit.* (Ps. cxviii. l. 14. n. 16. p. 327.) Upon these words, *I am thy servant*, Ps. cxviii. v. 125. he observes, that every Christian frequently repeats this, but most deny by their actions what they profess in words: "It is the privilege of the prophet to call himself the servant of God in every affection of his heart, in every circumstance and action of his life," &c. (in Ps. cxviii. l. 17. p. 339.) He teaches that the angels, patriarchs, and prophets are as it were mountains protecting the church; (in Ps. cxxiv. n. 6. p. 404.) and that holy angels attend and succour the faithful; (in Ps. cxxxvii. p. 499.) assist them in time of combat against the devils; (in Ps. lxxv. p. 178. and in Ps. cxxxiv. p. 475.) carry up their prayers to their heavenly Father with an eager zeal; and looking upon this ministry as an honour. (in Matt. c. 18. p. 699.) That the church of Christ is one, out of which, as out of the ark of Noah, no one can be saved. (in Ps. cxlvi. xiv. cxviii, and cxvii. in Matt. c. 4. and 7. De Trinit. l. 7. p. 917.) He mentions fast days of precept, the violation of which renders a Christian a slave of the devil, a vessel of death, and fuel of hell. (in Ps. cxviii. l. 18. p. 349.) This crime he joins with pride and fornication,

fearless of death and torments. He had the greatest veneration for truth, sparing no pains in its pursuit, and dreading no dangers in its defence.

as sins at the sight of which every good Christian ought to pine away with grief and zeal, according to the words of Ps. cxviii. v. 139. Saint Hilary seems to have explained the whole Psalter, though only part is recovered by the editors of his works. To the comments published by Dom Coutant at Paris, in 1693, the marquis Scipio Maffei added some others on several other Psalms, in his edition at Verona, in 1730. Dom Martenne, in 1733, published others on certain other Psalms, which he had discovered in a manuscript at Anchin, in his *Amplissima Monumentorum Collectio*, t. 9. p. 55. These comments on the Psalms, St. Hilary compiled after his exile, as appears from certain allusions to his books on the Trinity, and from his frequent reflections against the Arians. Nothing of this is found in his commentary on Saint Matthew, which Dom Coutant shows to have been the first of his works in the order of time, composed soon after he was raised to the episcopal dignity. He here and there borrows short passages from Origen, but adheres closer to the literal sense, though he sometimes has recourse to the allegorical, for the sake of some moral instruction. St. Hilary is one of the first who published any Latin comments in the holy scriptures. Rheticius, bishop of Autun, and St. Victorinus of Passau, though the latter wrote in Greek, had opened the way in the West in the beginning of the same century. St. Hilary, in this commentary on St. Matthew, excellently inculcates in few words the maxims of christian virtue, especially fraternal charity and meekness, by which our souls pass to divine charity and peace: (in Matt. c. 4. v. 18, 19. p. 626.) and the conditions of fasting and prayer, though for the exposition of our Lord's prayer, he refers to that of St. Cyprian; adding that Tertullian has left us also a very suitable work upon it; but that his subsequent error has weakened the authority of his former writings which may deserve approbation. (in c. 5. p. 630.) The road to heaven he shows to be exceedingly narrow, because even among Christians very few sincerely despise the world, and labour strenuously to subdue their flesh and all their passions, and to shun all the incentives of vice. (in c. 6. p. 368.) St. Peter he calls the Prince of the College of the Apostles, and the Porter of Heaven, and extols the authority of the keys conferred upon him. (in Matt. c. 7. p. 642. in c. 16. p. 690. Also l. 6. de Trin. p. 891, 903, 904.) He proves that Christ in his bloody sweat, grieved more for the danger of his disciples and other causes, than for his own death; because he had in his last supper already consecrated his blood to be poured forth for the remission of sin. *Numquid pati ipse nolebat! Atquin superius fundendum in remissionem peccatorum corporis sui sanguinem consecraverat.* (S. Hilary in Matt. c. 31. p. 743.) His twelve books on the Trinity he compiled during his banishment in Phrygia, between the years 356 and 359, as is clear from his own express testimony, and that of St. Jerom. In the first book of this immortal monument of his admirable genius and piety, he beautifully shows that man's felicity is only to be found in God; and that the light of reason suffices to demonstrate this, which he illustrates by an account of his own conversion to the faith. After this he takes notice, that we can learn only by God's revelation, his nature, or what he is, he being the competent witness of himself, who is known only by himself. (n. 18. p. 777.) In the second book he explains the Trinity, which we profess in the form of baptism, and says, that faith alone in believing, and sincerity and devotion in adoring, this mystery ought to suffice, without disputing or prying; and laments, that by the blasphemies of the Sabellians and Arians, who perverted the true sense of the scriptures, he was compelled to dispute of things ineffable and incomprehensible, which

