

the art of living well, according to the received maxim of the fathers and masters of a spiritual life,* nothing is certainly of greater importance, than for us to learn this heavenly art of conversing with God in the manner we ought. We admire the wonderful effects which this exercise produced in the saints, who by it were disengaged from earthly ties, and made spiritual and heavenly; perfect angels on earth: but we experience nothing of this in ourselves. Prayer was in them the channel of all graces, the means of attaining all virtues, and all the treasures of heaven. In us it is fruitless: the reason is plain; for the promises of Christ cannot fail: "we ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss."

ST. CANUTUS, KING OF DENMARK, M

From his life faithfully written by Elnoth, a monk of Canterbury, who had lived twenty-four years in Denmark, and wrote in 1105. It was printed at Copenhagen, in 1602. See also Saxo Grammaticus, the most elegant and judicious of the Danish historian.

A.D. 1086.

ST. CANUTUS, or KNUT, the fourth of that name, king of Denmark. was natural son of Swein III, whose great uncle Canutus had reigned in England. Swein having no lawful issue, took care of the education of Canutus, who being endowed with excellent qualities both of mind and body, answered perfectly well the care of his preceptors and governors. It is hard to say, whether he excelled more in courage, or in conduct and skill in war; but his singular piety perfectly eclipsed all his other endowments. He scourged the seas of pirates, and subdued several neighbouring provinces which infested Denmark with their incursions. The kingdom of Denmark was elective till the year 1660; wherefore, when Swein died, many pitched upon our saint, whose eminent virtues best qualified him for the throne; but the majority, fearing his martial spirit, preferred his eldest natural brother Harold, the seventh king of that name, who for his stupidity and vices, was commonly called the Slothful. Canutus retired into Sweden to King Halstan, who received him with the greatest marks of kindness and esteem; but the king could never induce him to undertake any expedition against Denmark; on the contrary, the Christian hero employed all his power and interest

* Vere novit rectè vivere, qui rectè novit orare. Inter. Serm. S. Augustini, Sermon 55, in Appendix, ed. Ben. t. 5. p. 101.

in the service of his country. Harold dying after two year's reign, Canutus was called to succeed him.

Denmark had received the Christian faith long before ; some say in 826, but wanted a zealous hand at the helm, to put the finishing stroke to that good work. St. Canutus seems to have been pitched upon by providence for this purpose. He began his reign by a successful war against the troublesome barbarous enemies of the state, and by planting the faith in the conquered provinces of Courland, Samogitia, and Livonia. Amidst the glory of his victories, he humbly prostrated himself at the foot of the crucifix, laying there his diadem, and offering himself and his kingdom to the King of kings. After having provided for its peace and safety, and enlarged its territories, he married Eltha, or Alice, daughter of Robert, earl of Flanders, by whom he had a pious son, St. Charles, surnamed the Good, afterwards also earl of Flanders. His next concern was to reform abuses at home. For this purpose, he enacted severe, but necessary laws, for the strict administration of justice, and repressed the violence and tyranny of the great, without respect of persons. He countenanced and honoured holy men, granted many privileges and immunities to the clergy, to enhance the people's esteem of them ; and omitted nothing to convince them of their obligation to provide for their subsistence by the payment of tithes. His charity and tenderness towards his subjects made him study by all possible ways to ease them of their burdens, and make them a happy people. He showed a royal munificence in building and adorning churches, and gave the crown which he wore, of exceeding great value, to the church of Roschild, in Zealand, his capital city, and the place of his residence where the kings of Denmark are yet buried. He chastised his body with fasting, discipline, and hair-cloths. Prayer was his assiduous exercise. When William the Conqueror had made himself master of England, Canutus sent forces to assist the vanquished ; but these troops finding no one willing to join them, were easily defeated in the year 1069. Sometime after, being invited by the conquered English, he raised an army to invade this island, and expel the Normans : but through the treacherous practices of his brother Oloas, or Olaus, was obliged to wait so long on the coast, that his troops deserted him. The pious king, having always in view the service of God, and judging this a proper occasion to induce his people to pay tithes

