

Scattered about in the Church's Calendar like the "lesser light" of the firmament, are certain minor holidays. Last week, on Friday, was commemorated Bishop Hilary of the French Diocese of Poitiers in the 4th Century. He became famous for leading the Gallican and British Bishops against the Arian heresy, which denied the Divinity of Christ: but the Emperor banished him for a time, on this account, so that he became what is called a "Confessor"—"he confessed Christ before men" and suffered for it. His name is associated with the wording of the Nicene Creed in our Prayer Book.

This week two female saints, Prisca and Agnes are commemorated besides the martyred Bishop Fabian. The history of Prisca carries us a century farther back than that of Hilary in the history of the Church of Christ. She is said to have become a martyr very early in life. A little later on in Church History but still before the time of Hilary, we come to St. Agnes. When ordered to offer incense to the heathen goddess Vesta, she refused, and made the sign of the Cross instead. Like Prisca, she died for the faith; and her death made a lasting impression on the whole Christian world. To this day her name is a synonym for gentleness and purity. Saints Jerome and Augustine, early Christian writers, both refer in high terms of admiration to her constancy in those virtues. Nearer to the time of Prisca, than that of Agnes, but a bishop of the same Church (Rome) was Fabian. His martyrdom occurred in the "Decian persecution." Those were the days when the faith of the Church of Rome was still—as in the days of St. Paul—"spoken of throughout the world." Alas! that the fine gold has become dim in that Church of martyrs since the age of martyrs; and that the Church which suffered so much from persecution, afterwards became the worst at persecuting others!

THE CATECHISM.

- Q. What is the Second Commandment?
A. Thou shalt not make to thyself, &c.
- Q. What is the difference between the first and second commandments?
A. In the first we are charged to take the one true God for our God; in the second, to worship Him in a right way. The first orders inward devotion; and the second, a fitting outward worship.
- Q. What words in the Duty towards God explain this commandment?
A. My duty towards God is to . . . worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put my whole trust in Him, to call upon Him.
- Q. What sin is specially forbidden?
A. Idolatry. Deut. iv. 15; St. John iv. 24.
- Q. Is it wrong to worship God under any form or figure?
A. Yes. Romans i. 25.
- Q. Does God resent this?
A. Yes: for this the heathen were left to the evil of their own hearts (Rom. i. 20-32); and to this were due the captivity and dispersion of God's ancient people.
- Q. What is the Bible meaning of "worship"?
A. Bowing down to a person or thing.
- Q. How are we to worship God?
A. With both body and spirit.
- Q. How with our bodies? A. By using reverent postures and gestures. St. Luke xxii. 41; St. Matt. xxvi. 39; Acts ix. 40, xx. 36; Isaiah vi. 2; Rev. vii. 11, &c. [Vide Rubric to General Confession, Lord's Prayer, &c.]
- Q. How are we to worship God with our spirits?
A. By fixing our hearts upon Him in prayer. By abasing ourselves before Him for our sins. By submitting our reason to the claims of faith.
- Q. What comes next in our duty to God?
A. To give Him thanks.
- Q. For what?
A. For every thing, (specify) Eph. v. 20; but especially for our redemption through Jesus Christ.
- Q. What special service of thanksgiving is provided for this?
A. The Holy Eucharist. Eucharist means "giving of thanks."
- Q. For what do we in this Rite specially offer thanks?
A. "For the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man."
- Q. What is the next part of this duty to God?
A. "To put our whole trust in Him;" especially in the Redemption which He has wrought through Christ; in His promises, in the guidance of His Providence, and the teaching of His Spirit.
- Q. What else belongs to this part of our duty to God?
A. "To call upon Him" in prayer.
- Q. Wherein does this differ from "worshipping Him"?
A. The latter appears to refer to the stated solemnities of public worship; the former to every time and every place, especially in moments of difficulty or danger.

Q. What besides heathen idolatry is forbidden by this second commandment?

A. The worship of Saints and Angels. Acts x. 26; xiv. 12; Rev. xix.

Q. Is it lawful to make a image of our Blessed Lord?

A. Yes, if it be not for worship: for our Lord was "found in fashion as a man."

Q. What sins of ignorant people are hereby forbidden?

A. Fortune-telling, the use of charms and amulets, superstitions about lucky days, actions as implying the power of evil spirits over God's Providence.

Q. What is the so-called "religious" world is equally forbidden?

A. All sensational modes of worship, which appeal to our merely emotional bodily nature, rather than to reason and faith and the spirit of man.

[Comp. Such hymns as "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," and the worship of the Sacred Heart.]

Q. What reason is given for obedience?

A. God is a jealous God; i.e. He has indignation against those who offer to anything else what is His alone by right.

Q. What punishment is threatened to violators of this commandment?

A. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the third and fourth generations of them that hate Him. [As love is obedience, so disobedience is declared hate.]

Q. Are we to understand that God inflicts spiritual injury on the descendants of sinners?

A. No: Ezek. xviii. 20; "The soul that sinneth it shall die"—itself, and not another for its sin. But in early times it was agreeable to the wise Providence of God to punish temporally the seed of the ungodly; as now they are punished in the order of nature.

Q. What sin of Christians is especially against this commandment?

A. "Covetousness, which is idolatry." Eph. v. 5, Col. iii. 5. Comp. also 1 John v. 21, idols in the heart.

Therefore let Christians beware!

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

WHEN the Wise Men had offered their gifts, being warned of God in a dream they did not return to Herod as he had requested, but went back to their own land by another way. Neither in Scripture nor in history do we find any further notice of their existence. But the first and most startling result of their visit—the slaughter of the Innocents—became widely known, as we pointed out last week, throughout the empire.