The Emperor Constantius, having laboured for several years to compel the eastern churches to embrace Arianism, came into the West; and after the overthrow of the tyrant Magnentius, made some stay at Arles, whilst his Arian bishops held a council there, in which they engaged Saturninus, the impious bishop of that city, in their party, in 353. A bolder Arian council at Milan, in 355, held during the residence of the emperor in that city, required all to sign the condemnation of St. Athanasius. Such as refused to comply were banished; among whom were St. Eusebius of Vercelli, Lucifer of Cagliari, and St. Dionysius of Milan, into whose see Auxentius, the Arian, was intruded. St. Hilary wrote on that occasion his first book to Constantius, in which he mildly entreated him to restore peace to the church. He separated himself from the three Arian bishops in the West, Ursacius, Valens, and Saturninus, and exhibited an accusation against the last in a synod at Beziers. But the emperor, who

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only necessity can excuse. (n. 25.) He then proves the eternal generation of the Son, the procession of the Holy Ghost, and their consubstantiality in one nature. (l. 2. & 3.) He checks their presumption in pretending to fathom the Trinity, by showing that they cannot understand many miracles of Christ or corporeal things, which yet they confess to be most certain. (l. 3. n. 19, 20, 24.) He detects and confutes the subtleties of the Arians, in their various confessions of faith, (l. 4, 5, 6.) also of the Sabellians and Photinians; (l. 7.) and demonstrates the divinity of Christ, from the confession of St. Peter, &c. (l. 6.) and of the very Jews, who were more sincere than the Arians, acknowledging that Christ called himself the natural Son of God. (John x. 31, &c. l. 7. n. 2, 3. p. 931.) The natural unity of the Father and Son, he demonstrates from that text, "I and my Father are one," and others, (l. 8.) and observes that both from the testimony of Christ in the holy scriptures, and from the faith of the church, we believe without doubting the Eucharist to be the true body and blood of Christ. (l. 8. n. 14. p. 955, 956.) He answers several objections from Scripture, (l. 9.) and shows, there was something in Christ (viz. the divine person, &c.) which did not suffer in his passion. (l. 10.) Other objections he confutes, (l. 11.) and in his last book defends the eternity of the Son of God. Between August in 358, and May in 359, St. Hilary, after he had been three years in banishment, and was still in Asia, published his book on Synods, to inform the Catholics in Gaul, Britain, and Germany, what judgment they ought to form of several synods held lately in the East, chiefly by the Arians and Semi-Arians: a work of great use in the history of those times, and in which St. Hilary's prudence, humility, modesty, greatness of soul, constancy, invincible meekness, and love of peace shine forth. In this work he mollifies certain expressions of the Semi-Arians in their councils, because writing before the council of Rimini, he endeavoured to gain them by this method, whereas he at other times severely condemned the same: as did also St. Athanasius, in his book on the same subject, and under the same title, which he composed after the council of Rimini, and expressly to show the variations of those heretics. (See Coutant, vit. S. Hilar. p. c. ci. et præf. in S. Hilar. de Synodis, p. 1147.) Fifteen fragment of St. Hilary's history of the councils of Rimini and

information of the matter from Saturninus, had sent an order to Julian, then Cæsar, and surnamed after the apostate, who at that time commanded in Gaul, for St. Hilary's immediate banishment into Phrygia, together with St. Rhodanius, bishop of Toulouse. The bishops in Gaul being almost all orthodox, remained in communion with St. Hilary, and would not suffer the intrusion of any one into his see, which in his absence he continued to govern by his priests. The saint went into banishment about the middle of the year 356, with as great alacrity as another would take a journey of pleasure, and never entertained the least disquieting thought of hardships, dangers, or enemies, having a soul above both the smiles and frowns of the world, and fixed only on God. He remained in exile somewhat upwards of three years, which time he employed in composing several learned works. The principal and most esteemed of these is that *On the Trinity, against the Arians*, in twelve books. In them he proves the consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He teaches that the church is one, by separating from which all heresies spring; but that by this she is distinguished, as standing always one, always alone against them all, and confounding them all: whereas they, by perpetual divisions, tear each other in pieces, and so become the subject of her triumph. (1) He proves that Arianism cannot be the faith of Christ, because not revealed to St. Peter, upon whom the church was built and

(1) Lib. 7. de Trinit. n. 4. p. 917.

