

sweetness of the cross. The more we share in the suffering life of Christ, the greater share we inherit in his spirit, and in the fruit of his death. To souls mortified to their senses and disengaged from earthly things, God gives frequent foretastes of the sweetness of eternal life, and the most ardent desires of possessing him in his glory. This is the spirit of martyrdom, which entitles a Christian to a happy resurrection and to the bliss of the life to come.

SAINT SIGEFRIDE, OR SIGFRID,

BISHOP, APOSTLE OF SWEDEN.

From Joan. Magnus, *Hist. Goth.* l. 17. c. 20. quoted by Bollandus, and chiefly from a life of this saint, compiled at Wexiow about the year 1205, published from an ancient MS. by the care of Ericus Benzelius, junior, in his *Monumenta Historica vetera Ecclesiæ Suevogothiscæ*, printed at Upsal in 1709, p. 1. ad p. 14. and in *Prolegom.* sect. 1. The editor was not able to discover the author's name: upon which he repeats the remark of the learned Maussac (in *Diss. Critica ad Harpocrat.*) that "many monkish writers endeavoured to conceal their names out of humility." On which see Mabillon, *Diar. Ital.* p. 36. Benzelius gives us a considerable fragment of a second life of this holy prelate, *ib.* p. 21. ad 29. and some verses of Bishop Brynoth the third, on St. Sigfrid and the other bishops of this province, *ib.* p. 72.

OUR zealous ancestors having received the light of faith, propagated the same throughout all the northern provinces of Europe. St. Anscarius had planted the faith in Sweden, in 830; but it relapsed soon after into idolatry. King Olas Scobcong entreated King Edred, who died in 951, to send him missionaries to preach the gospel in this country. Sigefride, an eminent priest of York, undertook that mission, and on the 21st of June, in 950, arrived at Wexiow, in Gothland, in the territory of Smaland. He first erected a cross, then built a church of wood, celebrated the divine mysteries, and preached to the people. Twelve principal men of the province were converted by him, and one who died, was buried after the Christian manner, and a cross placed upon his grave. So great numbers were in a short time brought to the faith, that the cross of Christ was triumphantly planted in all the twelve tribes into which the inhabitants of South-Gothland were divided. The fountain near the mountain of Ostrabo, since called Wexiow, in which St. Sigefride baptised the catechumens, long retained the names of the twelve first converts, engraved on a monument. King Olas was much pleased with the accounts he heard of the man of God, and many flocked from remote parts,

out of mere curiosity to hear his doctrine, and to see him minister at the altar, admiring the rich ornaments of linen, and over them of silk, which he wore in celebrating the divine mysteries, with a mitre on his head, and a crosier, or pastoral staff in his hands. Also the gold and silver vessels which he had brought with him for the use of the altar, and the dignity and majesty of the ceremonies of the Christian worship, attracted their attention. But the sublime truths of our religion, and the mortification, disinterestedness, zeal, and sanctity of the apostolic missionaries, engaged them to give them a favourable reception, and to open their eyes to the evidence of the divine revelation. St. Sigefride ordained two bishops, the one of East, the other of West Gothland, or Linköping, and Scara. The see of Wexiow he continued himself to govern so long as he lived. His three nephews, Unaman a priest, and Sunaman and Wiaman, the one a deacon, the other a sub-deacon, were his chief assistants in his apostolic labours. Having intrusted the administration of his see of Wexiow to Unaman, and left his two brothers to assist and comfort him, the saint himself set out to carry the light of the gospel into the midland and northern provinces. King Olaf received him with great respect, and was baptized by him, with his whole court and his army. St. Sigefride founded many churches, and consecrated a bishop of Upsal, and another of Strengues. The former of these sees had been founded by St. Anscharius in 830, and the bishop was declared by Pope Alexander III. in 1160, metropolitan and primate of the whole kingdom. During the absence of our saint, a troop of idolatrous rebels, partly out of hatred of the Christian religion, and partly for booty, plundered the church of Wexiow, and barbarously murdered the holy pastor Unaman and his two brothers. Their bodies they buried in the midst of a forest, where they had always remained hid. But the murderers put the heads of the martyrs into a box, which, with a great stone they had fastened to it, they threw into a great pond. But they were afterwards taken out, and kept richly enshrined in the church of Wexiow till their relics were removed by the Lutherans. These three holy martyrs were honoured in Sweden. Upon the news of this massacre St. Sigefride hastened to Wexiow to repair the ruins of his church. The king resolved to put the murderers to death; but Sigefride, by his earnest entreaties, prevailed on him to spare their lives. However, he condemned them to pay a heavy fine, which he would have bestowed on the saint, but he

refused to accept a single farthing of it notwithstanding his extreme poverty, and the difficulties which he had to struggle with, in laying the foundation of that new church. He had inherited the spirit of the apostles in an heroic degree. Our saint died about the year 1002, and was buried in his cathedral at Wexiow, where his tomb became famous for miracles. He was canonized about the year 1158, by Pope Adrian IV.,⁽¹⁾ an Englishman, who had himself laboured zealously, and with great success, in the conversion of Norway, and other northern countries, about a hundred and forty years after St. Sigefride, who was honoured by the Swedes as their apostle, till the change of religion among them.*

FEBRUARY XVI.

ST. ONESIMUS,

DISCIPLE OF SAINT PAUL.

HE was a Phrygian by birth, slave to Philemon, a person of note of the city of Colossæ, converted to the faith by St. Paul. Having robbed his master, and being obliged to fly, he providentially met with St. Paul, then a prisoner for the faith at Rome, who there converted and baptized him, and sent him with his canonical letter of recommendation to Philemon, by whom he was pardoned, set at liberty, and sent back to his spiritual father, whom he afterwards faithfully served. That apostle made him, with Tychicus, the bearer of his epistle to the Colossians,⁽²⁾ and afterwards, as St. Jerom⁽³⁾ and other fathers witness, a preacher of the gospel, and a bishop. The Greeks say, he was crowned with martyrdom under Domitian, in the year 95, and keep his festival on the 15th. Bede, Ado, Usuard, the Roman and other Latin martyrologists mention him on the 16th of February.⁽⁴⁾

Baronius and some others confound him with St. Onesimus, the third bishop of Ephesus, after St. Timothy, who was suc-

(1) Vastove, Vineæ Aquilonis. (2) Colos. iv. (3) Ep. 62. c. 2.

(4) Tillem. t. 1. p. 294. and note 10 on St. Paul.

* In the life of St. Sigefride, published by Benzelius, it is mentioned, that St. Sigefride, upon his first arrival in Sweden, preached chiefly by interpreters.