

lous Christian, and was instructed by St. Peter, or his disciples, in the most perfect maxims of our holy faith. Nazarius embraced it with so much ardour that he copied in his life all the great virtues he saw in his teachers; and out of zeal for the salvation of others left Rome, his native city, and preached the faith in many places with a fervour and disinterestedness becoming a disciple of the apostles. Arriving at Milan he was there beheaded for the faith, together with Celsus, a youth whom he carried with him to assist him in his travels. These martyrs suffered soon after Nero had raised the first persecution. Their bodies were buried separately in a garden without the city, where they were discovered and taken up by St. Ambrose in 395. In the tomb of St. Nazarius a vial of the saint's blood was found as fresh and red as if it had been spilt that day. The faithful stained handkerchiefs with some drops, and also formed a certain paste with it; a portion of which St. Ambrose sent to St. Gaudentius, bishop of Brescia. St. Ambrose conveyed the bodies of the two martyrs into the new church of the apostles, which he had just built. A woman was delivered of an evil spirit in their presence; St. Ambrose sent some of these relics of St. Paulinus of Nola, who received them with great respect, as a most valuable present, as he testifies.(1)

The martyrs died as the outcasts of the world, but are crowned by God with immortal honour. The glory of the world is false and transitory, and an empty bubble or shadow; but that of virtue is true, solid, and permanent, even in the eyes of men; for, to use the comparison of St. Basil,(2) as the more we look upon the sun the more we admire it, and by reviewing it never find it less bright or less beautiful; so the memory of the martyrs which we celebrate, after so many years, is only more fresh in our minds, and will be more flourishing in all ages to come.

### ST. VICTOR, POPE, M.

He was a native of Africa, and succeeded St. Eleutherius in the pontificate, in the year 192, the nineteenth of Commodus.

(1) St. Paulin. Carm. 24, and ep. 12. On the relics of St. Nazarius at Milan, see the life of St. Charles Borromeo, by Guissiano, in the new Latin edition, l. 5, c. 9, p. 435, and the notes of Oltrocchi, ibid.

(2) S. Bas. hom. de S. Gordio

The practice of those virtues which had prepared him for that dignity rendered him a true successor of the apostles. He vigorously opposed the rising heresies of that age. Theodotus of Byzantium, a tanner, having apostatized from the faith to save his life in a late persecution, afterwards, to extenuate his guilt, pretended that he had denied only a man, not God; teaching that Christ was nothing more than a mere man, as the Socinians teach at this day; whereas the Arians allowed him to have been before the world, though himself a creature. Theodotus, going to Rome, there drew many into his blasphemous error; for he was well versed in polite literature; but Victor checked his progress by excommunicating him, with Ebion, Artemon, and another Theodotus, who had taught the same blasphemy.<sup>(1)</sup> This other Theodotus, called Trapezita, or the banker, was author of the Melchisedecian heresy, pretending that Melchisedec was greater than Christ.

Montanus, a new convert in Mysia, near Phrygia, out of an unbounded desire of invading the first dignities of the church, and filled with rage to see himself disappointed, began to preach against the church; and having by pride and ambition given entrance to the devil, commenced false prophet, and sometimes losing his senses, began in an enthusiastic strain to utter extraordinary expressions. Prisca, or Priscilla, and Maximilla, two women of quality, but of debauched lives, left their husbands, and being filled with the same spirit, spoke like Montanus, void of sense, and after an extravagant and unusual manner, pretending they succeeded the prophets among the disciples of the apostles. Montanus placed himself above the apostles, saying that he had received the Paraclete, or the Holy Ghost promised by Christ, to perfect his law. He denied that the church had power to forgive the sins of idolatry, murder, and impurity, and hardly received any sinners on repentance. St. Paul had allowed second marriages; but Montanus forbade them as inconsistent with the perfect law of chastity; and he forbade Christians to flee in time of persecution. The Montanists were also called from their country, Cataphryges, and Pepuzeni, from Pepuzium, a little town in Phrygia, which was their capital,

(1) S. Epiph. Hær. 54; Eus. l. 5, c. 28; Conc. t. 1; Theodoret, Hæret. Fabul. l. 2, c. 5.