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Seleucia furnish important materials for the history of Arianism, particularly of the council of Rimini. In his first book to the emperor Constantius, which he wrote in 355 or 356, he conjures that prince with tears to restore peace to the church, and leave the decision of ecclesiastical causes to its pastors. The excellent request, which he presented to Constantius at Constantinople, in 360, is called his second book to that prince. The third book ought to be styled, with Coutant, *Against Constantius*: for in it St. Hilary directs it to the Catholics, (n. 2. & 12,) though he often uses an apostrophe to Constantius. The saint wrote it five years after the council of Milan, in 355, as he testifies; consequently in 360, after that prince had rejected his second request; but it was only published after the death of that emperor, in the following year, as is clear from St. Jerom. He says, Constantius, by artifices and flattery, was a more dangerous persecutor than Nero and Decius: he tells him, "Thou receivest the priests with a kiss, as Christ was betrayed by one: thou bowest thy head to receive their blessing, that thou mayest trample on their faith: thou entertainest them at thy table, as Judas went from table to betray his master." Fleury, l. 14. n. 26, bids us observe in these words, with what respect emperors then treated bishops. St. Hilary in his elegant book against Auxentius, gives the Catholics an account of his conferences with that heretic at Milan in 364.



secured for ever; for whose faith Christ prayed, that it might never fail; who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whose judiciary sentence on earth is that of heaven; (1) all which arguments he frequently urges. (2) He proves the divinity of Christ by the miracles wrought at the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs, and by their relics: for the devils themselves confess Christ's Godhead, and roar and flee at the presence of the venerable bones of his servants, (3) which he also mentions and urges in his invective against Constantius. (4) In 358, he wrote his book *On Synod*, or *On the Faith of the Orientals*, to explain the terms and variation of the eastern Arians in their synods.

In his exile he was informed, that his daughter Apra, whom he had left in Gaul, had thoughts of embracing the married state; upon which he implored Christ, with many tears, to bestow on her the precious jewel of virginity. He sent her a letter that is still extant, in which he acquaints her, that if she contemned all earthly things, spouse, sumptuous garments, and riches, Christ had prepared for her, and had shown unto him, at his prayers and tears, an inestimable never-fading diamond, infinitely more precious than she was able to frame to herself an idea of. He conjures her by the God of heaven, and entreats her not to make void his anxiety for her, nor to deprive herself of so incomparable a good. Fortunatus assures us, that the original letter was kept with veneration in the church of Poitiers, in the sixth century, when he wrote, and that Apra followed his advice, and died happily at his feet after his return.\* St. Hilary sent to her with this letter two hymns, composed by himself; one for the evening, which does not seem to have reached our times; the other for the morning, which is the hymn *Lucis largitor splendide*.

The emperor, by an unjust usurpation in the affairs of the church, assembled a council of Arians, at Seleucia in Isauria, to undermine the great council of Nice. St. Hilary, who had

(1) L. 6. n. 37, 38. p. 904.

(2) In Ps. 131. n. 4. p. 447. in cap. 16. Matt. n. 7. p. 690.

(3) Lib. 11. de Trinit. n. 3. (4) Lib. 3. adv. Constant. n. 8. p. 1243. Ed. Ben.

