

Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my father who is in heaven. AND I SAY TO THEE, THAT THOU ART PETER, AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.

AND I SHALL GIVE TO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.



“Was anything concealed from PETER, who was styled the Rock on which the Church was built, who received the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power of loosing and binding in Heaven and on earth?”—TERTULLIAN *Præscrip.* xii.

“There is one God, and one Church, and one Chair founded by the voice of the Lord upon PETER. That any other Altar be erected, or a new Priesthood established, besides that one Altar, and one Priesthood, is impossible. Whosoever gathers elsewhere, scatters. Whatever is devised by human frenzy, in violation of the Divine Ordinance, is adulterous, impious, sacrilegious.”—St. Cyprian *Ep.* 43 ad plebem.

“All of them remaining silent, for the doctrine was beyond the reach of man, PETER the Prince of the Apostles and the supreme herald of the Church, not following his own inventions, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but enlightened by the Father, says to him: *Thou art Christ*, and not this alone, but *the Son of the living God*.”—St. Cyril of Jerus. *Cat.* v. l.

CALENDAR.

- JULY 9—Sunday—IV after Pent Feast of the Miracles of B V M G.
- “ 10—Monday—Seven Martyrs Brothers, & Semid.
- “ 11—Tuesday—St Pius I P M Doub Sup.
- “ 12—Wednesday—St John Gualbert Abbot Doub com &c.
- “ 13—Thursday—St Anselmus P M Doub.
- “ 14—Friday—St Bonaventuro B C and Doct. Doub.
- “ 15—Saturday—St. Henry Emperor, Conf Semid.

ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS

(Continued.)

IX.—Invocation of Saints in the Primitive Church proved from ancient inscriptions.

In favour of the belief and practice of the Invocation of Saints by the primitive Church, there is a species of proof which has been seldom, perhaps never before, introduced to the notice of the English reader. The Roman catacombs are perpetually exhibiting such lucid evidence upon this article of apostolic doctrine, as to dispel the faintest shadow of doubt or uncertainty from about the subject. For whenever that burial-place of the primitive and persecuted witnesses to the faith is explored, it almost invariably happens that an inscription is discovered over some martyred saint, in which the prayers of the Christian champion who sleeps within, are desired by those who with religious reverence interred his mangled body, and composed his epitaph.\* In the year 1694 was discovered, in the cemetery of SS. Gordianus and Epimachus,† the grave of the holy martyr Sabbatius, along with the following inscription, between a Palm branch and wreath, on a marble slab which closed up the oblong niche in the wall or sepulchre containing the martyr's bones.

Sabbati Dulcis Anima Peio et Roga  
Pro Fratres (sic) et Sudales Tuos.‡  
O Sabbatius, sweet soul, petition and pray for  
Thy brethren and companions.

\* The religious zeal which prompted many of the faithful to expend large sums of money, and even to risk their lives to rescue the bodies of the martyrs from insult; and to possess themselves even of the earth which was sprinkled with their blood, will be noticed in the next chapter, Non. 6, 7.

† This cemetery is on the Latin way, and about a mile from Rome.

‡ Grammatical inaccuracies are of frequent occurrence in ancient inscriptions, hence we must not be surprised to find ‘pro fratres’ instead of ‘pro fratribus,’ &c. This inscription was afterwards presented by Cardinal di Carpegna to the learned Florentine senator Buonarroti, who has inserted it in his interesting work entitled *Osservazioni sopra alcuni Frammenti di Vasi antichi di vetro*, where the reader may see it at p. 167. In the works of the poets and the orators of paganism, a palm-branch and wreath were emblematical of victory. The sacred writers also have noticed the palm-branch as a symbol of the triumph gained by the martyr and the true believer; (*Apocal.* c. vii. v. 9.) and the crown or garland as indicative of that eternal glory which the saints enjoy in heaven. (*Isaiah*, c. xxviii. v. 5. *1 Cor.* c. ix. v. 25. *2 Tim.* c. iv. v. 8. *Epist.* of St. James, c. i. v. 12. *1 St. Peter*, c. v. v. 4. *Apocal.* c. ii. v. 10.) Hence it is that a palm-branch and a wreath of laurel are usually traced in the mortar, scratched on the tile, or sculptured on the marble slab, which may have been severally employed by the first Christians, to seal the martyrs' graves in the catacombs. Both these types of victory are mentioned by the Christian poet Prudentius, who lived so near to the times of persecution. In his hymn in honour of St. Vincent, he says of that illustrious martyr:—

The following sepulchral inscription was extracted from a tomb in the cemetery of Callistus  
ATTICE SPIRITVS TVS  
IN BONY ORA PRO PAREN  
TIBVS TVIS

O Atticus, thy spirit is in good, pray for thy parents.\*

Another inscription, found in the cemetery of Cyriaca,† is to a similar effect.

