

"And not long after, the benign and merciful Lord, that beheld the tears of Ezechie the King, the importune prayer of the woman of Chanane, rewarded with the benefit of his pity; thus likewise mercifully he beheld this weeping man, and gave him his health, approved his vow.

"So of his sickness recovered he was; and in short time, whole made, began homeward to come, his vow to fulfil that he had made.

"When he would perfect his way that he had begun, in a certain night he saw a vision full of dread and sweetness; when after labourous and sweating that he had by days, his body he with rest would refresh. It seemed to him to be borne up on high of a certain beast, having four feet and two wings, and set in a high place. And when he from so great a height would inflect and bow down his eye to the lower part downward, he beheld an horrible pit, whose horrible beholding impressed in him great dread and horror; for the deepness of the said pit was deeper than any man might attain to see; therefore he (secret knower of his defaults) deemed himself to slide into that cruel a down-cast.

"And therefore, as him seemed inwardly, he fremesied and for dread trembled, and great cries of his mouth proceeded.

"To whom dreading and for dread crying, appeared a certain man pretending in cheer the majesty of a King, of great beauty and imperial authority, and his eye on him fastened. 'O, man,' he said, 'what and how much service shouldest thou give to him that in so great a peril hath brought help to thee?'

"Anon he answered to this Saint, 'Whatsoever might be of heart and of might, diligently should I give, in recompense of my deliverer.' Then said he:

"I am Bartholomew the Apostle of Jesus Christ, that come to succour thee, in thine anguish, and to open to thee the secret mysteries of Heaven. Know me truly, by the will and commandment of the Holy Trinity and the common favour of the celestial Court and Council, to have chosen a place in the Suburbs of London at Smithfield, where in mine name thou shalt found a Church and it shall be the house of God; there shall be the tabernacle of the Lamb, and the temple of the Holy Ghost. This spiritual house Almighty God shall inhabit, and hallow it and glorify it, and His eyes shall be open and His ears intending on this house night and day, that the asker in it shall receive, the seeker shall find, and the ringer or knocker shall enter. Truly every soul converted, penitent of his sin, and in this place praying, in Heaven graciously shall be heard: the seeker with perfect heart (for whatsoever tribulation), without doubt he shall find help: to them that with faithful desire knock at the door of the Spouse, assistant Angels shall open the gates of Heaven, receiving and offering to God the prayers and vows of faithful people. Wherefore thine hands be there comforted in

God, having in Him trust; doubt thee nought; only give thy diligence, and my part shall be to provide necessaries, direct build and end this work, and this place, to me accept, with evident tokens and signs, protect and defend continually it under the shadow of my wings; and therefore of this work know me the master and thyself only the minister: use diligently thy service, and I shall show my lordship.' In these words the Vision disappeared."

[From the Book of the Foundation of St. Bartholomew's Church in London, Cottonian MSS. Vespasian B IX. British Museum.]

Rahere now "came to London," the chronicle continues—

"Since the place godly to him shewed, was contained within the King's market"; therefore, "in opportune time, he addressed him to the King" who "granted to the petitioner his kingly favour, benignly giving his authority to execute his purpose."

"Then nothing he omitting of care and diligence two works of piety began to make. . . . The church he made of comely stone work, tablewise. And an hospital house a litle longer off from the church. . . . Both were founded in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in memory of the most blessed Bartholomew apostle the year from the Incarnation of the same Lord our Saviour, 1123."

But Rahere was not the first to whom Smithfield had been pointed out as a place with a great future. King Edward the Confessor had dreamed a dream concerning it. In the words of the MS.:-

"This blessed King, when he was in the Church of God (replete with manifold beauty of virtue, as the book of his gifts declareth) as a religious and full of the spirit of prophecy, he shone bright, beholding things afar off as they were present, and things to come as they were now existent, with the eyes of his soul by the Holy Ghost. For he was illumined.

"The which, in a certain night when he was bodily sleeping, his heart to God waking, he was warned of this place, with an heavenly dream made to him, that God this place had chosen, his name therein to be put and set, and holy and worshipful it should be showed to Christian people. Whereupon this holy King, early arising, came to this place that God had shewed him; and to them that about him stood, expressed the vision that night made to him, said before all the people, prophesied this place to be great before God."

Three men of Greece also, of noble lineage, who were on pilgrimage and had entered England,

"Desiring to visit the bodies of saints there resting," came to London and to Smithfield, "and began wonderful things to say and prophesy of this place. 'Wonder not to see us here to worship God, where a full acceptable temple to him shall be builded; for the high Maker of all things will that it be builded; and the fame of this place shall attain from the spring of the sun to the going down.'"

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)