

<203>

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Mahuzzims, honoured by the King who doth according to his will.

In scripture we are told of some *trusting in God* and others *trusting in idols*, and that *God is our refuge, our strength, our defense*. In this sense God is *the rock of his people*, and false Gods are called *the rock of those that trust in them*, Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37. In the same sense the Gods of *the King who shall do according to his will* are called *Mahuzzims*, munitions, fortresses, protectors, guardians, or defenders. *In his estate*, saith *Daniel*, [1] *shall he honour Mahuzzims; even with a God whom his fathers knew not, shall he honour them with gold and silver, and with precious stones, and things of value. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds or temples; — and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land among them for a possession.* Now this came to pass by degrees in the following manner.

Gregory Nyssen tells us, [2] that after the persecution of the Emperor *Decius*, *Gregory Bishop* <204> of *Neocæsarea* in *Pontus*, instituted among all people, as an addition or corollary of devotion towards God, that festival days and assemblies should be celebrated to them who had contended for the faith, that is, to the *Martyrs*. And he adds this reason for the institution: *When he observed*, saith *Nyssen*, *that the simple and unskilful multitude, by reason of corporeal delights, remained in the error of idols; that the principal thing might be corrected among them, namely, that instead of their vain worship they might turn their eyes upon God; he permitted that at the memories of the holy Martyrs they might make merry and delight themselves, and be dissolved into joy.* The heathens were delighted with the festivals of their Gods, and unwilling to part with those delights; and therefore *Gregory*, to facilitate their conversion, instituted annual festivals to the *Saints* and *Martyrs*. Hence it came to pass, that for exploding the festivals of the heathens, the principal festivals of the *Christians* succeeded in their room: as the keeping of *Christmas* with ivy and feasting, and playing and sports, in the room of the *Bacchanalia* and *Saturnalia*; the celebrating of *May-day* with flowers, in the room of the *Floralia*; and the keeping of festivals to the *Virgin Mary*, *John the Baptist*, and divers of the *Apostles*, in the room of the solem <205> nities at the entrance of the Sun into the signs of the *Zodiac* in the old *Julian Calendar*. In the same persecution of *Decius*, *Cyprian* ordered the passions of the *Martyrs* in *Africa* to be registred, in order to celebrate their memories annually with oblations and sacrifices: and *Felix Bishop* of *Rome*, a little after, as *Platina* relates, *Martyrum gloriæ consulens, constituit ut quotannis sacrificia eorum nomine celebrarentur*; "consulting the glory of the *Martyrs*, ordained that sacrifices should be celebrated annually in their name." By the pleasures of these festivals the *Christians* increased much in number, and decreased as much in virtue, until they were *purged and made white* by the persecution of *Dioclesian*. This was the first step made in the *Christian* religion towards the veneration of the *Martyrs*: and tho it did not yet amount to an unlawful worship; yet it disposed the *Christians* towards such a further veneration of the dead, as in a short time ended in the invocation of *Saints*.

The next step was the affecting to pray at the sepulchres of the *Martyrs*: which practice began in *Dioclesian's* persecution. The Council of *Eliberis* in *Spain*, celebrated in the third or fourth year of *Dioclesian's* persecution, A.C. 305, hath these Canons. Can. 34. *Cereos per diem placuit in Cæmeterio non incendi: inquit <206> tandi enim spiritus sanctorum non sunt. Qui hæc non observârint, arceantur ab Ecclesiæ communione.* Can. 35. *Placuit prohiberi ne fæminæ in Cæmeterio pervigilent, eò quod sæpe sub obtentu orationis latentèr scelera committant.* Presently after that persecution, suppose about the year 314, the Council of *Laodicea* in *Phrygia*, which

