

The apostle with confidence committed his tender flock to God, and commended to them his own work, whilst he rejoiced to go to his Redeemer, and to give his life for him. We all meet with trials. But can we fear or hesitate to drink a cup presented to us by the hand of God, and which our Lord and Captain, by free choice, and out of pure love, was pleased himself to drink first for our sake? He asks us whether we can drink of his cup? He encourages us by setting before our eyes the glory of heaven, and he invites us by his own divine example. Let us humbly implore his grace, without which we can do nothing, and take with joy this cup of salvation, which he presents us with his divine hand.

ST. CHRISTOPHER, M.

HE suffered martyrdom under Decius in Lycia, and is honoured on this day in the Martyrology which bears the name of St. Jerom, and in other western Calendars, but is commemorated by the Greeks and other Oriental nations on the 9th of May. The Mosarabic Breviary, attributed to St. Isidore, mentions the translation of his relics to Toledo, whence they were brought into France, and are at present shown enshrined at the abbey of St. Denys near Paris. He seems to have taken the name of Christopher upon the like motive that St. Ignatius would be called Theophorus, to express his ardent love for his Redeemer, by which he always carried him in his breast as his great and only good, his inestimable treasure, and the object of all his affections and desires. There seem to be no other grounds than this name for the vulgar notion of his great stature, the origin of which seems to have been merely allegorical, as Baronius observes, and as Vida has beautifully expressed in an epigram on this saint.* The enormous statues of St. Christopher, still to be seen in many Gothic cathedrals, expressed his allegorical wading through the sea of tribulations, by which the faithful meant to signify the many sufferings through which he arrived at eternal life. They are monuments of the devotion of our an-

* "Christophore, infixum quodd eum usque in corde gerebas,
Pictores Christum dant tibi ferre humeris," &c.

Vida, Hym. 26. t. 2. p. 150.

cestors to this saint, whose intercession they implored especially against pestilential distempers. St. Gregory the Great mentions a monastery in Sicily which bore the name of St. Christopher. See Pinius the Bollandist, t. 6, p. 125.

SAINTS THEA AND VALENTINA, VIRGINS, AND ST. PAUL, MM.

IN the year 308 there were at the same time six emperors, successors of Dioclesian, namely in the East Galerius, Licinius, and Maximinus; in the West Constantine, Maxentius, and his father, Maximian Hercules, who had reassumed the purple; Firmilian, the successor of Urbanus in the government of Palestine, under Maximinus II., carried on the persecution with great cruelty. When fourscore and seventeen confessors, men, women, and children, out of an innumerable multitude of Christians who were banished a long while before to the porphyry quarries in Thebais, were brought before him, he commanded the sinews of the joint of their left feet to be burnt with a hot iron; and their right eyes to be put out, and the eye-holes burnt with a hot iron to the very bottom of the orb. In this condition he sent them to work at the mines in Palestine about mount Libanus. Many others were brought before this inhuman judge from different towns of Palestine, and were tormented in various ways.

Among the Christians taken at Gaza, whilst they were assembled to hear the holy scriptures read, was a holy virgin named Thea, whom the judge threatened with the prostitution of her chastity in the public stews. She, to whom her virtue was most dear, reproached him for such infamous injustices. Firmilian, enraged at her liberty of speech, caused her to be inhumanly scourged, then stretched on the rack, and her sides torn with iron hooks till the bare ribs appeared. Valentina, a pious Christian virgin of Cæsarea, who had also by vow consecrated her chastity to God, being present at this spectacle, cried out to the judge from the midst of the crowd: "How long will you thus torment my sister?" She was immediately apprehended, and being dragged by force to the altar, she threw herself upon it, and overturned it with her feet, together with the fire and sacrifice which stood ready upon it. Firmilian, pro-