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\* This letter is commended by the most judicious critics, Baronius, Tillemont, Fleury, and Contant, a monk of the congregation of St. Maur, in his edition of the works of St. Hilary, and others. The style is not pompous, but adapted to the capacity of a girl of thirteen years of age.

then passed four years in banishment, in Phrygia, was invited thither by the Semi-Arians, who hoped from his lenity that he would be useful to their party, in crushing the staunch Arians, that is, those who adhered strictly to the doctrine of Arius. But no human considerations could daunt his courage. He boldly defended the decrees of Nice, till at last, tired out with hearing the blasphemies of the heretics, he withdrew to Constantinople. The weak emperor was the dupe sometimes of the Arians, and at other times of the Semi-Arians. These last prevailed at Seleucia, in September 359, as the former did, in a council held at Constantinople, in the following year, 360, where having the advantage, they procured the banishment of the Semi-Arians, less wicked than themselves. St. Hilary, who had withdrawn from Seleucia to Constantinople, presented to the emperor a request, called, his second book to Constantius, begging the liberty of holding a public disputation about religion with Saturninus, the author of his banishment. He presses him to receive the unchangeable apostolic faith, injured by the late innovations, and smartly rallies the fickle humour of the heretics, who were perpetually making new creeds, and condemning their old ones, having made four within the compass of the foregoing year; so that faith was become that of the times, not that of the gospels, and that there were as many faiths as men, as great a variety of doctrine as of manners, and as many blasphemies as vices.(1) He complains that they had their yearly and monthly faiths; that they made creeds to condemn and repent of them; and that they formed new ones to anathematize those that adhered to their old ones. He adds, that every one had scripture texts, and the words *Apostolic Faith*, in their mouths, for no other end than to impose on weak minds: for by attempting to change faith, which is unchangeable, faith is lost; they correct and amend, till weary of all, they condemn all. He therefore exhorts them to return to the haven, from which the gusts of their party spirit and prejudice had driven them, as the only means to be delivered out of their tempestuous and perilous confusion. The issue of this challenge was, that the Arians, dreading such a trial, persuaded the emperor to rid the East of a man, that never ceased to disturb its peace, by sending him

(1) Facta est fides temporum, potius quàm evangeliorum, l. 2. ad Const. p. 1227. Tot nunc fides existere, quot voluntates. ib. Annuas atque mœnstruas de Deo fides decernimus, decretis pœnitemus, pœnitentes defendimus, defensores anathematizamus. ib. p. 1228.

back into Gaul; which he did, but without reversing the sentence of his banishment, in 360.

St. Hilary returned through Illyricum and Italy to confirm the weak. He was received at Poitiers with the greatest demonstrations of joy and triumph, where his old disciple, St. Martin, rejoined him, to pursue the exercises of piety under his direction. A synod in Gaul, convoked at the instance of St. Hilary, condemned that of Rimini, which, in 359, had omitted the word *Consubstantial*. Saturninus proving obstinate, was excommunicated and deposed for his heresy and other crimes. Scandals were removed, discipline, peace, and purity of faith were restored, and piety flourished. The death of Constantius put an end to the Arian persecution. St. Hilary was the mildest of men, full of condescension and affability to all; yet seeing this behaviour ineffectual, he composed an invective against Constantius, in which he employed severity, and the harshest terms; and for which undoubtedly he had reasons that are unknown to us. This piece did not appear abroad till after the death of that emperor. Our saint undertook a journey to Milan, in 364, against Auxentius, the Arian usurper of the see, and in a public disputation obliged him to confess Christ to be true God, of the same substance and divinity with the Father. St. Hilary indeed saw through his hypocrisy; but this dissembling heretic imposed so far on the emperor Valentinian, as to pass for orthodox. Our saint died at Poitiers, in the year 368, on the thirteenth of January, or on the first of November, for his name occurs in very ancient Martyrologies on both these days. In the Roman breviary his office is celebrated on the fourteenth of January. The one is probably that of some translation of his relics. The first was made at Poitiers in the reign of Clovis I. on which see Cointe.(1) From St. Gregory of Tours it appears, that before his time some part of St. Hilary's relics was honoured in a church in Limousin.(2) Alcuin mentions the veneration of the same at Poitiers;(3) and it is related that his relics were burned by the Huguenots at Poitiers.(4) But this we must understand of some small portion, or of the dust remaining in his tomb. For his remains were translated from Poitiers to the abbey of St. Denys, near Paris, as is proved by the tradition of that abbey, a writer of the abbey of Richenow,

(1) Cointe Annal. Fr. ad ann. 538. n. 41, 42, 43. (2) L. de Gl. Conf. c. 2.

(3) Alcuin, Hom. de S. Willibrordo.

(4) Baillet, Vie de S. Hilaire.