then met for restoring the lapsed discipline of the Church, has the following Canons. Can. 9. *Those of the Church are not allowed to go into the Cœmeteries or Martyries, as they are called, of hereticks, for the sake of prayer or recovery of health: but such as go, if they be of the faithful, shall be excommunicated for a time.* Can. 34. *A Christian must not leave the Martyrs of Christ, and go to false Martyrs, that is, to the Martyrs of the hereticks; for these are alien from God: and therefore let those be anathema who go to them.* Can. 51. *The birth-days of the Martyrs shall not be celebrated in Lent, but their commemoration shall be made on the Sabbath-days and Lords days.* The Council of Paphlagonia, celebrated in the year 324, made this Canon: *If any man being arrogant, abominates the congregations of the Martyrs, or the Liturgies performed therein, or the memories of the Martyrs, let him be anathema.* By all which it is manifest that the Christians in the time of *Dioctlesian's* persecution used to pray in the Cœmeteries or burying-places of the dead; for avoiding the danger of the persecution, and for want of Churches, which were all thrown down: and after the persecution was over, continued that practice in honour of the Martyrs, till new Churches could be built: and by use affected it as advantageous to devotion, and for recovering the health of those that were sick. It also appears that in these burying-places they commemorated the Martyrs yearly upon days dedicated to them, and accounted all these practices pious and religious, and anathematized those men as arrogant who opposed them, or prayed in the Martyries of the hereticks. They also lighted torches to the Martyrs in the day-time, as the heathens did to their Gods; which custom, before the end of the fourth century, prevailed much in the West. They sprinkled the worshipers of the Martyrs with holy-water, as the heathens did the worshipers of their Gods; and went in pilgrimage to see Jerusalem and other holy places, as if those places conferred sanctity on the visitors. From the custom of praying in the Cœmeteries and Martyries, came the custom of translating the bodies of the Saints and Martyrs into such Churches as were new built: the Emperor Constantius began this practice about the year 359, causing the bodies of Andrew the Apostle, Luke and Timothy, to be translated into a new Church at Constantinople: and before this act of Constantius, the Egyptians kept the bodies of their Martyrs and Saints unburied upon beds in their private houses, and told stories of their souls appearing after death and ascending up to heaven, as Athanasius relates in the life of Antony. All which gave occasion to the Emperor Julian, as Cyril relates, to accuse the Christians in this manner: *Your adding to that antient dead man, Jesus, many new dead men, who can sufficiently abominate? You have filled all places with sepulchres and monuments, altho you are no where bidden to prostrate yourselves to sepulchres, and to respect them officiously.* And a little after: *Since Jesus said that sepulchres are full of filthiness, how do you invoke God upon them?* and in another place he saith, that if Christians had adhered to the precepts of the Hebrews, they would have worshiped one God instead of many, and not a man, or rather not many unhappy men: And that they adored the wood of the cross, making its images on their foreheads, and before their houses.

After the sepulchres of Saints and Martyrs were thus converted into places of worship like the heathen temples, and the Churches into sepulchres, and a certain sort of sanctity attributed to the dead bodies of the Saints and Martyrs buried in them, and annual festivals were kept to them, with sacrifices offered to God in their name; the next step towards the invocation of Saints, was the attributing to their dead bodies, bones and other reliques, a power of working miracles, by means of the separate souls, who were supposed to know what we do or say, and to be able to do us good or hurt, and to work those miracles. This was the very notion the heathens had of the separate souls of their antient Kings and Heroes, whom they worshiped under the names of Saturn, Rhea, Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, Bacchus, Ceres, Osiris, Isis, Apollo, Diana, and the rest of their Gods. For these Gods being male and female, husband and wife, son and daughter, brother and sister, are thereby discovered to be antient men and women. Now as the first step towards the invocation of Saints was set on foot by the persecution of Decius, and the second by the persecution of Dioclesian; so this third seems to have been owing to the proceedings

