

prepared to forsake that which he, in common with the English nation, had held so long; 'but,' he said, 'you have come from far, you are strangers;' and adding that he perceived that they came with good intentions, promised them fair play and hospitality, with full permission to gain as many as they could to their religion. He then gave them leave to proceed to the city of Canterbury, and make their abode there. Augustine and his companions, therefore, gladly went on their way, entering the city in a procession as solemn as that with which they had approached the king, bearing with them the cross and the picture of the Redeemer crowned with His crown of thorns, singing also as they went these words:—'We beseech Thee, O Lord, in all Thy mercy, that Thy anger and wrath be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, because we have sinned. Hallelujah.'

As soon as the missionaries were established in Canterbury, their preaching, which from the first had been eagerly listened to, was greatly helped and commended by their good lives. They showed themselves to be frequent in prayer, to be indifferent to worldly things, to be self-denying, and earnest in promoting the welfare of souls. 'In short,' writes Bede, 'several believed and were baptized, admiring the simplicity of their innocent life and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine.'

The doctrine they preached, free from the deadly errors with which, alas! it would in these days be mixed on the lips of a Roman preacher, consisted of the pure and simple truths of Christianity. They preached God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; they preached the love of God in the redemption of the world; the divinity and the manhood of our Lord; His wonderful birth and the prophecies which had foretold it; they preached 'the Lord Jesus Christ, at whose birth a new star appeared; who trod the sea with His feet; at whose death the sun hid its shining; at whose burial and resurrection the earth first trembled and then reposed.' Then they would tell their hearers that it was by the working of the love of God that they had come from far, to set before them the way of salvation, and to share with them everlasting life.\*

Patiently and earnestly the Christians toiled at their work, watching and longing, we may well suppose, for the up-springing of the good seed they had sown, until their labours met a glad reward in the conversion of the noble-hearted king. This was in less than a year after the arrival of the mission, and on the 2nd of June, in the year 597, being Whitsun Day, Ethelbert was baptized, possibly and probably in the little church of St. Martin, which he had some twenty years before bestowed upon his Christian queen.

The example of the royal convert was sure to produce some good effect upon his people, who had a deep sense of his goodness and wisdom; and this effect was soon seen in an increased anxiety amongst them to listen to the teaching of the missionaries.

The king, as Bede tells us, encouraged but would not compel his people. 'He only showed more affection to the believers and to his fellow-citizens in the heavenly kingdom. For,' observes the old

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\* *Hook's Lives of the Archbishops.*