

and dead to themselves; to love retirement, and to be always employed in the business of their heavenly Father, is the characteristic of the ministers of the altar. Such were the pastors who formed so many saints. The reformation of the manners of the people depends very much upon that of the clergy. *Judgment must begin from the house of God.*¹ A clergyman is one separated from the people, as his name and office imply: separated not only in his education and ministry, but, in some degree, in his life and conversation. How much soever he is filled with the spirit of his profession, this will be soon extinguished, and the contagion of the world or love of vanity, pleasure, riches, and honour, insensibly contracted by too great familiarity with it. *It shall be as with the people, so with the priest.*²

SS. VITALIS AND AGRICOLA, MM.

ST. AMBROSE informs us that Agricola was a gentleman of Bologna, whose behaviour in the world had engaged the affection of the idolaters amongst whom he lived. Vitalis, his slave learned from him the Christian religion, and first received the crown: for the servant and the freeman are one and the same thing in Christ, nor is there any difference from their condition in their reward. They were both seized, probably in the year 304, and Vitalis first put to the torture. He ceased not to praise God so long as he had the use of his tongue; and seeing no part of his body left which was not covered with wounds and blood, he prayed Jesus Christ to receive his soul, and to bestow on him that crown which his angel had shown him. His prayer was no sooner ended than he gave up the ghost. Agricola's execution was deferred out of a cruel compassion, that time

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 17.

² Isa. xxiv. 2.

and the sight of the sufferings of his faithful servant might daunt his resolution. But he was animated and encouraged by such an example. Whereupon the affection of the judges and people was converted into fury; and the martyr was hung on a cross, and his body pierced with so many huge nails that the number of his wounds surpassed that of his limbs. The bodies of the martyrs were laid in the burial place of the Jews. St. Ambrose flying from the arms of the tyrant Eugenius, came to Bologna in 393, and there discovered these relics. He took to himself some of the blood that was found in the bottom of the grave, and the cross and nails which were the instruments of Agricola's martyrdom. Juliana, a devout widow of Florence, invited him to dedicate a church she had built in that city, and begged of him this treasure, which he was not able to refuse her, and the value of which he much extols to her three daughters, bidding them receive with respect these presents of salvation, which were laid under the altar.

ST. JOANNICIUS, ABBOT.

THIS saint, by holy penance after a dissolute youth, arrived at so eminent a degree of sanctity, as to be ranked by the Greek Church amongst the most illustrious saints of the monastic Order. He was a native of Bithynia, and a hog driver; afterward he rode in the guards of Constantine Copronymus, or at least of his son and successor Leo IV. surnamed Chazares, and was distinguished by a robust constitution, big stature, intrepid courage, and many military exploits, but was carried away with the torrent of the times, and became a violent persecutor of holy images. By the conversation of a holy monk in the reign of the Catholic empress Irene, he was reclaimed from his error and dissolute life, and,