

treasure. At the request of these monks, St. Bernard composed an office of St. Victor, extant in his works, (ep. 312. vet. ed. seu 398. nov. edit.) See the two sermons of St. Bernard on Saint Victor, and his ancient life in Henschenius and others: from which it appears that this saint never was a monk, never having professed any monastic Order, though he led an eremitical life.

FEBRUARY XXVII.

ST. LEANDER, BISHOP OF SEVILLE,

CONFESSOR.

From St. Isidore of Seville, St. Gregory the Great, and St. Gregory of Tours, Hist. l. 5. See Fleury, b. 34, 35, 36. Mabillon, Sæc. Ben. l. Ceillier, t. 17.

A.D. 596.

ST. LEANDER was of an illustrious family, and born at Carthage in Spain. He had two brothers, St. Faugentius, bishop of Ecija and Carthage, and St. Isidore, our saint's successor in the see of Seville. He had also one sister, Florentia by name, who had consecrated herself to God in the state of virginity. He set them an example of that piety which they faithfully imitated. He entered into a monastery very young, where he lived many years, and attained to an eminent degree of virtue and sacred learning. These qualities occasioned his being promoted to the see of Seville: but his change of condition made little or no alteration in his method of life, though it brought on him a great increase of care and solicitude for the salvation of those whom God had put under his care, as well as for the necessities of the whole church, that of Spain in particular. This kingdom was then possessed by the Visigoths, or Western-Goths; who, while Theodoric settled the Ostrogoths, or Eastern-Goths, in Italy, had passed the Alps, and founded their kingdom, first in Languedoc, and soon after, about the year 470, in Spain. These Goths, being for the generality all infected with Arianism, established this heresy wherever they came; so that when St. Leander was made bishop, it had reigned in Spain a hundred years. This was his great affliction: however, by his tears and prayers to God, and by his most zealous and unwearied endeavours both at home and

abroad, he became the happy instrument of the conversion of that nation to the Catholic faith. But he suffered much from king Leovigild on this account, and was at length forced into banishment; the saint having converted, among others, Hermenegild, the king's eldest son and heir apparent.

This pious prince his unnatural father put to death the year following, for refusing to receive the communion from the hands of an Arian bishop. But, touched with remorse not long after, he recalled our saint, and falling sick and finding himself past hopes of recovery, he sent for St. Leander, whom he had so much persecuted, and recommended to him his son Recared, whom he left his successor, to be instructed in the true faith; though out of fear of his people, as St. Gregory laments, he durst not embrace it himself. His son Recared, by listening to St. Leander, soon became a Catholic. The king also spoke with so much wisdom on the controverted points to the Arian bishops, that by the force of his reasoning, rather than by his authority, he brought them over to own the truth of the Catholic doctrine; and thus he converted the whole nation of the Visigoths. He was no less successful in the like pious endeavours with respect to the Suevi, a people of Spain, whom his father Leovigild had perverted. It was a subject of great joy to the whole church to behold the wonderful blessing bestowed by Almighty God on the labours of our saint, but to none more than St. Gregory the Great, who wrote to St. Leander to congratulate him on the subject.

This holy prelate was no less zealous in the reformation of manners, than in restoring the purity of faith; and he planted the seeds of that zeal and fervour which afterwards produced so many martyrs and saints. His zeal in this regard appeared in the good regulations set on foot with this intent in the council of Seville, which was called by him, and of which he was, as it were, the soul. In 589, he assisted at the third council of Toledo, of seventy-two bishops, or their deputies, in which were drawn up twenty-three canons relating to discipline, to repair the breaches the Arian heresy had made in fomenting disorders of several kinds. One of these was, that the Arian clergy cohabited with their wives; but the council forbade such of them as were converted to do so, enjoining them a separation from the same chamber, and, if possible, from the same house.⁽¹⁾ This council commanded also the rigorous execution of all penitential

(1) Conc. t. 5. p. 993.

canons without any abatement. The pious cardinal D'Aguirre has written a learned dissertation on this subject. (1)

St. Leander, sensible of the importance of prayer, which is in a devout life what a spring is in a watch, or the main wheel in an engine, laboured particularly to encourage true devotion in all persons, but particularly those of the monastic profession, of which state it is the very essence and constituent. His letter to his sister Florentina, a holy virgin, is called his Rule of a Monastic Life. It turns chiefly on the contempt of the world, and on the exercises of prayer. This saint also reformed the Spanish liturgy.* In this liturgy, and in the third council of Toledo, in conformity to the eastern churches, the Nicene creed was appointed to be read at mass to express a detestation of the Arian heresy. Other western churches, with the Roman, soon imitated this devotion. St. Leander was visited by frequent distempers, particularly the gout, which St. Gregory, who was often afflicted with the same, writing to him, calls a favour and mercy of heaven. This holy doctor of Spain died about the year 596, on the 27th of February, as Mabillon proves from his

(1) Diss. 8. in Conc. Hisp.