JUVIANE VIBAS IN DEO ET  
ROO (id est Roga.)

In the cemetery of Priscilla‡ was discovered the following:

ANATOLIUS FILIO BENEMERENTI FECIT  
QVI VIXIT ANNIS VII. MENSIS VII. DIE  
BVS XX. ISPIRITVS TVVS BENEREQVIES  
CAT IN DEO PETAS PRO SORORE TVA.

The two succeeding inscriptions were inscribed until a few years ago, when they became the subject of a particular dissertation, and were published by an Italian antiquary.‡

SIMPLICIO  
VENEMEREN  
TI. FILIO. TE —  
IN PACI M  
P. T. PR. N. S.

that is:—  
SIMPLICIO BENEMERENTI FILIO  
(Suscipiat) TE (Christus) IN PACEM  
Pe Te PRO NOBIS.¶

The second, in Greek, is preserved in the church of the Blessed Trinity at Velletri:  
To Anatolius, our first begotten son, (thou) who wast given to us for a short time, pray for us.  
Euchon per eumon.

The following inscription, which may be found inserted in the works of one of the most celebrated scholars in lapidary writing,¶ is equally demonstrative of the belief and practice of the primitive Church with regard to the invocation of departed saints:

ROGES. PRO. NOBIS. QUIA. SCIMUS. TE. IN. CHRISTO.\*\*

Tu solus, o bis inclyte  
Solus brabii duplicis (brabii pro bravii)  
Palmani tulisti: tu duas  
Sumul parasti laureas.  
Peristeph. Hymn 5, v 537.

The palm-branch and the laurel-crown, which accompany the inscription, unitedly testify that Sabbatius was martyred for the faith.

\* Apud Muratorium in Novo Thes. p. 1833, num 6.—Bianchini, in his learned work entitled, *Demonstratio Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ Quadrupartite: comprobata Monumentis*, places this inscription in the first table of the first century of the Christian Church

† This cemetery is on the Tyburtine way, and has its entrance at the Church of St. Laurence out of the Walls.

‡ This cemetery is on the Salarian way.

§ Intorno un' antico Marino christiano, Lettera di Clemente Cardinali, Bologna, 1819.

¶ In ancient inscriptions, the V is frequently substituted for B; and to those who are anywise versed in the lapidary style of writing, it is well known, that very often words are so abbreviated, that their consonants only, sometimes no others than the first and last, are inscribed.—*Fabretti, Inscr. Domest.* c. iii. p. 164, *Mazzochi de Epist. Hilarii*, p. 11, in notis.

\*\* Marini, *Iscrizioni Albane*, p. 37: and *Fr. Areali*, p. 266.

At Rome, in 1758, in an excavation at the church of St. Agnes out of the walls, was discovered an epitaph composed by St. Damasus, who was elected Pope in 366, in honour of that youthful martyr and illustrious virgin. The pontiff concludes his verses with this invocation of St. Agnes:—

O VENERANDA MIHI SANCTÆ DEUS ALMA PUDORIS  
UT DAMASI PRECIB | FAVEAS PRECOR INCLYTA  
MARTYR.\*

The following inscription records a vow discharged by the religious empress Galla Placidia and her children, towards the year 410, when, as it would appear, the imperial family experienced the efficacy of the intercession made in their behalf during a tempest at sea, by St John the Evangelist.

SANCTO AC BEATISSIMO APOSTOLO  
JOANNI EVANGELISTÆ  
GALLA PLACIDIA AUGUSTA  
CUM FILIO SUO PLACIDIO VALENTINIANO  
AUGUSTO  
ET FILIA SUA JUSTA GRATA HONORIA  
AUGUSTA  
LIBERATIONIS PERICULO MARIS  
VOTUM SOLVIT †

X.—Invocation of Saints in the Anglo-Saxon Church.

It will not, the writer presumes, be considered by the British reader as an intrusion on his patience, if a few extracts from an elegant and learned work on our native history,‡ be presented to his notice, in proof of the perfect conformity in belief and practice concerning the invocation of Saints, which subsists between the Anglo-Saxons and the present Catholic inhabitants of the British Islands.

