

to the relief of the unhappy sufferers, drew tears of joy from St. Jerom's eyes. This father dedicated to him his *Commentaries* on the Prophet Zachary. St. Exuperius was not witness of the taking of Toulouse by the barbarians, God having spared him so poignant an affliction. He was still alive in 409, since St. Paulinus of Nola, who wrote in this year, reckons him among the illustrious bishops who then adorned the Gallican church. Neither the place nor year of his death are known. Pope Innocent addressed to him the decretal so famous in church history. It is divided into a number of articles relating to church discipline. St. Exuperius is honoured at Toulouse on this day, and the feast of his translation celebrated on the 14th of June. See St. Jerom, Ep. 4, 10, 11, et *Præf.* in lib. 1. et 2 *Comm.* in Zach. Catel, *Hist. de Languedoc*, l. 5, &c.

## SEPTEMBER XXIX.

### THE DEDICATION OF ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, OR, THE FESTIVAL OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL THE HOLY ANGELS.

THIS festival has been kept with great solemnity on the 29th of September ever since the fifth age, and was certainly celebrated in Apulia in 493. The dedication of the famous church of St. Michael on Mount Gargano, in Italy,(1) gave occasion to the institution of this feast in the West, which is hence called in the *Martyrologies* of St. Jerom, Bede, and others, The dedication of St. Michael. The dedication of St. Michael's church in Rome, upon Adrian's Mole, which was performed by Pope Boniface IV. in 610, and that of several other churches in the West, in honour of this arch-angel, were performed on this same day.\* Churches were like-

(1) See Baillet, Thomassin, &c.

\* This festival has been celebrated in the church with great solemnity ever since the sixth century. It was enacted in the ecclesiastical laws of King Ethelred in England, in the year 1014, "That every Christian who is of age, fast three days on bread and water, and raw herbs, before the feast of St. Michael, and let every man go to confession and to church barefoot.—Let every priest with his people go in procession three days barefoot, and let every one's commons for three days be prepared without anything of flesh, as if they themselves were to eat it, both in meat and drink, and let all this be distributed to the poor. Let every servant be excused from labour these three days that he may the better perform

wise erected in the East, in honour of St. Michael and other holy angels, from the time when the Christian worship was publicly established by the conversion of Constantine, doubtless upon the model of little oratories and churches, which had been formerly raised in the intervals of the general persecutions, in which storms they were again thrown down. Sozomen informs us, that Constantine the Great built a famous church in honour of this glorious archangel, called Michaelion, and that in it the sick were often cured, and other wonders wrought through the intercession of St. Michael. This historian assures us, that he had often experienced such relief here himself; and he mentions the miraculous cures of Aquilin, an eminent lawyer, and of Probian, a celebrated physician, wrought in the same place. This church stood about four miles from Constantinople; a monastery was afterwards built contiguous to it. Four churches in honour of St. Michael stood in the city of Constantinople itself; their number was afterwards increased to fifteen, which were built by several emperors.(1)

Though only St. Michael be mentioned in the title of this festival, it appears from the prayers of the church that all the good angels are its object, together with this glorious prince and tutelar angel of the church. On it we are called upon, in a particular manner, to give thanks to God for the glory which the angels enjoy, and to rejoice in their happiness. Secondly, to thank him for his mercy to us in constituting such glorious beings to minister to our salvation, by aiding and assisting us. Thirdly, to join them in adoring and praising God with all possible ardour, desiring and praying that we may do his will on earth

(1) See Du Cange, *Descript. Constantinop.*

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his fast, or let him work what he will for himself. These are the three days, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, next before the feast of St. Michael. If any servant break his fast, let him make satisfaction with his hide, (bodily stripes,) let the poor freeman pay thirty pence, the king's thane a hundred and thirty shillings; and let the money be divided to the poor." See Sir Henry Spelman's *Councils*, vol. i. p. 530, and Johnson's *Collection of the Canons of the Church of England*, t. 1, an. 1014. Michaelmas-day is mentioned among the great feasts in the *Saxon Chronicle* on the year 1011; in the *Saxon Menology* of the ninth century, published by Mr. Wanley (in *Lingue. Aquilon. Thes.* l. 2, p. 107,) and in the *English Calendar* published by Dr. Hicks, (in his *Saxon Grammar*, p. 102,

with the utmost fidelity, fervour, and purity of affection, as it is done by these blessed spirits in heaven; and that we may study to sanctify our souls in imitation of the spotless angels to whom we are associated. Lastly, we are invited to honour, and implore the intercession and succour of the holy angels.