of *Constantius* and *Julian* the Apostate. When *Julian* began to restore the worship of the heathen Gods, and to vilify the Saints and Martyrs; the *Christians* of *Syria* and *Egypt* seem to have made a great noise about the miracles done by the reliques of the *Christian* Saints and Martyrs, in opposition to the powers <210> attributed by *Julian* and the heathens to their Idols. For *Sozomen* and *Ruffinus* tell us, that when he opened the heathen Temples, and consulted the Oracle of *Apollo Daphnæus* in the suburbs of *Antioch*, and pressed by many sacrifices for an answer; the Oracle at length told him that the bones of the Martyr *Babylas* which were buried there hinder'd him from speaking. By which answer we may understand, that some *Christian* was got into the place where the heathen Priests used to speak thro' a pipe in delivering their Oracles: and before this, *Hilary* in his book against *Constantius*, written in the last year of that Emperor, makes the following mention of what was then doing in the *East* where he was. *Sine martyrio persequeris. Plus crudelitati vestræ Nero, Deci, Maximiane, debemus. Diabolum enim per vos vicimus. Sanctus ubique beatorum martyrum sanguis exceptus est, dum in his Dæmones mugiant, dum ægritudines depelluntur, dum miraculorum opera cernuntur, elevari sine laqueis corpora, & dispensis pede fæminis vestes non defluere in faciem, uri sine ignibus spiritus, confiteri sine interrogantis incremento fidei.* And *Gregory Nazianzen*, in his first Oration against the Emperor *Julian* then reigning, writes thus: *Martyres non extimui quibus præclari honores & festa constituta, à quibus Dæmones propelluntur & morbi curantur; quo <211> rum sunt apparitiones & prædictiones; quorum vel sola corpora idem possunt quod animæ sanctæ, sive manibus contrectentur, sive honorentur: quorum vel solæ sanguinis guttæ atque exigua passionis signa idem possunt quod corpora. Hæc non colis sed contemnis & aspernaris.* These things made the heathens in the reign of the same Emperor demolish the sepulchre of *John* the Baptist in *Phœnicia*, and burn his bones; when several *Christians* mixing themselves with the heathens, gathered up some of his remains, which were sent to *Athanasius*, who hid them in the wall of a Church; foreseeing by a prophetic spirit, as *Ruffinus* tells us, that they might be profitable to future generations.

The cry of these miracles being once set on foot, continued for many years, and encreased and grew more general. *Chrysostom*, in his second Oration on St. *Babylas*, twenty years after the silencing of the Oracle of *Apollo Daphnæus* as above, viz. A.C. 382, saith of the miracles done by the Saints and their reliques: [3] *Nulla est nostri hujus Orbis seu regio, seu gens, seu urbs, ubi nova & inopinata miracula hæc non decantentur; quæ quidem si figmenta fuissent, prorsus in tantam hominum admirationem non venissent.* And a little after: *Abunde orationi nostræ fidem faciunt quæ quotidiana à martyribus miracula eduntur, magna affatim ad illa hominum <212> num multitudine affluente.* And in his 66th Homily, describing how the Devils were tormented and cast out by the bones of the Martyrs, he adds: *Ob eam causam multi plerumque Reges peregrè profecti sunt, ut hoc spectaculo fruerentur. Siquidem sanctorum martyrum templa futuri judicii vestigia & signa exhibent, dum nimirum Dæmones flagris cæduntur, hominesque torquentur & liberantur. Vide quæ sanctorum vitâ functorum vis sit?* And *Jerom* in his Epitaph on *Paula*, thus mentions the same things. [4] *Paula vidit Samariam: ibi siti sunt Elisæus & Abdias prophætæ, & Joannes Baptista, ubi multis intremuit consternata miraculis. Nam cernebat variis dæmones rugire cruciatibus, & ante sepulchra sanctorum ululare, homines more luporum vocibus latrare canum, fremere leonum, sibilare serpentum, mugire taurorum, alios rotare caput & post tergum terram vertice tangere, suspensisque pede fæminis vestes non defluere in faciem.* This was about the year 384: and *Chrysostom* in his Oration on the *Egyptian* Martyrs, seems to make *Egypt* the ringleader in these matters, saying: [5] *Benedictus Deus quandoquidem ex Ægypto prodeunt martyres, ex Ægypto illa cum Deo pugnante ac insanissima, & unde impia ora, unde linguæ blasphemæ; ex Ægypto martyres habentur; non in Ægypto tantum, nec in finitima vicinaque regione, sed UBIQUE TER <213> RARUM. Et quemadmodum in annonæ summa ubertate, cum viderunt urbium incolæ majorem quam usus habitatorum postulat esse proventum, ad peregrinas etiam urbes transmittunt: cum & suam comitatem & liberalitatem ostendant, tum ut præter horum abundantiam cum facilitate res quibus indigent*