In the ninth century,(1) and other monuments.(2) Many miracles performed by St. Hilary are related by Venantius Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, and are the subject of a whole book added to his life, which seems to have been written by another Fortunatus. St. Gregory of Tours, Flodoard, and others, have mentioned several wrought at his tomb. Dom Coutant, the most judicious and learned Maurist monk, has given an accurate edition of his works, in one volume in folio, at Paris, in 1693, which was reprinted at Verona by the Marquess Scipio Maffei, in 1730, together with additional comments on several Psalms.

St. Hilary observes, that singleness of heart is the most necessary condition of faith and true virtue, "For Christ teaches that only those who become again as it were little children, and by the simplicity of that age cut off the inordinate affections of vice, can enter the kingdom of heaven. These follow and obey their father, love their mother; are strangers to covetousness, ill-will, hatred, arrogance, and lying, and are inclined easily to believe what they hear. This disposition of affections opens the way to heaven. We must therefore return to the simplicity of little children, in which we shall bear some resemblance to our Lord's humility." (3) This, in the language of the Holy Ghost, is called the foolishness of the cross of Christ, (4) in which consists true wisdom. That prudence of the flesh and worldly wisdom, which is the mother of self-sufficiency, pride, avarice, and vicious curiosity, the source of infidelity, and the declared enemy of the spirit of Christ, is banished by this holy simplicity; and in its stead are obtained true wisdom, which can only be found in a heart freed from the clouds of the passions, perfect prudence, which, as St. Thomas shows, is the fruit of the assemblage of all virtues, and a divine light which grace fails not to infuse. The simplicity, which is the mother of Christian discretion, is a stranger to all artifice, design, and dissimulation, to all views or desires of self-interest, and to all undue respect or consideration of creatures. All its desires and views are reduced to this alone, of attaining to the perfect union with God. Unfeignedly to desire this one thing, to belong to

(1) Ap. Mah. anal T. 4. p. 644

(2) Aimonin. l. 4. c. 17 and 33. Coutant, Vit. S. Hilar. p. cxxiv. cxxv. cxxxix.

(3) S. Hilar. in Matt. c. 18. v. i. p. 698.

(4) 1 Cor. i. 17. and iii. 18. S. Hilar l. 3. de Trin. n. 24, 25. p. 822, 823.

God alone, to arrive at his pure love, and to do his will in all things, is that simplicity or singleness of heart of which we speak, and which banishes all inordinate affections of the heart, from which arise the most dangerous errors of the understanding. This is the essential disposition of every one who sincerely desires to live by the spirit of Christ. That divine spouse of souls, loves to communicate himself to such. (1) His conversation (or as another version has it, his secret) is with the simple. (2) His delight is in those who walk with simplicity. (3) This is the characteristic of all the saints; (4) whence the Holy Ghost cries out, "Approach him not with a double heart." (5) That worldly wisdom is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. (6) Its intoxication blinds men, and shuts their eyes to the light of divine revelation. They arrogate to themselves the exclusive privilege of learning and clear understanding: but the scepticism, the pitiful inconsistencies, and monstrous extravagancies which characterise their writings and discourses, make us blush to see so strong an alliance of ignorance and presumption; and lament that the human mind should be capable of falling into a state of so deplorable degeneracy. Among the fathers of the church we admire men the most learned of their age, the most penetrating and most judicious, and at the same time, the most holy and sincere; who, being endowed with true simplicity of heart, discovered in the mysteries of the cross the secrets of infinite wisdom, which they made their study, and the rule of their actions.

#### ST. FELIX OF NOLA, P. AND C.

It is observed by the judicious Tillemont, with regard to the life of this saint, that we might doubt of its wonderful circumstances, were they not supported by the authority of a Paulinus; but that great miracles ought to be received with the greater veneration, when authorized by incontestable vouchers.

St. Felix was a native of Nola, a Roman colony in Campania, fourteen miles from Naples, where his father Hermias, who was by birth a Syrian, and had served in the army, had purchased an estate and settled himself. He had two sons, Felix and Hermias, to whom at his death he left his patrimony. The younger sought preferment in the world among the lovers of

(1) 1 Par. xxix. 17.

(2) Prov. iii. 32.

(3) Prov. xi. 20.

(4) 2 Cor. i. 12.

(5) Eccles. i. 39.

(6) Rom. viii. 7.