and which they called Jerusalem.(1) They boasted of their martyrs, as the Marcionites also did; which other heretics seldom pretend to, as St. Irenæus and Origen take notice; nor could these have any great number. Apollonius, a Catholic writer quoted by Eusebius, confounding the hypocrisy of the Montanists, reproached their pretended prophetesses with infamous debaucheries, and with receiving presents, saying: "Does a prophet colour his hair, paint his eye-brows, play at dice, or lend out money on usury? I will demonstrate that they are guilty of these things." The Catholics met to examine their pretended new prophecies, and convicted them of falsehood, because the true prophets were not beside themselves when they spoke; also, the Montanists had lied in their predictions, and opposed the doctrine of the church. Asterius Urbanus, a learned priest, (for he calls St. Zoticus fellow-priest,) confounded them by these arguments, in a great conference held at Ancyra, about the year 188. Their prophecies and errors being condemned as impious, the followers of Montanus were driven out of the church, and excommunicated. It was reported for certain that Montanus and Maximilla, led away by the spirit that possessed them, afterwards hanged themselves. These particulars are related by Eusebius.

Tertullian who fell into this heresy about the time of the death of Pope Victor, says,(2) that this pope at first admitted to the communion of the church these pretended prophets. And it was easy to be deceived in a matter of fact concerning persons at such a distance, and who appeared under the garb of hypocrisy. But he had no sooner answered their letters, in which he acknowledged them brethren, but Praxeas coming from the East, brought him an ample account of their tenets and practice: and Victor immediately recalled his letters of communion, and condemned these innovators. This Praxeas was a Phrygian, and being puffed up because he had suffered imprisonment for the faith, began to sow a new heresy at Rome, maintaining but one person in God, and attributing crucifixion to the Father as well as the Son; whence his followers were

(1) Eus. l. 5, c. 17; St. Hier. ep. 54, ad Marcel.; Tert. l. de Fugâ, de Pudic. &c.

(2) Tert. l. adv. Praxeam.

called Patripassians. His errors being brought to light, he was also cut off from the communion of the church.

About the same time Tatian fell from the church. He was a Syrian, a Platonic philosopher, and a disciple of St. Justin, martyr, after whose death he taught some time at Rome. Afterwards, returning into Syria in 171, he there broached his errors, which he durst not advance at Rome. He borrowed several of them from Marcion, Valentinus, and Saturninus, teaching two principles, and that the Creator is the evil principle of God. He added several new errors, as that Adam was damned. He condemned marriage as no less criminal than adultery, whence his followers were called Encratitæ, or the continent. They were likewise called Hydroparastatæ, or Aquarii, because, in consecrating the Eucharist, they used only water. for they condemned all use of wine, and likewise the use of flesh-meat.(1) The ancients observe that Tatian's fall was owing to pride, which often attends an opinion of knowledge;\* and of this there cannot be a more dangerous symptom in a scholar than a fondness for novelty and singularity, especially if joined with obstinacy and opiniativeness.

St. Victor was watchful to cut off these scandals in their root, and everywhere to maintain the purity of the faith with unity. Upon this motive, he exerted his zeal in the dispute about the time of celebrating Easter. The churches of Lesser Asia kept it with the Jews on the fourteenth day of the first moon after the vernal equinox, on whatever day of the week it

(1) S. Epiph. Hær. 46; S. Iren. l. 1, c. 31; Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 3, p. 465.

\* Tatian's Oration against the Greeks is extant. In it he displays much profane erudition, showing that Moses was older than the Gentile philosophers, who borrowed the sciences from the patriarchs. He wrote this piece after the death of St. Justin, but before his separation from the church: for in it he proves one God the Creator of all things, and seems to approve the state of matrimony. It wants method; but the style is elegant enough, though exuberant, and not very elaborate. This piece is often published at the end of the works of St. Justin. We have an accurate separate edition, printed at Oxford in 1700, with notes and dissertations, by the care of Mr. William Worth, archdeacon of Worcester. P. Travasa, in his learned history of heresiarchs, demonstrates against Massuet, &c., that Tatian's Oration against the Gentiles is not orthodox; and that in it the author teaches that the human soul is of its own nature mortal. See Travasa *Storia Critica delle vite degli eresiarchi*, t. 2, at Venice, 1760.

