

the name of St. Aper, whose relics and miracles rendered it famous. A monastery was soon after built to this church; and, in the decline of the sixth century, the abbot Apollinaris governed both this church and that of Agaunum. St. Leo IX bishop of Toul, afterwards pope, carried certain relics of St. Mansuetus (first bishop of Toul in the reign of Constantine the Great) and of St. Aper with him, and by them cured many of his attendants of the pestilence on the road, as is related by Wibert, archdeacon of that holy pope, in his life. The chief parts of the relics of St. Aper are to this day kept with veneration in his church. See the life of St. Aper among the lives of the bishops of Toul, published by Martenne, t. 3, Anecd. Col. 991, and by Calmet, Hist. de Lorraine, t. 1, inter Instrum. col. 121, ed. 2dæ; also The History of the Bishops of Toul, &c.

---

## SEPTEMBER XVI.

## ST. CORNELIUS, POPE, MARTYR.

From Eus. l. 6, c. 43. S. Pacianus, ep. 23. S. Cypr. ep. 52, ed. Pam. 55, ed. Oxon. ad Antonianum, item ep. 44, &c. ed. Oxon. See Berti, Diss. Hist. t. 2, p. 167. Orsi and Tillemont, Suysken, t. 3, Sept. p. 18.

A. D. 252.

THE holy pope Fabian having been crowned with martyrdom on the 20th of January, in the year 250, the see of Rome remained vacant above sixteen months, the clergy and people not being able all that while, through the violence of the persecution, to assemble for the election of a bishop. St. Cyprian says, that such was the rage of the persecutor Decius, that he would more easily have suffered a competitor in his empire than a bishop in Rome. At length, however, when that emperor was taken up in opposing the revolt of Julius Valens, or in his wars against the Goths, at a distance from Rome, Cornelius was chosen to fill the apostolic chair in 251. St. Cyprian testifies that he was a person of an unblemished character and virginal purity, remarkable for his humility; meek, modest, peaceable, and adorned with all other virtues; that he was not advanced to the episcopal dignity on a sudden, but had gone through all the orders of the clergy, as the previous steps, and served the Lord in

the functions of each distinct order, as the canons require. At the time of St. Fabian's death he was a priest in the Roman church, and had the chief share in the direction of affairs during the vacancy of the holy see. Far from aiming at, or desiring the supreme dignity in the church to which he was raised, he suffered violence, says the same St. Cyprian, and was promoted to it by force and compulsion. In this we see the character of the Spirit of God, which teaches holy men in humility and distrust sincerely to fear and decline such posts, which presumption, vanity and ambition make others seek and invade, who by this mark alone, are sufficiently proved to be most unworthy. And Cornelius, by gradually proceeding through all the functions of the ministry, according to the spirit of the church, had attained all the graces and virtues by which he was qualified for that high station. The election of Cornelius was made by a due assembly of almost all the clergy of Rome; a great number also of the laity, who were present, consented to and demanded his ordination. The concurring suffrages of sixteen ancient and worthy bishops, (two of whom were Africans,) who happened then to be in Rome, confirmed the same, and the elect was compelled to receive the episcopal consecration. St. Cyprian and other bishops, according to custom, despatched to him letters of communion and congratulation. Matters were thus settled when the devil found in Novatian an instrument to disturb the peace of the church.

This man had been a Stoic philosopher, and had gained a considerable reputation by his eloquence. He at length embraced the faith, but continued a catechumen, till, falling dangerously ill, and his life being despaired of, he was baptized in bed, not by immersion, which was then the most usual method, but by infusion, or the pouring on of water. Recovering, he received not the seal of the Lord by the hand of the bishop, says St. Pacian, that is to say, the sacrament of confirmation. Both these defects were, by the ancient discipline of the church, bars to holy orders. The Clinici, or persons who had been baptized in bed in time of sickness, were declared irregular, and excluded from the priesthood; not as if such a baptism was defective, but in detestation of the sloth and lukewarmness by which such persons put off their baptism till they were in