rursus ab illis sibi comparent: sic & Ægyptii, quod attinet ad religionis athletas, fecerunt. Cum apud se multam eorum Dei benignitate copiam cernerent, nequaquam ingens Dei munus sua civitate concluserunt, sed in OMNES TERRÆ PARTES bonorum thesauros effuderunt: cum ut suum in fratres amorem ostenderent, tum ut communem omnium dominum honore afficerent, ac civitati suæ gloriam apud omnes compararent, totiusque terrarum ORBIS esse METROPOLIN declararent. — Sanctorum enim illorum corpora quovis adamantino & inexpugnabili muro tutiùs nobis urbem communiunt, & tanquam excelsi quidam scopuli undique prominentes, non horum qui sub sensus cadunt & oculis cernuntur hostium impetus propulsant tantùm, sed etiam invisibilium dæmonum insidias, omnesque diaboli fraudes subvertunt ac dissipant. — Neque vero tantùm adversus hominum insidias aut adversus fallacias dæmonum utilis nobis est hæc possessio, sed si nobis communis dominus ob peccatorum multitudinem irascatur, his objectis corporibus continuo poterimus eum propitium <214> reddere civitati. This Oration was written at *Antioch*, while *Alexandria* was yet the Metropolis of the *East*, that is, before the year 381, in which *Constantinople* became the Metropolis: and it was a work of some years for the *Egyptians* to have distributed the miracle-working reliques of their Martyrs over all the world, as they had done before that year. *Egypt* abounded most with the reliques of Saints and Martyrs, the *Egyptians* keeping them embalmed upon beds even in their private houses; and *Alexandria* was eminent above all other cities for dispersing them, so as on that account to acquire glory with all men, and manifest herself to be the *Metropolis* of the world. *Antioch* followed the example of *Egypt*, in dispersing the reliques of the forty Martyrs: and the examples of *Egypt* and *Syria* were soon followed by the rest of the world.

The reliques of the forty Martyrs at *Antioch* were distributed among the Churches before the year 373; for *Athanasius* who died in that year, wrote an Oration upon them. This Oration is not yet published, but *Gerard Vossius* saw it in MS. in the Library of Cardinal *Ascanius* in *Italy*, as he says in his commentary upon the Oration of *Ephræm Syrus* on the same forty Martyrs. Now since the Monks of *Alexandria* sent the reliques of the Martyrs of *Egypt* into all parts of the <215> earth, and thereby acquired glory to their city, and declared her in these matters the Metropolis of the whole world, as we have observed out of *Chrysostom*; it may be concluded, that before *Alexandria* received the forty Martyrs from *Antioch*, she began to send out the reliques of her own Martyrs into all parts, setting the first example to other cities. This practice therefore began in *Egypt* some years before the death of *Athanasius*. It began when the miracle-working bones of *John* the Baptist were carried into *Egypt*, and hid in the wall of a Church, *that they might be profitable to future generations*. It was restrained in the reign of *Julian* the Apostate: and then it spread from *Egypt* into all the Empire, *Alexandria* being the Metropolis of the whole world, according to *Chrysostom*, for propagating this sort of devotion, and *Antioch* and other cities soon following her example.

In propagating these superstitions, the ringleaders were the Monks, and *Antony* was at the head of them: for in the end of the life of *Antony*, *Athanasius* relates that these were his dying words to his disciples who then attended him. *Do you take care, said Antony, to adhere to Christ in the first place, and then to the Saints, that after death they may receive you as friends and acquaintance into the everlasting Tabernacles. Think upon these things, perceive <216> these things; and if you have any regard to me, remember me as a father.* This being delivered in charge to the Monks by *Antony* at his death, A.C. 356, could not but inflame their whole body with devotion towards the Saints, as the ready way to be received by them into the eternal Tabernacles after death. Hence came that noise about the miracles done by the reliques of the Saints in the time of *Constantius*: hence came the dispersion of the miracle-working reliques into all the Empire; *Alexandria* setting the example, and being renowned for it above all other cities. Hence it came to pass in the days of *Julian*, A.C. 362, that *Athanasius* by a prophetic spirit, as *Ruffinus* tells us,

hid the bones of *John* the Baptist from the Heathens, not in the ground to be forgotten, but in the hollow wall of a Church before proper witnesses, that they might *be profitable to future generations*. Hence also came the invocation of the Saints for doing such miracles, and for assisting men in their devotions, and mediating with God. For *Athanasius*, even from his youth, looked upon the dead Saints and Martyrs as mediators of our prayers: in his Epistle to *Marcellinus*, written in the days of *Constantine* the great, he saith that the words of the *Psalms* are not to be transposed or any wise changed, but to be recited and sung without any artifice, as they are writ <217> ten, *that the holy men who delivered them, knowing them to be their own words, may pray with us; or rather, that the Holy Ghost who spake in the holy men, seeing his own words with which he inspired them, may join with them in assisting us.*