* The church of Spain first received the faith from Rome, as Pope Innocent I. informs us. (Ep. ad Decent.) Whence St. Isidore says their divine office was instituted by St. Peter. (l. 1. c. 15. Eccl. Offic.) Their ceremonies and discipline, as of fasting on Saturdays, and other rites mentioned in their council, are Roman. And the Roman liturgy was used in Africa, beyond Spain. But the Goths used a liturgy formed by Uphilas from the Orientals. St. Leander is said to have compiled a liturgy from both, and also from the Gaulish and Oriental liturgies: St. Isidore and St. Ildefonse perfected it. When the Saracens or Arabians became masters of Spain, the Christians of that country were called Mixt-Arabs, and their liturgy, Mozarabic. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries this liturgy gave place to the Roman. Cardinal Ximenes re-established the daily use of the Mozarabic in a chapel of the cathedral of Toledo: it is also used in the same city by seven old Mozarabic churches, but on the days of their patrons only. See Le Brun, liturg. t. 2. p. 272. F. Flores thinks the Mozarabic liturgy was that of the Roman and African churches retained by St. Leander, without any alteration or mixture from the Orientals, except certain very inconsiderable rites. See his Spana Sagrada, t. 3. Diss. de la Missa Antigua de Espagna, p. 187. 198, &c. But though it much resembles it, we are assured by F. Burriel, the learned Jesuit, in his letter on the litary monuments found in Spain, that in some parts there are considerable differences. We shall be fully informed of this, also what masses were added by St. Ildefonse, and of other curious particulars, when we are favoured with the collections he has made from the Gothic MSS. in Spain on this subject; and the new edition of all the liturgies of Christian churches which the Assemani are preparing at Rome in fifteen volumes folio. The Mozarabic liturgy has been printed at Rome in folio by the care of F. Lesley, a Scotch Jesuit.

epitaph. The church of Seville has been a metropolitan see ever since the third century. The cathedral is the most magnificent, both as to structure and ornament, of any in all Spain.

The contempt of the world which the gospel so strongly inculcates, and which St. Leander so eminently practised and taught, is the foundation of a spiritual life; but is of far greater extent than most Christians conceive, for it requires no less than a total disengagement of the affections from earthly things. Those whom God raises to perfect virtue, and closely unites to himself, must cut off and put away everything that can be an obstacle to this perfect union. Their will must be thoroughly purified from all dross of inordinate affections before it can be perfectly absorbed in his. This those who are particularly devoted to the divine service, are especially to take notice of. If this truth were imprinted in the manner that it ought, in the hearts of those who enrol themselves in the service of the church, or who live in cloisters, they would be replenished with heavenly blessings, and the church would have the comfort of seeing apostles of nations revive amongst her clergy, and the monasteries again filled with Antonies, Bennets, and Bernards; whose sanctity, prayers, and example would even infuse into many others the true spirit of Christ amidst the desolation and general blindness of this unhappy age.

SS. JULIAN, CHRONION, AND BESAS, MM.

WHEN the persecution of Decius filled the city of Alexandria with dread and terror, many, especially among the nobles, the rich, and those who held any places in the state, sacrificed to idols, but pale and trembling, so as to show they had neither courage to die, nor heart to sacrifice. Several generous soldiers repaired the scandal given by these cowards. Julian who was grievously afflicted with the gout, and one of his servants, called Chronion, were set on the backs of camels, and cruelly scourged through the whole city, and at length were consumed by fire. Besas, a soldier, was beheaded. See St. Dionysius of Alex. in Eusebius, l. 6. c. 41. ed Val.

ST. THALILÆUS, A CILICIAN.

HE lived a recluse on a mountain in Syria, and shut himself up ten years in an open cage of wood. Theodoret asked him why

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