immediate danger of death. Novatian, notwithstanding this double irregularity, was afterwards ordained priest. The persecution coming on, he kept himself shut up in his house; and when the deacons solicited him to go and assist his brethren, he went away in a rage, saying he would no longer serve the church, being fond of another kind of philosophy. Afterwards, with a view to make himself conspicuous by opposing the pastors, he became very rigid, and complained that some who had fallen in the persecution were too easily admitted again. By this pharisaical zeal he made a small party, and counted some among the confessors who were in prison at Rome in his interest. He was much emboldened in his cabals by Novatus, a wicked priest of Carthage. This man having strenuously abetted the deacon Felicissimus in the schism which he raised against St. Cyprian, about the beginning of the year 251, to avoid the sentence of excommunication with which St. Cyprian threatened him, fled to Rome, and there, joining Novatian, either first stirred him up to commence an open schism, or at least very much encouraged him in it. So notoriously were ambition and faction the aim of this turbulent man, that though at Carthage he had condemned the conduct of St. Cyprian towards the lapsed as too severe, he was not ashamed to ground his schism at Rome upon the opposite principle, calling there the self-same discipline of the church a criminal relaxation of the law of the gospel.

To frame a clear conception of this controversy, it is necessary to observe that those Christians who in the persecution had offered incense to idols, were called *Sacrificati* and *Thurificati*; others who purchased with money of the imperial officers libels or certificates of safety, as if they had offered sacrifice, (by which they were guilty of the same scandal,) were called *Libellatici*, or certificate-men. All the lapsed, upon giving marks of sincere repentance, were admitted by the church to a course of severe canonical penance, which was shorter and milder with regard to the certificate-men than to apostates; which term being completed, (or abridged by an indulgence given by the bishop,) they were received to communion. If any penitent, during the course of his penance, happened to be in danger of death the benefit of absolution and communion

was granted him. This discipline was confirmed by several councils at Rome, in Africa, and other places, and at this Novatian took offence, pretending that the lapsed ought never to be again admitted to penance, or to receive absolution, not even after having performed any course of penance, or in the article of their death. Yet he did not bid them despair, but left them to the divine mercy, exhorting them privately (though excluded from the communion of the rest of the faithful) to make application to God for mercy, hoping that he would be moved to show them compassion at the last day. Novatian soon added heresy to his schism, maintaining that the church had not received from Christ power to absolve sinners from the crime of apostacy, how penitent soever they might be. His followers afterwards taught the same of murder and fornication, and condemned second marriages.\* His disciples were called Novatians and Cathari, that is, pure. Having separated many persons from the communion of Cornelius, he decoyed three bishops from a corner of Italy, to come to Rome, and ordain him bishop of that city. One of these bishops returned soon after to the church, bewailing and confessing his guilt, and was admitted by St. Cornelius to lay-communion; for he remained deposed from his dignity, as well as the two other bishops who were concerned with him, and Pope Cornelius sent others to fill up their sees. Thus Novatian was the first anti-pope, though he was author not only of a schism, but also of a heresy, and was acknowledged bishop only by heretics. On account of his errors he is called by St. Cyprian,(1) "A deserter of the church, an enemy to all tenderness, a very murderer of penance, a teacher of pride, a corrupter of the truth, and a destroyer of charity."

St. Cornelius assembled at Rome a synod of sixty bishops, in which he confirmed the canons, by which it was ordained to admit the lapsed that were penitent to public penance; and bishops and priests, who had fallen, only to the rank of laymen, without power of exercising any sacerdotal function.

(1) Ep. 57, Pam. 60, Fello. p. 172.

\* On these errors of the Novatians see Bellarm. l. 3, de Eccl. Milit. c. 2. Juenin de Penit. c. 1, qu. 1. Albaspinæus, Observ. Eccl. l. 2, c. 21. Orsi, De Criminum Capitalium inter veteres Christianos Absolutione, p. 251. Mosheim, Instit. Histor. Eccl. sæc. 3, part. 2, sect. 14. Nat. Alex. sæc. 3, &c.