Whilst *Egypt* abounded with Monks above any other country, the veneration of the Saints began sooner, and spread faster there than in other places. *Palladius* going into *Egypt* in the year 388 to visit the Monasteries, and the sepulchres of *Apollonius* and other Martyrs of *Thebais* who had suffered under *Maximinus*, saith of them: *Iis omnibus Christiani fecerunt ædem unam, ubi nunc multæ virtutes peraguntur. Tanta autem fuit viri gratia, ut de iis quæ esset precatus statim exaudiretur, eum sic honorante servatore: quem etiam nos in martyrio precati vidimus, cum iis qui cum ipso fuerunt martyrio affecti; & Deum adorantes, eorum corpora salutavimus.* *Eunapius* also, a heathen, yet a competent witness of what was done in his own times, relating how the soldiers delivered the temples of *Egypt* into the hands of the Monks, which was done in the year 389, rails thus in an impious manner at the Martyrs, as succeeding in the room of the old Gods of *Egypt*. *Illi ipsi, milites, Monachos Canobi quoque collocârunt, ut pro Diis qui <218> animo cernuntur, servos & quidem flagitiosos divinis honoribus percolerent, hominum mentibus ad cultum ceremoniasque obligatis. Ii namque condita & salita eorum capita, qui ob scelerum multitudinem à iudicibus extremo iudicio fuerant affecti, pro Divis ostentabant; iis genua submittebant, eos in Deorum numerum receptabant, ad illorum sepulchra pulvere sordibusque conspurcati. Martyres igitur vocabantur, & ministri quidem & legati arbitrique precum apud Deos; cum fuerint servilia infida & flagris pessimè subacta, quæ cicatrices scelerum ac nequitiae vestigia corporibus circumferunt; ejusmodi tamen Deos fert tellus.* By these instances we may understand the invocation of Saints was now of some standing in *Egypt*, and that it was already generally received and practised there by the common people.

Thus *Basil* a Monk, who was made Bishop of *Cæsarea* in the year 369, and died in the year 378, in his Oration on the Martyr *Mamas*, saith: *Be ye mindful of the Martyr; as many of you as have enjoyed him in your dreams, as many as in this place have been assisted by him in prayer, as many of you as upon invoking him by name have had him present in your works, as many as he has reduced into the way from wandering, as many as he has restored to health, as many as have had their dead children re <219> stored by him to life, as many as have had their lives prolonged by him:* and a little after, he thus expresses the universality of this superstition in the regions of *Cappadocia* and *Bithynia*: *At the memory of the Martyr, saith he, the whole region is moved; at his festival the whole city is transported with joy. Nor do the kindred of the rich turn aside to the sepulchres of their ancestors, but all go to the place of devotion.* Again, in the end of the Homily he prays, that *God would preserve the Church, thus fortified with the great towers of the Martyrs:* and in his Oration on the forty Martyrs; *These are they, saith he, who obtaining our country, like certain towers afford us safety against our enemies. Neither are they shut up in one place only, but being distributed are sent into many regions, and adorn many countries. — You have often endeavoured, you have often laboured to find one who might pray for you: here are forty, emitting one voice of prayer. — He that is in affliction flies to these, he that rejoices has recourse to these: the first, that he may be freed from evil, the last that he may continue in happiness. Here a woman praying for her*

children is heard; she obtains a safe return for her husband from abroad, and health for him in his sickness. — *O ye common keepers of mankind, the best companions of our cares, suffragans and <220> coadjutors of our prayers, most powerful ambassadors to God, &c.* By all which it is manifest, that before the year 378, the Orations and Sermons upon the Saints went much beyond the bounds of mere oratorical flourishes, and that the common people in the *East* were already generally corrupted by the Monks with Saintworship.