to their pastors, he proposed to them either to pay a heavy fine, by way of punishment for their desertion, or submit to the law of tithes for the pastors of the church. Their aversion to the latter made them chose the tax, to the great mortification of the king, who, hoping they would change their resolution, ordered it to be levied with rigour. But they, being incensed at the severity of the collectors, rebelled. St. Canutus retired for safety into the isle of Fionia, and was hindered from joining his loyal troops, by the treachery of one Blanco, an officer, who, to deceive him, assured his majesty, that the rebels were returned to their duty. The king went to the church of St. Alban, the martyr, to perform his devotions, and return God thanks for that happy event. This the rebels being informed of by Blanco, they surrounded the church with him at their head. In the meantime the holy king, perceiving the danger that threatened his life, confessed his sins at the foot of the altar, with great tranquillity and resignation, and received the holy communion. His guards defended the church doors, and Blanco was slain by them. The rebels threw in bricks and stones, through the windows, by which they beat down the shrines of certain relics of St. Alban and St. Oswald, which St. Canutus had brought over from England. The saint, stretching out his arms before the altar, fervently recommended his soul into the hands of his Creator: in which posture he was wounded with a javelin, darted through the window, and fell a victim to Christ. His brother Benedict, and seventeen others, were slain with him, on the 10th of July, 1086, as Ælnoth, a contemporary author testifies, who has specified the date of all the events with the utmost exactness. His wicked brother Olas succeeded him in the kingdom. God punished the people during eight years and three months of his reign with a dreadful famine, and other calamities; and attested the sanctity of the martyr, by many miraculous cures of the sick at his tomb. For which reason his relics were taken up out of their obscure sepulchre, and honourably entombed towards the end of the reign of Olas. His successor, Eric III. a most religious prince, restored piety and religion, with equal courage and success, and sent ambassadors to Rome, with proofs of the miracles performed, and obtained from the pope a declaration, authorizing the veneration of St. Canutus, the proto-martyr of Denmark. Upon this occasion a most solemn translation of his relics, which were put in a most costly shrine, was performed,

at which Ælnoth, our historian, was present. He adds, that the first preachers of the faith in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, were English priests; that the Danes then zealously embraced the Christian religion, but that the Swedes still continued more obstinate, among whom Eschil, an Englishman, received the crown of martyrdom, whilst he was preaching Christ to certain savage tribes.

ST. HENRY, ARCHBISHOP OF UPSAL, M.

HE was an Englishman, and preached the faith in the North with his countryman, Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear, the apostle of Norway, and legate of the holy see, afterwards Pope Adrian IV. by whom he was raised to this see, in 1148. St. Eric, or Henry, (for it is the same name,) was then the holy king of Sweden.* Our saint, after having converted several provinces, went to preach in Finland, which that king had lately conquered. He deserved to be styled the apostle of that country, but fell a martyr in it, being stoned to death at the instigation of a barbarous murderer, whom he endeavoured to reclaim by censures, in 1151. His tomb was in great veneration at Upsal, till his ashes were scattered on the change of religion, in the sixteenth century. See John Magnus, l. 1. Vit. Pont. Upsal. Olaus Magnus, l. 4. Bollandus, and chiefly his life published by Benzelius. Monum. Suec. p. 33.

ST. WULSTAN, BISHOP OF WORCESTER, C.

HE was a native of Icentum, in Warwickshire. In his youth, perceiving himself somewhat touched with wanton love on seeing a woman dance, he withdrew into a thicket hard by, and lying prostrate, bewailed his fault before God, with very great contrition. And he was endowed from that time by Almighty

* Stiernman, in his discourse 'on the State of Learning among the Ancient Swedes,' observes, that Sweden was chiefly converted to Christianity by English Saxon missionaries. The principal among these were Ansgar, Sigfrid, Roduard, Richolf, Edward, Eskil, David, and Henric, as he gives their names.

In the history of the bishops and archbishops of Upsal, published by Benzelius in his Monum. Suec. p. 37, the first whose name is recorded is Everin, whom Benzelius supposes to be the person whom St. Sigfrid consecrated to this see. He seems to have been one of his English colleagues. Stephen, the sixth bishop of Upsal, was the first archbishop. See the life of St. Sigfrid, and Benzelius's notes on the catalogue of the bishops of Upsal, p. 186.