Of the flight and its duration, Holy Scripture gives us no further information, telling us only that the Holy family fled by night from Bethlehem and returned when assured that it would be safe to take the Saviour babe to the land of His nativity. St. Matthew does not tell us where they lived in Egypt, nor how long their exile continued. But ancient legends say that they remained ten years absent from Palestine and lived at Matareah, a few miles north-east of Cairo. The Evangelist alludes only to the cause of their flight and return, and finds in the latter an explanation of the words of Hosea: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." As the Wise Men did not return to him, Herod had no means of identifying the Royal Infant of the house of David. And so in his ruthless rage and jealousy he determined to make sure of his destruction by ordering the instant slaughter of all the children of Bethlehem, from two years old and under. "To us" says a popular living writer, "there seems something inconceivable in a crime so atrocious, but our thoughts have been softened by eighteen centuries of Christianity, and such deeds are by no means unparalleled in the history of heathen despots and of the ancient world. The massacre of the Innocents as well as the motives which led to it may be illustrated by several circumstances in the history of this very epoch. Suetonius, in his Life of Augustus, quotes a story to the effect that shortly before his birth there was a prophecy in Rome that a king over the Roman people would soon be born. To obviate this danger to the Republic, the Senate ordered that all the male children born in that year should be abandoned or exposed; but the senators took care that the statute did not apply to their own houses, because each of them hoped that the predicted king might be his own son. Again Eusebius quotes from Hegesippus, a story that Domitian alarmed by the growing power of the Name of Christ issued an order to destroy all the descendants of the house of David. Two grandchildren of St. Jude the brother of the Lord he tells were betrayed to the Emperor, but when he saw that they only held the rank of peasants, and that their hands were hard with toil he dismissed them with a mixture of pity and contempt."

The slaughter of the Infants has been questioned as a tragedy too atrocious to be true. But all that we know of Herod's character makes us feel that it is profoundly in harmony with his terrible career.

His master passions, as history paints him, were a most unbounded ambition and almost excruciating jealousy. And so his whole career was with the blood of murder. He had massacred priests and nobles; he had decimated the Sanhedrin; he had caused the high priest, his brother-in-law, the young and noble Aristobulus to be drowned in pretended sport before his eyes. He had ordered the strangulation of his favourite wife, the beautiful Asmonian princess Manaume. His sons Alexander Aristobulus and Antipater, his uncle Joseph, Antigonus and Alexander the uncle and father of his wife—his mother-in-law, Alexandra—his kinsman Cortobanus, his friends Dositroes and Godias, were but a few of the multitudes who fell victims to his sanguinary suspicions and guilty terrors. "Deaths by strangulation, deaths by burning, deaths by being cleft asunder, deaths by secret assassination, confessions forced by unutterable tortures, acts of insolent and inhuman lust mark the annals of a reign which was so cruel; that in the energetic language of the Jewish ambassadors to the Emperor Augustus the survivors during his life time were even more miserable than the sufferers. And as the case of Henry the VIII. every dark and brutal instinct of his character seemed to acquire fresh intensity as his life drew towards its close."

It has been objected that Josephus does not mention this tragedy. That however may have arisen from the fact that the slaughter of a score or two of infants in an obscure village was in his judgment a mere trifle in the light of Herod's other crimes. It is more probable however that Josephus, whom after all we can only regard as a renegade and a sycophant, did not choose to make any allusion to facts which were even remotely connected with the life of Christ. For "no one can doubt" says Canon Farrar "that his silence on the subject of Christianity was as deliberate as it was dishonest." But although Josephus does not distinctly mention the event, yet every single circumstance which he does tell us about this period of Herod's life is in harmony with its occurrence.

As soon as Joseph was made aware of the death of this monster (and a death of appalling terror it was) he returned with Jesus and his mother to Judea, intending evidently to settle at Bethlehem, the city of his ancestors. But on his way he was met by the news that Archelaus, who though younger than Antipas had been named in the last will of his father, Herod, was now ruling in his stead. And as though anxious to shew that he was the true son of that father, Archelaus, even before his authority had been confirmed by Roman authority, had given to his subjects a specimen of his future virtue by ordering the slaughter of three thousand of his fellow countrymen in the Temple. It was clear that under such a government there could be neither hope nor safety. And so Joseph, obedient to the Heavenly vision, turned aside into the parts of Galilee where the Holy family might live securely in their seclusion and poverty, under the sway of another son of Herod. The equally unscrupulous but more indolent and indifferent Antipas.

Correspondence.

All Letters will appear with the names of the writers in full and we do not hold ourselves responsible for their opinions.

THE ROMISH RITE CALLED BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

SIR,—It is now more than a quarter of a century since my attention was arrested by the fact which I had observed both in Upper and Lower Canada, that Romish churches were built externally like meeting-houses, having no chancels at all, or a very slight apsidal extension. Contrasting this with our traditional Anglican chancels, I was long puzzled to account for the modern Roman innovation; but my inquiries brought me no light. In time I felt persuaded that the change was but the architectural analogue of the altered Eucharistic doctrine and worship of the Roman Church; that as the Mass had become more scenic and, indeed, everything, where there was no vernacular presentation of the Breviary services, it was felt necessary to bring it into more local prominence; and this was effected by the abolition of structural chancels. In this I discovered I was partly right, and was certainly on the right track; but for the full truth I was indebted to an article in the *Christian Remembrancer* for 1851, which appears to have been written by Dr. J. M. Neale. Without further reference to my sources of information, I shall endeavour to say as briefly as possible what is necessary for the understanding of a most serious and dangerous corruption. As the worship of God is two-fold, (a) the celebration of the Eucharist, and (b) the Daily Prayer; so from the earliest times the church fabric has consisted of

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