Gregory Nazianzen a Monk, in his sixth Oration written A.C. 373, when he was newly made Bishop of *Sasima*, saith: *Let us purify ourselves to the Martyrs, or rather to the God of the Martyrs:* and a little after he calls the Martyrs *mediators of obtaining an ascension or divinity.* The same year, in the end of his Oration upon *Athanasius* then newly dead, he thus invokes him: *Do thou look down upon us propitiously, and govern this people, as perfect adorers of the perfect Trinity, which in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is contemplated and worshiped: if there shall be peace, preserve me, and feed my flock with me; but if war, bring me home, place me by thyself, and by those that are like thee; however great my request.* And in the end of the funeral Oration upon *Basil*, written A.C. 378, he thus addresses him: *But thou, O divine and sacred Head, look down upon us from heaven; and by thy prayers either take away that thorn of the flesh which is given <221> us by God for exercise, or obtain that we may bear it with courage, and direct all our life to that which is most fitting for us. When we depart this life, receive us there in your Tabernacles, that living together and beholding the holy and blessed Trinity more purely and perfectly, whereof we have now but an imperfect view, we may there come to the end of our desires, and receive this reward of the wars which we have waged or suffered:* and in his Oration upon *Cyprian*, not the Bishop of *Carthage*, but a *Greek*, he invokes him after the same manner; and tells us also how a pious Virgin named *Justina*, was protected by invoking the *Virgin Mary*, and how miracles were done by the ashes of *Cyprian*.

Gregory Nyssen, another eminent Monk and Bishop, in the life of *Ephræm Syrus*, tells how a certain man returning from a far country, was in great danger, by reason all the ways were intercepted by the armies of barbarous nations; but upon invoking *Ephræm* by name, and saying, *Holy Ephræm assist me*, he escaped the danger, neglected the fear of death, and beyond his hope got safe home. In the end of this Oration *Gregory* calls upon *Ephræm* after the following manner: *But thou, O Ephræm, assisting now at the divine altar, and sacrificing to the Prince of life, and to the most holy Trini <222> ty, together with the Angels; remember us all, and obtain for us pardon of our sins, that we may enjoy the eternal happiness of the kingdom of heaven.* The same *Gregory*, in his Oration on the Martyr *Theodorus* written A.C. 381, thus describes the power of that Martyr, and the practice of the people. *This Martyr*, saith he, *the last year quieted the barbarous tempest, and put a stop to the horrid war of the fierce and cruel Scythians.* — *If any one is permitted to carry away the dust with which the tomb is covered, wherein the body of the Martyr rests; the dust is accepted as a gift, and gathered to be laid up as a thing of great price. For to touch the reliques themselves, if any such prosperous fortune shall at any time happen; how great a favour that is, and not to be obtained without the most earnest prayers, they know well who have obtained it. For as a living and florid body, they who behold it embrace it, applying to it the eyes, mouth, ears, and all the organs of sense; and then with affection pouring tears upon the Martyr, as if he was whole and appeared to them: they offer prayers with supplication, that he would intercede for them as an advocate, praying to him as an Officer attending upon God, and invoking him as receiving gifts whenever he will.* At length *Gregory* concludes the Oration with this prayer: *O Theo <223> dorus, we want many blessings; intercede and beseech for thy country before the common King and Lord: for the country of the Martyr is the place of his passion, and they are his citizens, brethren and kindred, who have him, defend, adorn and honour him. We fear afflictions, we expect*

dangers: the wicked Scythians are not far off, ready to make war against us. As a soldier fight for us, as a Martyr use liberty of speech for thy fellow-servants. Pray for peace, that these publick meetings may not cease, that the furious and wicked barbarian may not rage against the temples and altars, that the profane and impious may not trample upon the holy things. We acknowledge it a benefit received from thee, that we are preserved safe and entire, we pray for freedom from danger in time to come: and if there shall be need of greater intercession and deprecation, call together the choir of thy brethren the Martyrs, and in conjunction with them all intercede for us. Let the prayers of many just ones atone for the sins of the multitudes and the people; exhort Peter, excite Paul, and also John the divine and beloved disciple, that they may be solicitous for the Churches which they have erected, for which they have been in chains, for which they have undergone dangers and deaths; that the worship of idols may not lift up <224> its head against us, that heresies may not spring up like thorns in the vineyard, that tares grown up may not choak the wheat, that no rock void of the fatness of true dew may be against us, and render the fruitful power of the word void of a root; but by the power of the prayers of thyself and thy companions, O admirable man and eminent among the Martyrs, the commonwealth of Christians may become a field of corn. The same Gregory Nyssen, in his sermon upon the death of Meletius Bishop of Antioch, preached at Constantinople the same year, A.C. 381, before the Bishops of all the East assembled in the second general Council, spake thus of Meletius. *The Bridegroom, saith he, is not taken from us: he stands in the midst of us, tho we do not see him: he is a Priest in the most inward places, and face to face intercedes before God for us and the sins of the people.* This was no oratorical flourish, but Gregory's real opinion, as may be understood by what we have cited out of him concerning Ephræm and Theodorus: and as Gregory preached this before the Council of Constantinople, you may thence know, saith Baronius,^[6] that he professed what the whole Council, and therewith the whole Church of those parts believed, namely, that the Saints in heaven offer prayers for us before God.