fell. The Roman church, and all the rest of the world, kept Easter always on the Sunday immediately following that fourteenth day. Pope Anicetus permitted these Asiatics to keep their own custom, even at Rome; but Pope Soter, his successor, obliged them to conform to the custom of places where they should be. Several councils held at Rome, in Palestine, in Pontus, in Gaul, at Corinth, and other places, unanimously determined the point according to the Roman custom. Yet Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, wrote strenuously in defence of the Asiatic custom, which he said was derived from St. Philip who died at Hierapolis, from St. John the Evangelist, St. Polycarp, bishop and martyr, Sagarus, bishop and martyr, who died at Laodicea, and others. Victor seeing the Asiatics fixed in their resolution, threatened to cut them off from the communion of the church; from the words of Eusebius\* some moderns infer with Baronius, Coustant, and De Marca, that he excommunicated them in a letter, but immediately suspended or recalled the sentence: others with Thomassin, Natalis Alexander, and Graveson, think that he only threatened it; which opinion best agrees with the sequel. To reconcile the different passages of authors, F. John Philip Monti(1) thinks Pope Victor, upon receiving the refractory answer of Polycrates, drew up a sentence of excommunication, but never sent or published the same, being overcome by the advice of St. Irenæus. The schism which Blastus, a priest, had lately formed at Rome, upon the difference of this rite, for which he had been degraded by Pope Eleutherius, probably made St. Victor more severe in extirpating a practice which became daily more dangerous to the unity of the church; but prudence and charity recommended a toleration some time longer, which he was prevailed upon to grant, by a letter of St. Irenæus, who wrote to him on that subject in his own name, and in that of his brethren in Gaul. St. Victor died soon after this, in the year 201, the ninth of Severus, after he had sat ten years. He is styled a martyr by some writers of

(1) Monti, Cler. Reg. S. Pauli, S. Th. Prof. Mediolani, *Dissertationes Theologico-historicæ tres*, quarum prima propugnat gratiam per se efficacem; Secunda agit de Canonibus vulgò apostolicis; Tertia versatur super dissidio de opportuno Paschatis celebrandi tempore. Papiæ, 1760.

the fifth age, and in an ancient pontifical written in 530. Though Severus only published the edicts for his persecution in 202, several Christians had suffered in his reign before that time, as Tillemont remarks. (1) F. Pagi thinks St. Victor did not die by the sword, because in some Martyrologies he is called only confessor, though his dignity and zeal exposed him to continual persecutions, for which alone he might deserve the title of martyr. See Eusebius Hist. l. 5, c. 23; Orsi, Berti Diss. Hist. t. 2, p. 88.

### ST. INNOCENT I., POPE AND CONFESSOR.

He was a native of Albano, near Rome; and upon the death of Pope Anastasius, in 402, was unanimously chosen to fill the pontifical chair. He ascended it by compulsion, and considering himself in it with trembling, he never ceased to beg of God the spirit of his holy wisdom and prudence, which he stood the more in need of, as the times in which he lived were more difficult. Alaric the Goth, with an army of barbarians, threatened to carry desolation over all Italy. The pope exhorted the faithful to receive the scourges of heaven with submission and humility, and undertook several journeys to negotiate a reconciliation between the emperor Honorius and Alaric, but in vain. The Goths received a great overthrow from the Roman army commanded by Stilico, in 403. But Alaric led them a second time to attempt the plunder of Rome; and because Honorius refused to make him general of the imperial army, he took that city on the 24th of August, 410, and abandoned it to the fury of his soldiers, excepting the church of SS. Peter and Paul, to which he granted the privilege of a sanctuary. Pope Innocent was at that time absent with the emperor at Ravenna. The year following, Alaric being dead, his brother-in-law and successor Atulphus again plundered Rome.

After the departure of the barbarians, the good pope hastened thither, and by his presence brought comfort and joy to that afflicted people. He taught them to draw an advantage from their sufferings by making a good use of them; and so much were the Heathens edified at the patience, resignation,

(1) Mem. Eccles. t. 3, p. 112.