Supreme honour called *Latria* is essentially reserved to God alone; nor can it ever be given to any creature without incurring the most heinous guilt of idolatry, and high treason against the majesty of God. This honour is paid by the offering of sacrifice, or by any direct or indirect acknowledgment of the divinity or any divine attribute residing in another. But there is an inferior or subaltern honour which is due to superior excellency in creatures. Such is that civil honour which the law of God expressly commands us to pay to parents, princes, magistrates, and all superiors; also some degree of a religious honour which the scriptures and law of nature teach us to be due to priests or the ministers of God, and which even the most wicked of kings often paid to prophets, who, as to the world, were mean and obscure persons. This inferior honour differs from divine or supreme honour, as much as infinity in the object does from what is finite; nor can it be any way derogatory from that which is due to God, whom it honours in his creatures, whose perfections it acknowledges merely to be its gifts. The respect which is shown to a governor or an ambassador is not injurious, but is highly agreeable and honourable to his master, on whose account it is paid, and whose dignity and authority are considered in those whom he has made in any part the depositaries of it. This duty which the law of nature dictates, is inculcated by those words of the apostle: *Render to all men their due.—Honour to whom honour.*(1) Hence St. Bernard expresses no more than what all men must necessarily approve, when he says: "Give to every one honour according to his dignity."(2) Honour being no more than a testimony which we bear to another's excellency, who can deny this to be due to the most sublime, most perfect, most holy, and most glorious heavenly spirits? Abraham prostrated himself before the angels whom he received in his tent.(3) Daniel did the

(1) Rom. xiii. 7

(2) S. Bern. Sermon. de Obed.

(3) Gen. xviii. 2.

same before one whom he saw upon the Tigris.(1) God commanded the Israelites to fear and respect the angel whom he sent to be their conductor into the promised land.(2) The first consideration for which the holy angels claim our respect, is that of the excellency of their nature, in which they are essentially of an order superior to men, being pure spirits, exempt from the weaknesses of our frail earthly frame, and endued with more noble faculties and qualities, suited to the perfection and simplicity of their unbodied and uncompounded being. Secondly, the gifts of grace and glory are proportioned in them to the superiority of their nature; and the scriptures speak of angels as absolutely above men, though some particular saints may, for ought we know, enjoy a greater felicity than many angels; and the Blessed Virgin is exalted in glory above all the heavenly spirits. Nor can any order of the highest spirits boast of an honour or dignity equal to that which is conferred on mankind by the mystery of the incarnation, in which the Son of God, who took not the nature of angels, assumed that of men,(3) and as man is constituted by his Father Lord of all creatures. Had the blessed angels no other title to command our veneration, this alone suffices, that they enjoy a state of bliss and glory, are the high courtiers of heaven, who stand always in the presence of God, are his officers who surround his throne, and his faithful ministers in executing in all things his holy will.

A circumstance in the blessed angels which above all others is most amiable and pleasing to devout souls, and must particularly excite their praise and reverence, is the constant and perfect fidelity of these holy spirits to God. Their innocence and sanctity were never tarnished with the least spot or stain, the purity of their affections was never debased by the least mixture of any thing inordinate, and the ardour with which they love God, and exert all their powers to serve him, and do his holy will, never admits the least abatement. If we love God, and rejoice when he is served and praised; if we grieve to see him forgotten and offended by men on earth; if we have the least spark of zeal for his glory, nothing will give us greater joy than to consider with what perfect fidelity he is served, and with what ardour and purity of affection he is loved and praised

(1) Dan. x. 5. 9

(2) Exod. xxiii. 21

(3) Hebr. ii. 16.