<225>

Ephræm Syrus, another eminent Monk, who was contemporary with Basil, and died the same year; in the end of his Encomium or Oration upon Basil then newly dead, invokes him after this manner: Intercede for me, a very miserable man; and recal me by thy intercessions, O father; thou who art strong, pray for me who am weak; thou who art diligent, for me who am negligent; thou who art chearful, for me who am heavy; thou who art wise, for me who am foolish. Thou who hast treasured up a treasure of all virtues, be a guide to me who am empty of every good work. In the beginning of his Encomium upon the forty Martyrs, written at the same time, he thus invokes them: *Help me therefore, O ye Saints, with your intercession; and O ye beloved, with your holy prayers; that Christ by his grace may direct my tongue to speak, &c.* and afterwards mentioning the mother of one of these forty Martyrs, he concludes the Oration with this prayer: *I entreat thee, O holy, faithful, and blessed woman, pray for me to the Saints, saying; Intercede ye that triumph in Christ, for the most little and miserable Ephræm, that he may find mercy, and by the grace of Christ may be saved.* Again, in his second Sermon or Oration on the praises of the holy Martyrs of Christ, he thus addresses them: *We entreat you most holy Martyrs, to intercede with the Lord <226> for us miserable sinners, beset with the filthiness of negligence, that he would infuse his divine grace into us: and afterwards, near the end of the same discourse; Now ye most holy men and glorious Martyrs of God, help me a miserable sinner with your prayers, that in that dreadful hour I may obtain mercy, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest. I am to day become to you, most holy Martyrs of Christ, as it were an unprofitable and unskilful cup-bearer: for I have delivered to the sons and brothers of your faith, a cup of the excellent wine of your warfare, with the excellent table of your victory, replenished with all sorts of dainties. I have endeavoured, with the whole affection and desire of my mind, to recreate your fathers and brothers, kindred and relations,*

who daily frequent the table. For behold they sing, and with exultation and jubilee glorify God, who has crown'd your virtues, by setting on your most sacred heads incorruptible and celestial crowns; they with excessive joy stand about the sacred reliques of your martyrdoms, wishing for a blessing, and desiring to bear away holy medicines both for the body and the mind. As good disciples and faithful ministers of our benign Lord and Saviour, bestow therefore a blessing on them all: and on me also, tho weak and feeble, who having received strength by <227> your merits and intercessions, have with the whole devotion of my mind, sung a hymn to your praise and glory before your holy reliques. Wherefore I beseech you stand before the throne of the divine Majesty for me Ephræm, a vile and miserable sinner, that by your prayers I may deserve to obtain salvation, and with you enjoy eternal felicity by the grace and benignity and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghost be praise, honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

