

divine praises, and taking each monk by the hand as they passed, as if it were to deliver them to the executioner. The Acts say he saw also a bright cross of fire shining over the bodies of the slain. Whether he had been before inclined to the Christian religion, or owed his conversion wholly to a sudden extraordinary light, he became on the spot a perfect Christian: and being moved by a strong impulse of divine grace, felt in himself an earnest desire to make one in that blessed company. He therefore alighted from his horse, changed clothes with his servant, and whispered in the abbot's ear, begging to be admitted into the happy number of his holy troop, as he was united with them in faith and desire. The abbot assenting, he passed through his hands after the ninth, and was beheaded by the executioner, who did not know him. He was succeeded by the eleventh martyr. Last of all, the venerable Barsabias, the father of these martyrs, presented his neck to the executioner. The bodies of these twelve saints were left to be devoured by the wild beasts and birds of prey; but their heads were brought to the city, and set up in the temple of Nahitis, or Venus. For, though the Magians detested all idols, there were several sects of idolaters in many parts of Persia.* The example of the Magian martyr moved his wife, children, and whole family zealously to profess the Christian faith.—These martyrs suffered on the 3d day of June, in the third year of the great persecution of Sapor, the thirty-third of his reign, of Christ 342. St. Barsabias is commemorated both in the Greek Menologies and in the Roman Martyrology on the 11th of December. See the Chaldaic Acts of these martyrs, published by Monsignor Stephen Assemani, *Acta Mart. Orient.* t. 1.

ST. ZENOBIUS, BISHOP OF FLORENCE, C.

THIS holy pastor is honoured at Florence as the patron, protector, and principal apostle of that city, of which he was a

* The system of a good and evil principle was not peculiar to the Magians; for it prevailed in many parts of Asia and Africa, especially in some sects among the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syrians, Indians, and Egyptians, but made its appearance in great variety of shapes and dresses. See Joan Christoph. Welfii *Manicheismus ante Manichæos*, Hamb. 1707; et Moshemi *Observationes ad Cudworthi Systema*, pp. 323, 423. But, as in all these countries, there were other numerous sects which worshipped idols, so there were also in Persia.

native. He was born towards the close of the reign of Constantine the Great, passed through a regular course of education under eminent masters ; and applied himself particularly to the study of philosophy. In his search after wisdom he discovered the folly and falsehood of idolatry, in which he had been educated, and listening to the doctrine of the gospel, attained to the happiness of faith. The seeds of the Christian religion had taken some root at Florence under Romulus, Paulinus, and Frontinus, whom some call disciples of the apostle St. Peter.(1) But Lamius(2) shows that their mission seems not to have been of so early a date, but of the second or third age. Foggini(3) thinks it not clear that St. Romulus, bishop of Fiesoli, two miles from Florence, flourished before the beginning of the fourth age, though it is not to be doubted but the faith of Christ began to be planted at Florence long before that time : which is manifest from the undoubted proofs that SS. Minias and his companions, SS. Crescius, Entius, Pamphyla, and others, glorified God there by martyrdom in some of the first general persecutions. It appears no less certain that idolatry was still the fashionable or reigning religion at Florence when St. Zenobius became an humble follower of Christ. He was baptized privately by the Bishop of Florence ; at which his parents took so great offence, that they raised a violent storm both against their son and the bishop, pretending that the step they had taken was an injury done to their paternal authority. Zenobius answered both for himself and the bishop with so much meekness and constancy, and, in justifying his own conduct, interwove so rational an account of our holy faith, as to satisfy his parents. And when he had once gained their benevolence and attention, it was no hard matter to bring them over to the Church of Christ. In order to devote himself to God in the most perfect manner, and to qualify himself to impart the blessing of divine faith to his countrymen, he entered

(1) Baron. ad an. 46, n. 11.

(2) Lamius, *Singulari de Eruditione Apost. libro, c. 11, p. 190, ed. an. 1738.* Foggini, *De Romano S. Petri Itinere et Episcopatu, Exercit. 14, p. 289, ad p. 365.*

(3) See Foggini, *ib. p. 290*, and his defence under the following title, *La vera Istoria di S. Romolo, Vescovo e Protettore di Fiesole, liberata dal D. Fr. Foggini dalle calunnie. Anno 1742.*

himself among the clergy. When he was only deacon, he preached with so great fruit, and such reputation, that he became known to St. Ambrose of Milan, and was called to Rome by Pope Damasus. The death of that pontiff restored him to his liberty, which he made use of to return to Florence, where he began again to cultivate the vineyard which called for all his strength and attention. The bishop of that city dying, the saint was placed in that see, and by his admirable humility, modesty, abstinence, and charity, approved himself truly an apostolical pastor. In extirpating the kingdom of Satan, and establishing that of Christ in the hearts of so many multitudes, a sphere of action was opened to him commensurate to his zeal; nor did he ever cease earnestly commending to Christ the souls that were intrusted to his care, or feeding them with the word of God, who confirmed his doctrine by miracles. The minds of men grown old in any way of thinking, enfeebled by inveterate sloth, immersed in worldly pursuits, and enslaved to tyrannical passions, have, as it were, formed to themselves a bed in the earth, from which they cannot easily be removed. Zenobius was no stranger to the difficulties of the task which he had undertaken, to awaken men who were insensible to spiritual things: he, therefore, redoubled his earnestness in his labours, and in engaging Omnipotence to bless them with success. Thus he had the comfort to see a numerous people brought into the path of everlasting happiness.

St. Zenobius died in the reign of Honorius. His relics are kept with veneration in the great church at Florence, and his name occurs in the Roman Martyrology on the 25th of May. See the abridgment of his ancient life in St. Antoninus, Ughelli in *Italia Sacra*, Foggini loco cit. and principally the accurate and elegant Giuseppe Richa, S. J. in *Notizie Istoriche delle Chiese Fiorentine*, t. 6, in Fierenze, anno 1757.

ST. SINDULPHUS, PRIEST OF RHEIMS,

COMMONLY CALLED ST. SENDOU.

INFLAMED with a desire to aim at perfection he left Aquitain, his native country, and sought for a retreat in the diocese of Rheims, about the beginning of the seventh century. He chose for his residence the village of Aussenon, four leagues from