in heaven. Even those who serve him best on earth, acquit themselves of these duties very imperfectly amidst the snares and distractions of this life. But the blessed angels are creatures perfectly holy, who, without either division or abatement in their affections, or interruption in their happy employment, obey, love, and glorify God with all their powers. Always employed in the delightful contemplation of his infinite goodness, and other amiable perfections, swallowed up in the ocean of his love, they never cease crying out with all their might: *Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of Hosts; all the earth is full of his glory, which shineth forth in all his works.*(1) *They cease not day or night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.*(2) In the most profound annihilation of themselves they give all honour and glory to him alone, and professing their crowns to be entirely his gifts they cast them at his feet, and sing: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, &c.*(3) Burning with the most ardent love, and the most eager desire to praise more and more perfectly his infinite goodness and greatness, they continually repeat their hymns with new jubilation and an earnestness to outdo themselves, as they are every moment inebriated with fresh overflowing joy, and pierced more deeply with the darts of his sweet love. The psalmist, who felt in some degree the impetuosity of this impulse in his own breast, knew no stronger motive to invite them to love and praise God with all their powers, than their own insatiable and boundless ardour for this holy duty and employment. He therefore cries out to them: *Bless the Lord, all you his angels; you that are mighty in strength, and execute his word, hearken to the voice of his orders. Bless the Lord, all you his hosts; you his ministers who do his will.*(4) Can we call to mind those holy and glorious spirits without being penetrated with love and veneration? O truly happy creatures! we also desire to love and praise God; and we condemn the faintness of our desires. We rejoice in your ardour, and by it we pray you incessantly to praise God both for yourselves and us, pouring forth all your affections, and enlarging and ex-

(1) Isa. vi. 3.

(3) Ibid. v. 11

(2) Apoc. iv. 8.

(4) Ps. cii. 20, 21.

erting all your powers, with the utmost effort of your strength; because he is infinitely above the love and praise of all creatures: he infinitely transcends all things out of himself, nor can the most perfect homage of all created beings ever be commensurate to his greatness, goodness, mercy, and boundless majesty. Whilst we invite you to his praise, with what regret, alas! do we reflect that we have often sinned, and daily continue to heap offences against him! Oh! may we cease to sin; may your flames, holy angels, kindle a fire of the like holy love in our souls. In our devotions we will unite our praises with those which you incessantly pour forth in your heavenly choirs, and animate ourselves to fervour by your example in this great employment.

Another motive why we ought to love and honour the holy angels is our relation and close affinity with them. Our souls are spiritual and immortal like them; and by sanctifying grace are their co-heiresses and fellow-members. They are glorious citizens of heaven, and we are called to be one day their companions. They will receive an additional *accidental* glory from our company, who are to repair their losses, and fill the seats forfeited by their apostate fellows. We are to be eternally united with them in bliss and love, and are already united by grace, and the communion of saints. They are called the sons of God,<sup>(1)</sup> so are we. And in the communion of saints, which we profess in our creed, the good angels are comprised; for we enjoy with them a holy partnership founded on many titles, and we are linked with them by many sacred bands and alliances. By virtue of this communion we owe them love and veneration, and receive from them many benefits and succours, especially by their patronage and intercession.

God is pleased frequently to employ the ministry of his angels in affording us many helps, and in the government of this lower world. He can do all things by the simple act of his own will, and stands not in need of ministers to execute his decrees, as earthly kings do. It is not from any want of power, but merely from his infinite goodness and wisdom that he employs superior spirits in various dispensations of his providence

(1) Job i. 6, xxxviii. 7.