‘But a short acquaintance with ancient literature,’ observes Dr. Lingard, ‘will prove, that our ancestors were too well instructed to confound man with God. They knew how to discriminate between the adoration due to the Supreme Being, and the honours which might be claimed by the most holy among his servants; and while they worshipped Him as the author of every blessing, they paid no other respect to them than what was owing to those whom they considered as his favourites, and their advocates. Whoever shall attentively peruse the works of the Saxon writers, or the acts of the Saxon councils, from the era of their conversion to what is deemed the darkest period of their history, will observe this important distinction accurately marked and constantly inculcated.—When the poet sang the praises of his patron, he sought neither to interest his mercy, nor deprecate his justice: to obtain the assistance of his intercession, to be remembered by him at the throne of the Almighty was the sole object of his petition.‡ If the preacher from the pulpit exhorted his hearers to solicit the prayers of their more holy brethren, he was careful to inculcate, that they should adore God alone, as

\* Apud Marangonium in Appen. ad Act. S. Victor, p. 138.

† Ravennæ, in *Eccles. S. Joannis Evangel.* apud Muratorium, p. 1878.

‡ The Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church, by J. Lingard, D. D.

§ See Alcuin's Address to the Virgin Mary.  
Tu mundi vitam, tuis tu gaudia sæclis,  
Tu regem cæli, tu dominum atque Deum  
Ventris in hospitio genuisti, virgo perennis  
Tu precibus nobis auxiliare tuis.  
*Alcuin.* apud *Can. Tom.* ii. pars. ii. p 471.

Also S. Aldhelm de Virgin Bib. Pat. tom. viii. p. 22, and Bede Vit. S. Cuthb. p. 291.

their true Lord and true God.\* If the Christian, when he rose from his bed, was accustomed to beg the protection of the saints, he was yet commanded in the first place to worship with bended knees the majesty of his Creator.† These distinctions were too easy to be mistaken. The idea of intercession necessarily includes that of dependence, and to employ the mediation of his favorites, is to acknowledge the superior excellency of the Deity.‡

XI.—Contained in all the Liturgies.

The unhesitating belief of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors in the intercession of the saints, and the religious ardour with which, as is attested by a variety of monuments, they invoked their prayers, demonstrate the genuineness of their religious credence, and its consequent identity with that of the universal Church, whether in the east or west, on this important article of faith. That such a doctrine was in fact most studiously inculcated by the Apostles and their immediate successors, may be readily ascertained by referring to the liturgies that have been in use from time immemorial in those several Churches, which those first preachers of the Gospel, or their immediate disciples, founded.

XII.—Objections Answered.

If it be idle or illicit to call upon the saints to pray for us, then the impropriety and unlawfulness of our invocations must arise from some of the following causes; namely, the unwillingness and incapability of the saints to pray for us; or, because they cannot hear our prayers; and even though they could, the offering of them up would be an injury perpetrated against the God head, and a particular derogation from the mediators of Jesus Christ.

XIII.—Charity engages the Saints to pray for us.

I. With respect to the unwillingness of the saints to present our petitions at the throne of mercy, we cannot for a single moment contemplate even the possibility of its existence; for though faith shall have a termination when we shall see God as he is;‡ though hope will one day win the object of its longings;‡ charity never falleth away,‡ but glows brighter and purer, and acts more unceasingly within the bosom of the saints in heaven, than in the breast of the most righteous man that ever lived upon earth.

If, therefore, charity impels each Christian, whose pretensions to piety are of the very humblest order, inwardly to remember his brethren and friends, and all fellow-creatures, in his daily prayers; the same virtues must possess an im-

\* The Saxon homilist is very accurate in his expressions:—‘Him alone shall we adore. He alone is true Lord and true God. We beg the intercession of holy men that they would intercede for us to their Lord and our Lord. But nevertheless we do not pray to them as we do to God.’—(*Homil. Sax. apud Whel.* p. 283.) ‘Nulli martyrum,’ says the manuscript quoted above, ‘sacrificamus, quamvis in memoriis constituamus altaria.’—*Ibid.*

† ‘Having worshipped his Creator alone, let him invoke God's saints, and pray that they would intercede for him to God; first to holy Mary, and then to all the saints of God.’—*Lib. Leg. Eccles. apud Wilk.* p. 272.

‡ Thus, in the Saxon homilies, the preacher points out the difference between the intercession of the saints and the mediation of Christ, when he exhorts his auditory to solicit the intercession of the Virgin Mary, with Christ her Son, her Creator, and her Redeemer.—*Serm. in Annunt. Mariæ, apud Wanley*, p. 11. See the *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 270-280.

§ *St. John*, c. iii. V. 2.

¶ ‘But hope that is seen is not hope. For what a man seeth, why doth he hope for?’—*Rom.-C.* viii. V. 24.

‡ *1 Cor.* C. xiii.