Novatian, who was there present, and obstinately refused to communicate with such penitents, was excommunicated. The confessors, Maximus a priest, Urbanus, Sidonius, Celerinus, and Moses, who had been seduced by Novatian to favour his schism, were disabused by the letters of St. Cyprian and the evidence of truth and justice, and were all received to communion by St. Cornelius, to the great joy of the people, as appears from a letter of this pope to St. Cyprian,<sup>(1)</sup> and from a fragment of the last of his four letters to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, preserved by Eusebius. This historian informs us that there were in the church of Rome, in the time of Pope Cornelius, forty-six priests, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, lectors, and janitors, or door-keepers, and one thousand five hundred widows and other poor persons whom the church maintained.

St. Cyprian exceedingly extols the zeal and piety with which St. Cornelius behaved in his pastoral charge; and the courage and steadfastness with which he adhered to his duty in the most perilous times. "Should not he be ranked among the most illustrious martyrs and confessors," says he, "who continued so long under the expectation of tormentors and savage executioners from the enraged tyrant, to mangle his body; to behead, or to burn, or to crucify: or, with some new and unexampled invention of malice and cruelty to tear and torture the bowels of this intrepid champion, opposing the dreadful edicts, and, through the mighty power of his faith, despising the torments wherewith he was threatened! Though the goodness of God hath hitherto protected his bishop, yet Cornelius gave sufficient evidence of his love and fidelity, by being ready to suffer all he could suffer, and by his zeal conquering the tyrant (Decius) first, who was soon after conquered in battle."<sup>(2)</sup> Our saint, who deserved by his constancy to be ranked among the martyrs in the persecution of Decius, attained to his crown a short time after. Decius being defeated by the Goths in Thrace, perished in a bog, towards the end of the year 251, and was succeeded by Gallus, the general of his army, who had betrayed him. The respite which this revolution seemed

(1) Inter. Cyprian, ep. 46, ed. Pam. 49, cd. Oxon.

(2) S. Cypr. ep. 55, ad Antonian.

to give the church was of a short continuance. A pestilence which ravaged the empire, alarmed the superstition of the new emperor, who thought he should appease the anger of his false gods by taking vengeance on the Christians, though his persecution is called by most writers a part of the seventh, or a continuation of that of Decius, whose edicts he put more rigorously in execution than that emperor himself had ever done. Pope Cornelius was the first person who was apprehended at Rome. Having made a glorious confession of his faith, he was sent into banishment to Centumcellæ, now called Civita Vecchia. St. Cyprian wrote him a congratulatory letter upon the news of his happiness in suffering for Christ.(1) In this epistle he clearly foretels the approaching conflicts of them both, and says God had, by a special revelation, warned him of his own, and that he therefore earnestly exhorted his people to prepare for it in continual watchfulness, fasting, and prayer. He adds: "Whoever of us shall be first favoured with a removal hence, let our charity persevere with the Lord for our brethren in never-ceasing prayers unto the Father for our brethren and sisters."

St. Cornelius was called to eternal bliss in 252, on the 14th of September, on the same day on which St. Cyprian was martyred six years after, though they are commemorated together in the present Roman Martyrology on the 16th. The Librarian Calendar mentions, that St. Cornelius having been banished to Centumcellæ, slept in the Lord on the 14th of this month. St. Jerom tells us, in his life of St. Cyprian, that this holy pope was brought back from Centumcellæ to Rome, and there suffered death, which is confirmed by Eusebius in his chronicle, by St. Prosper in his, by St. Eulogius of Alexandria, quoted by Photius, (Bibl. p. 1622.) St. Pacianus, (ep. 2, ad. Symphor.) St. Cyprian, writing to his successor St. Lucius, (ep. 58,) and in a letter to the next pope, Stephen, (ep. 67,) styles Cornelius a blessed martyr. His relics were first interred in the cemetery of Calixtus, where St. Leo. I. built a chapel in honour of them; Adrian I. placed them in a stately church, which he built in the city to bear his name, as Anastasius relates. In the reign of Charles, the son of Lewis

(1) S. Cypr ap. 57, Pam. 60, Fello.