concerning men. Zeal for the divine honour, fidelity in executing his will, and affection and charity for us make these holy spirits most diligent in their commission. Upon how many occasions were Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and other patriarchs and prophets favoured with apparitions and visions of these holy spirits! How many mysteries did they reveal! How many blessings did they bring from God sometimes to the church in general, sometimes to his faithful servants in particular! How many evils, both public and private, do they often avert! An angel sent by God relieved and comforted Agar in her despair.(1) Other angels delivered Lot from the burning of Sodom,(2) the three children from the flames,(3) Daniel from the lions,(4) St. Peter from his chains,(5) and the apostles out of their dungeon.(6) God gave his law to the Jews by an angel who was his ambassador.(7) By angels he showed to St. John the future state of his church,(8) and many wonderful visions to Daniel(9) and other prophets. They were his messengers in the execution of the principal mysteries relating to the incarnation, birth, flight, temptation, and agony of Christ. An angel conducted the Israelites into the land of promise.(10) The apostle St. Jude mentions a contest which St. Michael had with the devil about the burial of the body of Moses, and recommends humility, piety, and modesty in behaviour by the example of this archangel, who on that occasion used no curse, no harsh or reproachful word, but to repress the malicious fiend only said: *The Lord command thee*.(11) St. John describes a great battle of St. Michael and the good angels with the devil and his angels,(12) which seems by the context not to belong properly to the expulsion of these latter out of heaven when they sinned, but to some efforts of the evil spirits, when they were vanquished by Christ in the mystery of our redemption. By this victory of St. Michael we see the concern of the good angels for the salvation of man, and the activity and success with which they exert themselves in his

(1) Gen. xvi. 8, xxi. 17.

(2) Gen. xxii. 19.

(3) Dan. iii. 49.

(4) Dan. vi. 22.

(5) Act. xii. 7.

(6) Act. v. 19.

(7) Act. vii. 52, and Heb. ii. 2.

(8) Apoc. i. 1.

(9) Dan. viii. ix. x.

(10) Exod. xiv. 21, and Numb. xx. 18.

(11) Jude 9.

(12) Apoc. xii. 7.

behalf. Angels carried the soul of Lazarus into the place of rest.(1) Their host will descend with Christ at the last day, and will assemble men before his tribunal.(2) The holy scriptures assure us, that the angels are the ministers of God appointed to execute his orders, and to do his will in our favour.(3) God promises their ministry and succour to all who serve him.(4) Who is not astonished at the condescension with which the archangel Raphael accompanied the young Toby, and rescued him from all dangers? An angel wrestled all night with Jacob: another carried Habauc by the hair to Babylon, to feed Daniel in the lions' den.

That the good angels often intercede with God for us, and that their patronage is piously invoked, is an article of the Catholic faith. Jacob entreated with earnestness the angel with whom he had wrestled, that he would give him his blessing:(5) and on his death-bed he prayed the angel who had conducted and protected him, to bless his grandchildren Ephraim and Manasses.(6) If the angels give us their blessing, and do us greater offices, can we imagine that they do not pray to God for us? If Jacob prayed to his angel, this was certainly consonant to true religion and the practice of pious persons. The devils entreat God for permission to use their natural craft and strength to assail men with extraordinary temptations, as they did with regard to Job(7) and the apostles.(8) Christ prayed for St. Peter, that his faith should not fail under the assaults of Satan. The angels who are solicitous for us oppose these efforts of Satan against us, by praying for us, and otherwise. The prophet Daniel was informed in his visions how vigorously the guardian angel of Persia interposed in favour of that country, and much more what good offices Michael and other angels did for the Jews, in removing obstacles which retarded their return from the captivity. The angel Gabriel told Daniel that he had exerted his efforts for this purpose in Persia one-and-twenty days, and that Michael, the prince or guardian angel of the Jews, came to his help,(9) so that they

(1) Luke xvi. 23.

(3) Ps. ciii. 4, cii. 20.

Gen. xxxii. 26.

(7) Job i.

(2) Matt. xxiv. &amp;c.

(4) Ps. xxxiii. 8, cx. 11, Baruch vi. 6.

(6) Gen. xlviii. 26.

(8) Luke xxii. 41.

