

vicinity of Jerusalem, fasted and prayed for several days in sack-cloth and ashes, in order to obtain from God, through the intercession of that prophet, that he might save them from certain death by making it rain upon the earth.

The custom of applying to the living the merits of the dead, is of Hebrew origin; the proof of this is found in a liturgy of the synagogue of Venice. In the office entitled *Mazir nechamot*, (*remembrance of souls*), we find a prayer conceived in the following terms: "Hear us, O Jehovah, for the sake of those who loved thee and are now no more; hear us, for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Rachel," &c.

The invocation of saints is not, then, a *Catholic invention*.

Besides the saints, the Jews prayed to the angels, whom the ancient Arabs also invoked, and to whom the Assyrians offered sacrifice, attributing to them charming functions on the earth.* Jacob confesses himself indebted to an angel for deliverance from the evils which threatened him, and beseeches him to bless his children: *Angelus qui eripuit me de cunctis malis benedicat pueris istis*.† This prayer is addressed to an angel. It is even thought that the Jews carried the worship of the angels too far, since they are suspected of adoring them.‡ This veneration, or worship, never ceased amongst the modern Jews till the time of the pretended Reformation, when they abandoned it in order to conciliate the German innovators. There exists in the Vatican library a Hebrew manuscript containing a litany composed by R. Eliezer Hakalir, wherein is said to the angel Actariel: "Deliver Israël from all affliction, and quickly procure its redemption." Similar favours

* Amongst the Persians, every month was under the protection of an angel; to the angels was confided the care of seas, rivers, springs, pastures, flocks, trees, herbs, fruits, flowers, and seeds; they also guided the stars; prayers were offered to the angels soliciting their protection in danger. The modern Persians still sacrifice to the angel of the moon. (Firdousi, *Book of Kings*.—Chardin, *Voyage en Perse*.)

† *Genesis* xlviii., v. 16.

‡ The author of the *Preaching of St. Peter*, which is very ancient, cited by St. Clement of Alexandria, makes that Apostle say that we must not adore God with the Jews, because, although they profess to acknowledge but one God, they adore the angels. (Clem. Alex., b. v.)