By what has been cited out of *Basil*, the two *Gregories* and *Ephræm*, we may understand that Saint-worship was established among the Monks and their admirers in *Egypt*, *Phœnicia*, *Syria* and *Cappadocia*, before the year 378, this being the year in which *Basil* and *Ephræm* died. *Chrysostom* was not much later; he preached at *Antioch* almost all the time of *Theodosius* the great, and in his Sermons are many exhortations to this sort of superstition, as may be seen in the end of his Orations on *S. Julia*, on *St. Pelagia*, on the Martyr *Ignatius*, on the *Egyptian* Martyrs, on *Fate and Providence*, on the Martyrs in general, on *St. Berenice* and *St. Prosdoce*, on *Juventinus* and *Maximus*, on the name of *Cæmety*, &c. Thus in his Sermon on *Berenice* and *Prosdoce*: <228> *Perhaps*, saith he, *you are inflamed with no small love towards these Martyrs; therefore with this ardour let us fall down before their reliques, let us embrace their coffins. For the coffins of the Martyrs have great virtue, even as the bones of the Martyrs have great power. Nor let us only on the day of this festival, but also on other days apply to them, invoke them, and beseech them to be our patrons: for they have great power and efficacy, not only whilst alive, but also after death; and much more after death than before. For now they bear the marks or brands of Christ; and when they shew these marks, they can obtain all things of the King. Seeing therefore they abound with such efficacy, and have so much friendship with him; we also, when by continual attendance and perpetual visitation of them we have insinuated ourselves into their familiarity, may by their assistance obtain the mercy of God.*

Constantinople was free from these superstitions till *Gregory Nazianzen* came thither A.C. 379; but in a few years it was also inflamed with it. *Ruffinus* tells us,^[7] that when the Emperor *Theodosius* was setting out against the tyrant *Eugenius*, which was in the year 394, he went about with the Priests and people to all the places of prayer; lay prostrate in haircloth before the shrines of the Martyrs and Apostles, and <229> *pray'd for assistance by the intercession of the Saints*. *Sozomen* adds,^[8] that when the Emperor was marched seven miles from *Constantinople* against *Eugenius*, he went into a Church which he had built to *John the Baptist*, and invoked the *Baptist* for his assistance. *Chrysostom* says:^[9] *He that is clothed in purple, approaches to embrace these sepulchres; and laying aside his dignity, stands supplicating the Saints to intercede for him with God: and he who goes crowned with a diadem, offers his prayers to the tent-maker and the fisher-man as his Protectors*. And in another place:^[10] *The cities run together to the sepulchres of the Martyrs, and the people are inflamed with the love of them*.

This practice of sending reliques from place to place for working miracles, and thereby inflaming the devotion of the nations towards the dead Saints and their reliques, and setting up the religion of invoking their souls, lasted only till the middle of the reign of the Emperor *Theodosius* the great; for he then prohibited it by the following Edict. *Humatum*

corpus, nemo ad alterum locum transferat; nemo Martyrem distrahat, nemo mercetur: Habeant verò in potestate, si quolibet in loco sanctorum est aliquis conditus, pro ejus veneratione, quod Martyrium vocandum sit, addant quod voluerint fabricarum. Dat. iv Kal. Mart. Constantinopoli, Ho <230> norio nob. puero & Euodio Coss. A.C. 386. After this they filled the fields and high-ways with altars erected to Martyrs, which they pretended to discover by dreams and revelations: and this occasioned the making the fourteenth Canon of the fifth Council of Carthage, A.C. 398. Item placuit, ut altaria, quæ passim per agros aut vias, tanquam memoriæ Martyrum constituuntur, in quibus nullum corpus aut reliquiæ Martyrum conditæ probantur, ab Episcopis, qui illis locis præsent, si fieri potest, evertantur. Si autem hoc propter tumultus populares non sinitur, plebes tamen admoneantur, ne illa loca frequentent, ut qui rectè sapiunt, nullâ ibi superstitione devincti teneantur. Et omnino nulla memoria Martyrum probabiliter acceptetur, nisi aut ibi corpus aut aliquæ certæ reliquiæ sint, aut ubi origo alicujus habitationis, vel possessionis, vel passionis fidelissima origine traditur. Nam quæ per somnia, & per inanes quasi revelationes quorumlibet hominum ubique constituuntur altaria, omnimodè reprobentur. These altars were for invoking the Saints or Martyrs buried or pretended to be buried under them. First they filled the Churches in all places with the reliques or pretended reliques of the Martyrs, for invoking them in the Churches; and then they filled the fields and high-ways with altars, for invoking <231> them every where: and this new religion was set up by the Monks in all the *Greek Empire* before the expedition of the Emperor *Theodosius* against *Eugenius*, and I think before his above-mentioned Edict, A.C. 386.

The same religion of worshiping *Mahuzzims* quickly spred into the *Western Empire* also: but *Daniel* in this Prophecy describes chiefly the things done among the nations comprehended in the body of his third Beast.

The end of the first Part.