(9) Dan. x. 13



conquered the impediments. Gabriel added: (1) *From the first year, of Darius the Mede, I stood up that he might be strengthened and confirmed*; viz.: to promote the deliverance of God's people. The same prophet, speaking of the cruel persecution of Antiochus, says: (2) *At that time Michael shall rise up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people*. This implies that Michael would support the Machabees, and other defenders of God's people, whose protector this archangel was. *Standing up* for them must mean principally by praying for them, as it is said of the priests and Levites. (3) More ancient books of the holy scripture mention visible succours of holy angels which the Jews, in their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt, and passage to Canaan experienced; also many among the patriarchs, several among the judges of the Jewish nation, and others. From the traditionary notion of such interpositions of good spirits in favour of men, the Gentiles derived one part of their monstrous idolatry, into which they fell by a blind abuse of the most sacred truths; of which Dr. Lucas, an eminent Protestant divine, writes as follows: (4) "When I read that angels are the ministering spirits of God; when I read in Daniel of the princes of Græcia and Persia, and find that provinces were committed to angels as the viceroys and lieutenants of God, I cannot think that those devout and charitable spirits did with less zeal in their provinces labour to promote the honour of God and the good of man, than evil spirits did the dishonour of the one, and the ruin of the other. And unless the frequent appearances of angels in the beginning had possessed men's minds with a firm persuasion that there was a constant commerce maintained between heaven and earth; and that spirits very frequently did visibly engage themselves in the protection and assistance of men; I cannot as much as imagine what foundation there could be for the numerous impostures of oracles, or upon what ground the custom of putting themselves under the patronage of some tutelar spirit, could so generally have prevailed in the pagan world. I do not therefore doubt but that the Gentile world received

(1) Dan. xi. 1.

(2) Dan. xii. 1.

(3) Deut. x. 8.

(4) Lucas's Inquiry after Happiness, t. 1, ch. 3, p. 74.

very many good offices and advantages from good angels, as well as suffered many mischiefs from evil ones," &c.

It is clear from several of the above-mentioned examples, and many other passages of the holy scriptures, that the good angels pray for us. The prophet Zacharias was favoured with a vision of angels in the seventieth year of the desolation of Jerusalem and the cities of Juda, dated from the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, in the ninth year of Sedecias; which seventieth year was the second of Darius Hystaspis, and the eighteenth from the beginning of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon, and the end of the captivity. The prophet saw an angel in the shape of a man (probably Michael, the protector of the Jews) standing in a grove of myrtle trees, and several angels, the guardians of other provinces, came to him and said: *We have walked through the earth, and behold, all the earth is inhabited, and is at rest.* Then the angel made this prayer: *O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Juda, with which thou hast been angry? This is now the seventieth year.*(1) The Lord answered his prayer, that he would return to Jerusalem in mercies, and that his house should be built in it. In the book of Job, Elihu says: (2) *If there shall be an angel speaking for him among thousands*; that is, if an angel chosen out of a thousand to be the guardian of a sinner, shall pray to God for him, and bring him to repentance, the sick sinner shall recover his health. The angel Raphael told Toby: *When thou didst pray with tears, I offered thy prayers to the Lord,*(3) doubtless to recommend them to God by his own intercession. St. John saw an angel offering to God the prayers of all the saints.(4) If the good angels pray for us, and often present our supplications to God, in order to strengthen them by their own prayers, they certainly know and hear our petitions. Jacob could not pray to the angel that he would bless his two boys,(5) if the angel could not hear him. Isaias had no sooner complained that his lips were defiled, but a seraph purified them with a burning coal from the altar.(6) How can the angels be offended at

(1) Zachar. i. 12.

(3) Tob. xii. 12.

(4) Gen. xlviii.

(2) Job xxxiii. 23.

(4) Apoc. viii. 3, 4.

(6) Isa. vi.

scandals given to the little ones, who are committed by God to their charge,(1) if they do not know them? How could they otherwise represent to God the afflictions of his people, as the prophets so often mention? In the first chapter of Zacharias the good angels (and the devil in the first and second chapters of Job) are said to walk over the earth, and to lay before God both the prayers and good works, and the neglects and sins of men; not as if he by his own all-piercing eye did not see them, but as witnesses of their actions, the ministers of divine providence in its dispensations towards them, and the patrons and defenders, or the accusers of our souls.

