

SACRED LEGENDS.

FIFTH PAPER.

LEGENDS OF THE HOLY CROSS.

"If the Catholic Church," says Father Burke, "is simply and solely to enlighten the world by that faith that comes from the cross, it follows that the main position of the Church of God was to proclaim the cross in every land, to lift it up and hold it in honour and glory, to proclaim its significance and power, to place it hither and thither over the earth, to let it go before the face of the Lord; for He said, 'Ye shall behold the sign of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven.' . . . The Catholic Church has kept it, has followed it and bowed down before it. For the first three hundred years of the Christian era the cross of Christ was a sign by which the Christians were known." And it is a remark of St. Jerome, quoted by Dr. Butler, "That if the ark was held in such high veneration among the Jews, how much more ought the Christians to respect the wood of the cross whereon our Saviour offered Himself a bleeding victim for our sins."*

As may be expected, there are numerous traditions regarding the Holy Cross—traditions that begin with the creation of the world and end with the last judgment—traditions co-extensive with everything human and temporal. In the Old Testament, the blood that was sprinkled on the lintels of the doors, when the destroying angel passed over the land and spared the Israelites, is one of the earliest figures; the pole and transverse bar on which was placed the brazen serpent by Moses, at the time of the serpent plague, and the rod of Moses which swallowed up the magician's rod, are also referred to this wonderful sign; Moses, with his arms extended, was indeed no far-fetched figure of the same sacred type of deliverance. The Jewish cross was in the form of the letter T, called the Tau cross, and is more familiar under the name of St. Anthony's cross. The cross of St. Andrew is in the form of an X, while the Greek cross has four equal bars, but placed in an upright position. The Roman or Latin cross, upon which our Lord suffered, differs from all these, and, of course, needs no description.

The Greek tradition of the cross is that the tree was of that wood we call cypress, and that it was of that tree of which Adam ate the forbidden fruit. And when, many years afterwards, Adam fell sick and sent his son Seth to the angel who kept Paradise, to pray that he would send him Oil of Mercy to anoint his members with, that he might have health. And Seth went, but the angel refused; he, however, gave him three grains of the same tree of which his father ate the apple, and bade him, as soon as his father was dead, that he would put these three grains under his tongue and bury him so. And of these three grains sprung a tree as the angel said it should, and bore a fruit, through which fruit Adam should be saved. On Seth's return his father was nearly dead, and after his death he did as the angel said, and from these sprung three trees whereof the Holy Cross was made. The angel said that at the end of 4000 years the "wood whereon Redemption shall be won shall grow from the tomb of thy father." In this legend, the trees are cedar, cypress, and pine. And it was from a bough of one of these that Moses brought water from the rock—with them he healed those

* On the 3rd of May the Church commemorates the finding of the Holy Cross, and the reader can easily find many particulars of it in pious books. St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, visited Palestine in the year 326, and was filled with a great desire to find the Holy Cross. The heathens had done all they could to conceal the place where our Lord suffered. A temple, erected in honour of Jupiter, stood where our Lord rose from the dead; and another temple, dedicated to Venus, stood where He was buried. It was the custom among the Jews to dig a deep pit near the places where their criminals were buried, and to throw therein all that belonged to them. After great labour, three crosses were recovered, but the tablet placed over the head of our Lord was separated from the cross. The difficulty of distinguishing the true cross from the others was referred to the Bishop Macarius, and a sick person being touched by it was immediately restored to health. These particulars and many others are given by Dr. Butler in his "Lives of Saints," and they rest on historical evidences that cannot be shaken.

bitten by the serpents; and these of themselves interlaced so as to shade the repentant David bewailing his sins. It is narrated that when Solomon was building his temple, one of the noblest trees in Lebanon was brought in to Jerusalem for the purpose of manufacturing the main pillar of the roof. In bringing it from the mountain, the Jews in some way were unable to get it to its place, but it lay in the pool of Bethesda. At the time of the crucifixion it was found by the executioners, and of it they fashioned the cross.

Other Eastern traditions vary somewhat from this. One is that the cross of our Lord was made of four kinds of wood, as is contained in the verse,

"In cruce fit palma, cedrus cypressus, oliva,"

the upright being of cypress, the transverse piece of palm, the stock of cedar and the tablet of olive. The Jews, so the legends say, believed that our Lord should have hanged on the cross as long as the cross might last, and so they embedded it in cedar, because cedar does not rot in earth or water; the palm was to indicate their victory over Him, and the tablet of olive to denote the peace they should have after his death. The height of the cross was eight cubits and the transverse piece three and a half cubits. The tablet was said to be twelve inches in length and had the title in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. By the Roman custom, the title was directed by Pilate to be carried before our Lord to the place of execution, and then affixed to the cross. It proclaimed to the nations, in a manner His executioners never intended, that He was their true King. The cross rested on the skull of Adam. Noah took the bones of Adam into the Ark, and afterwards distributed them among his three sons. Shem took, in his inheritance, among other places, the land of Judea, and buried the skull of our first father in Calvary. The cross stood in the centre of the world; "rightly so, as He that was creator of the world, should suffer for us at Jerusalem, that is the middle of the world, to the end and intent that His passion and His death, which was published there, might be known equally to all parts of the world." FIRESIDE.

(To be continued.)

THE SIXTH ANGLICAN ARTICLE.

THE sixth article of religion of the Anglican Church is entitled, "Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation." (See Book of Common Prayer.) As I have said before, some of these thirty nine articles contain doctrine which is peculiar to the Church of England alone, and consequently render her wholly distinct from the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church. This Sixth Article is one of these, and with it I shall now begin, and shall continue on in the same order as is in the Book of Common Prayer. We have in this Article two principal propositions, the first of which is,—"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." As is evident, this proposition is mainly directed against the Catholic doctrine or tradition. It is radically false, and misleading for many reasons, among which are the following: In making Holy Scripture, the standard or rule of faith for the faithful, the Anglican Church not only destroys the *raison d'être* of the Church founded by Jesus Christ; but she likewise flatly contradicts the whole Gospel narrative itself. As a matter of fact, the Church which was prior in point of time to the Holy Scriptures, was commissioned by Christ to be the medium of His relation to man. It received and fulfilled that commission long before a line of the New Testament was written. Wherefore the first converts to Christianity had no solid reason for believing the Gospel, or they derived their faith thereon from that very medium alone, denied by the Anglican Church in this Article. The command of Christ to His Apostles was, "to preach" and "to teach." He Himself never wrote a single word of the Scriptures, nor did He command them to be written. The infant Church received the law of the Gospel by the