Debonnaire, the sacred remains of St. Cornelius were translated to Compeigne in France,\* where the emperor built a church and monastery of canons to receive them, which in 1150 was put in the hands of Benedictine monks; of which famous abbey of St. Cornelius a considerable portion of these relics is to this day esteemed the richest treasure. The head and one arm were removed to the abbey of Inda, on the river of that name, near Aix la Chapelle, and there honoured with pilgrimages to this day, and miracles. Part of this arm and other bones were translated from Inda to Rotnay, or Rosnay, formerly a monastery founded by St. Amand, in the diocese of Cambrai, now in that of Mechlin, between Courtray and Tournay, and converted long since into a collegiate church of canons.(1)

St. Irenæus, Origen, and other fathers observe, that most of the heretics were spared in the persecutions, which fell either solely, or at least most heavily upon the Catholics. This was sometimes owing to the subtrefuges of the heretics, often to the persecutors. St. Cyprian, in his last letter to Pope Cornelius,(2) makes the same remark concerning the Novatians; but attributes it to the devil: "Who," says he, "are the servants of God, whom the devil so molests? Who are truly Christians, whom Antichrist with all his might opposes? For the devil troubles not himself with those whom he hath already made sure of, nor does he labour to conquer those who are now in his power. The great enemy of the church overlooks them as his captives and passes them by without thinking them worth his notice, whom he hath already seduced and alienated from the church, and employs his pains and strata-

(1) See Pamelius in S. Cypr. Miræus in Fastis, the Bollandists, p. 188, &c.

(2) Ep. 57, alias 60, ad Corn.

\* Compeigne was a royal palace in the reign of the children of Clovis I. as appears from St. Gregory of Tours. The Emperor Charles the Bald built here a stately church adjoining to his palace with a cloister, in which he placed one hundred canons and other clergymen. When he was crowned emperor by John VIII. in 875, that pope made him a present of the bodies of SS. Cornelius and Cyprian, which he deposited in this church, which he called SS. Cornelius and Cyprian's. Pope Eugenius III. and King Lewis VI. expelled the canons, and placed in this royal monastery monks from St. Denys in 1150, which have adopted the reformation of the congregation of S. Maur.

gems upon those in whom he observes Christ to dwell. Although, if it should so happen, that one of that wretched company should be seized, he could have no reason to flatter himself with any hopes upon his confession of Christ; since it is an agreed rule, that whoever suffers without the church, is so far from being entitled to the crown of faith, that he continues obnoxious to the punishment of having forsaken it."

### SAINT CYPRIAN, M.,

#### ARCHBISHOP OF CARTHAGE

We have his life written by Pontius, his deacon, an eye-witness to his principal actions; also two-fold genuine copies of extracts from the Precidial Acts of his two examinations, and of his martyrdom. The saint's epistles furnishes us with ample memoirs. See his life compiled by Tillemont, t. 3, and best by Dom. Maran, the Maurist monk, prefixed to the edition of this father's works, prepared by Baluze, before his death, but published by Maran in 1726. The Cyprianic annals of Bishop Pearson, and some of Dodwell's Dissertations, printed in the Oxford edition, are of great service. Maran has corrected several mistakes, particularly relating to the schism of Novatus, into which Pearson, Tillemont, and all who had wrote before him, had been led. See also the life of St. Cyprian compiled in French by M. Lombert, who printed a French translation of all his works in 1672. Another elegant translation of the same was printed at Rouen in 1716, with learned remarks; and Suysken the Bollandist, t. 3, Sept. p. 191.

A. D. 258.

THASCIUS CYPRIAN was a native of Carthage, his father being one of the principal senators of that city. He made great improvements in philosophy and all the liberal arts, applied himself to the study of oratory and eloquence with great success, and was made public professor of rhetoric at Carthage. This employment was anciently most honourable, and all this time he lived suitably to the rank of his birth, in great pomp and plenty; in honour and power, wearing a splendid attire, and never stirring abroad without a pompous retinue, and a crowd of clients and followers waiting upon him. He tells us in his book to Donatus, that he had lived a long time amidst the fasces, which were the Roman emblem of the supreme magistracy; but he deploras that he was then a slave to vice and evil habits. The far greater part of his life he passed in the errors of paganism, and he was upon the borders of old age when he was rescued from the darkness of idolatry, and the servitude of vice and errors.