The church has always invoked, and paid a religious honour to the holy angels.\* Origen teaches, that they assist us in our devotions, and join their supplications to ours. "The angel of the Christian," says he, "offers his prayers to God through the only high priest; himself also praying for him who is committed to his charge."(2) He tells us, that the angels carry up our prayers to God, and bring back his blessings and gifts to us; but that Christians do not invoke or adore them as they do God.(3) He addresses a prayer to the angel of a person who

(1) Matt. xviii.

(2) L. 8, contra Cels. p. 400.

(3) L. 5, ib. p. 233.

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\* St. Paul condemns a superstitious worship of angels, (Coloss. ii. 18,) and the ancient council of Laodicea declares the same to be idolatry.—(Can. 35, t. 1, p. 468.) Here is meant a superstitious worship introduced by certain heretics. St. Jerom and St. Clement of Alexandria (l. 6, Strom. p. 636,) testify, that many Jews at that time adored the angels and stars. Among the heretics of the infant church, the Simonians, Cerinthians, and several others, pretended that this world was framed and governed by angels, with many ridiculous extravagancies concerning them, as we read in St. Irenæus, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Epiphanius, Tertullian, St. Austin, and Theodoret. Hence these heretics worshipped the angels, some in an idolatrous manner, others with superstitious notions and practices. This worship was evidently superstitious, and highly criminal, and was condemned as such. But we must not hence infer, says Balsamon, (who flourished in the twelfth century,) that the honour which is due to the angels was ever censured. (Comm. in Can. Conc. Laodic.) Estius thinks the superstitions of these heretics regarded the Genii or imaginary tutelary spirits of the idolaters, who derived their notions of them from a corrupted tradition concerning the angels, and who ascribed to them several divine attributes. At least these superstitions belonged to the fables of those heretics who ascribed to angels the framing of this world, and such a government of it as cannot, without idolatry, or at least without abominable superstition, be given to any creatures.

is going to be baptized, that he would instruct him.(1) The martyr Nemesian and his companions, writing to St. Cyprian, say: "Let us assist one another by our prayers, and beg that we may have God and Christ and the angels favourers in all our actions."(2) St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "The angelical powers are a succour to us in all good."(3) He prays the good angels to receive his soul at the hour of death; and threatens the devil with the sign of the cross, if he should approach him.(4) St. Ephrem says of heaven: "Where all the angels and saints of God reign, praying the Lord for us."(5) He repeats, that the angels with joy offer our prayers to God.(6) The English Protestants have retained in their book of Common Prayer the collect of this day, in which we desire Almighty God "to grant that, as his holy angels always do him service in heaven, so, by his appointment, they may defend and succour us upon earth."

If we desire to live for ever in the company of the holy angels, we must lead on earth the life of angels. We must learn here to converse with God by assiduous prayer and holy contemplation, and to walk in his presence by frequent aspirations, withdrawing our minds, as much as we can, from a vain distracting world; adoring and loving God, rejoicing in him, bending our wills cheerfully under all his appointments, and studying with our whole strength to obey his law, and fulfil his holy will in all things. We must also work our minds into the holy temper and dispositions of the blessed angels, putting on the same perfect humility, the same uninterrupted tranquillity, constancy, meekness, patience, pure and vehement love of God, and zeal for his glory, with all other virtues. Neither do certain transient acts suffice to denominate a person meek, humble, or virtuous; these dispositions must be wrought into his very frame, and be the firm, habitual, permanent, reigning affections of his soul. They must, as far as our state will allow, be pure without alloy, or mixture of anything inordinate or irregular. No one can be admitted into the society of the spotless angels, or stand in the presence of a God of infinite purity and sanctity; no one can find a place in the region of the blessed, who is not perfectly

(1) Hom. i. in Ezech. p. 391.

(3) Or. 43, p. 664.

(5) L. de. Locis Beatus

(2) Inter ep. S. Cypr. 77, p. 230.

(4) Carm. 22, t. 2, p. 84.

(6) S. Eubr. l. de Virgin. p. 129

without spot or blemish: *There shall not enter into it any thing defiled.* (1) All infection of inordinate passions or vicious self-love, must be purged away. How great a task have we upon our hands! but how noble and happy is the pursuit! Perfectly to subdue all our passions, to counteract and reform all our vicious inclinations, and to acquire, cherish, and constantly improve all virtues. This is not done by broken and interrupted essays and attempts, but by a vigorous and constant application of the means, and repeated fervent acts of all virtues.

### ST. THEODOTA, M.

TOWARDS the end of the reign of Licinius, on a Friday, in September, in the year 642 from the death of Alexander the Great, that is, of Christ 318, a persecution was raised at Philippi, not the city so called in Macedon, which was at that time comprised in the empire of Constantine, but that called Philippopolis, anciently Eumolpias, in Thrace.\* Agrippa, the prefect, on a certain festival of Apollo, had commanded that the whole city should offer a great sacrifice with him. Theodota, who had been formerly a harlot, was accused of refusing to conform, and being called upon by the president, answered him, that she had indeed been a grievous sinner, but could not add sin to sin, nor defile herself with a sacrilegious sacrifice. Her constancy encouraged seven hundred and fifty men (who were, perhaps, some troop of soldiers) to step forth, and professing themselves Christians, to refuse to join in the sacrifice. Theodota was cast into prison where she lay twenty days; all which time she employed in continual prayer. Being brought to the bar, as she entered the court she burst into tears, and prayed aloud that Christ would pardon the crimes of her past life, and arm her with strength, that she might be enabled to bear with constancy and patience the cruel torments she was

Apoc. xxi. 27.

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\* Constantine the Great declared openly in favour of the Christians in the West, after the defeat of Maxentius, and out of compliment to him, Licinius favoured them in the East. His colleague Maximin was a cruel persecutor; but his death, in 313, put an end to the persecution raised by Dioclesian, though it was afterwards revived in the East for a short time, when war broke out between Licinius and Constantine, in 318, and continued till the defeat of the former. Licinius seems to have begun his persecution in Thrace, where he then resided. St. Theodota received her crown in the first fury of this storm.

going to suffer. In her answers to the judge she confessed that she had been a harlot, but declared that she had become a Christian, though unworthy to bear that sacred name. Agrippa commanded her to be cruelly scourged. The pagans who stood near her, ceased not to exhort her to free herself from torments by obeying the president but for one moment. But Theodota remained constant, and under the lashes cried out: "I will never abandon the true God, nor sacrifice to lifeless statues." The president ordered her to be hoisted upon the rack, and her body to be torn with an iron comb. Under these torments she earnestly prayed to Christ, and said: "I adore you, O Christ, and thank you, because you have made me worthy to suffer this for your name." The judge, enraged at her resolution and patience, said to the executioner: "Tear her flesh again with the iron comb; then pour vinegar and salt into her wounds." She said: "So little do I fear your torments, that I entreat you to increase them to the utmost, that I may find mercy and attain to the greater crown." Agrippa next commanded the executioners to pluck out her teeth, which they violently pulled out one by one with pincers. The judge at length condemned her to be stoned. She was led out of the city, and, during her martyrdom, prayed thus: "O Christ, as you showed favour to Rahab the harlot, and received the good thief; so turn not your mercy from me." In this manner she died, and her soul ascended triumphant to heaven in the year of the Greeks 642. See her authentic Chaldaic Acts, published by Stephen Assemani, *Acta Martyr. Occid. t. 2, p. 221.*

## SEPTEMBER XXX.

### SAINT JEROM, PRIEST.

#### DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH.

From his epistles and other works, and from other fathers and ancient historians. See Tillemont, t. 12. Ceillier, t. 10, and his life compiled in French by Dom. Martianay, in 4to. in 1706, dedicated to the abbess of Lauzun; and that in Latin by Villarsi, in the Verona edition of his works. Consult also Orsi, l. 18, n. 51, t. 8, p. 113, l. 20, n. 31, t. 9, p. 77. *Dolci de rebus gestis S. Hieronymi*, 4to. Anconæ, 1750. Sülting, t. 8, Sept. p. 418, 699.

A. D. 420.

ST. JEROM, who is allowed to have been, in many respects,  
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