

from the brethren the seal of the Lord (that is, baptism), he made the next day, a second time, a glorious confession of the faith before the tribunal of the prefect, and sentence of death being passed upon him, his head was cut off with an axe. St. Potamiana appeared to several others in dreams, and they were converted to the faith. See Eusebius, Hist. l. 6. c. 5. and Palladius, Lausiaca, c. 3.

JUNE XXIX.

ST. PETER, PRINCE OF THE APOSTLES.

From the Gospels, Acts. and ancient fathers. See Tillemont, Calmet, and Ceillier.

ST. PETER, the most glorious prince of the apostles, and the most ardent lover of his divine Master, before his vocation to the apostleship was called Simon. He was son of Jonas, and

edition, procured by Buneman in 1739, is more complete than that published by Dr. Spark at Oxford, in 1684, or that by Mr. Wasse. John Baptist Le Brun Desmarettes, the editor of St. Paulinus's works, had begun to prepare a perfect edition of Lactantius, which was finished by Nicholas Lenglet du Fresnoy, and printed at Paris in two volumes quarto, in 1748. F. Francis Xavier Franceschini, a Carmelite friar, has most correctly published at Rome, in 1754, the works of Lactantius in nine volumes octavo, with new and judicious dissertations. To the notes of so many critics on this author, we must add the Theological Notes and Remarks of Dom Nicholas Le Nourry. (*Apparatus ad Bibl. Patr. t. 2, p. 571, &c.*)

The most valuable book of Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, quoted by St. Jerom, was first published by the learned Baluze. Dom Nourry denied it to be the offspring of our author; but has been abundantly confuted by others. It is addressed to a confessor named Donatus, who had suffered several times during the persecution. Lactantius relates in it the several persecutions which the church had suffered, and the exemplary punishments which God had inflicted on the persecutors. He tells us that as the Emperor Maximianus was offering sacrifice, one of his officers made the sign of the cross, and thereupon, to the great trouble of the Pagans, the auspices were disturbed, and the demons disappeared. This book is written with elegance and spirit. Dr. Gilbert Burnet says, the style is too flowery for history, but the work is not merely historical. The doctor translated it into English, and printed it first in 1686, and again in 1714, prefixing a preface against persecution on account of religious matters. See p. 51. He published the same in French at Utrecht in 1687. See Tillemont, t. 6. p. 206, and Ceillier, t. 3. p. 387.

brother of St. Andrew. St. Epiphanius(1) says, that though he was the younger brother, he was made by Christ the chief* of all the apostles. St. Chrysostom, on the contrary, takes him to have been the elder brother, and the oldest man in the apostolic college. If writers of the fifth age were divided upon this point, succeeding ages have not been able to decide it. St. Peter originally resided at Bethsaida,(2) a town much enlarged and beautified by Herod the tetrarch, situated in the tribe of Nepthali, in Upper Galilee, on the banks of the lake or sea of Genesareth. This town was honoured with the presence of our Lord, who, in the course of his ministry, preached and wrought miracles in it. Its inhabitants, however, were for the most part a stupid and obstinate set of men, and their abuse of the grace that was offered them, deserved the dreadful woe which Christ denounced against them. St. Peter and St. Andrew were religious, docile, and humble in the midst of a perverse and worldly-minded people. They were educated in the laborious trade of fishing, which was probably their father's calling. From Bethsaida St. Peter removed to Capharnaum,(3) probably on account of his marriage, for his wife's mother dwelt there. This place was equally commodious for fishing, being seated on the bank of the same lake, near the mouth of the river Jordan, on the confines of the tribes of Zabulon and Nepthali. Andrew accompanied his brother thither, and they still followed their trade as before. With their worldly employment they retained a due sense of religion, and did not suffer the thoughts of temporal concerns or gain to devour their more necessary attention to spiritual things, and the care of their souls. They lived in the earnest expectation of the Messiah. St. Andrew became a disciple of St. John the Baptist; and most are of opinion that St. Peter was so too. The former having heard St. John call Christ the Lamb of God repaired to our Lord, and continued with him the remainder of that day, and, according to St. Austin, the following night.

(1) Hær. 51, c. 17, p. 440.

(2) John i. 44. On Herod's enlarging Bethsaida, and giving it the name of Julias, see Josephus, Wells, Geogr. of the N. Testament.

(3) Mark i. 29.

By the conversation of Jesus, he was abundantly convinced that he was the Christ, the world's Redeemer; and, coming from him, he went and sought out his brother Simon, and told him, in a transport of holy joy, that he had found the Messiah.⁽¹⁾ Simon believed in Christ before he saw him; and being impatient to behold him with his eyes, and to hear the words of eternal life from his divine mouth, he without delay went with his brother to Jesus, who, looking upon him, in order to give him a proof of his omniscience, told him not only his own, but also his father's name. He on that occasion gave him the new name of Cephas, which in the Syro-Chaldaic tongue, then used in Judæa, signifies a rock, and is by us changed into Peter, from the Greek word of the same import.* St. Peter and St. Andrew, after having passed some time in the company of our divine Redeemer, returned to their fishing trade; yet often resorted to him to hear his holy instructions. Towards the end of the same year, which was the first of Christ's preaching, Jesus saw Simon Peter and Andrew washing their nets on the banks of the lake; and going into Simon's boat to shun the pressure, he preached to the people who stood on the shore. After his discourse, as an earnest of his blessing to his entertainer, he bade Peter cast his nets into the sea. Our apostle had toiled all the foregoing night to no purpose, and had drawn his boat into the harbour, despairing of any success at present. However, in obedience to Christ, he again launched out into deep water, and let down his net. He had scarcely done this, when such a shoal of fishes was caught by the first draught, as filled not only their own boat, but also that of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were fishing near them, and were forced to come and help them to drag in the net, which

(1) John i. 42. St. Aug. hom. 7, in Joan. p. 27.

* In imitation of St. Peter's receiving a new name on this occasion, the popes, upon their advancement to the pontificate, usually exchange their own name for a new one, as they have done ever since Sergius II. in 844; whose former name being Peter, he, out of humility, and respect for the prince of the apostles, did not presume to bear it. Christians in like manner have a new name given them at baptism, and generally take a new one at confirmation, also when they enter a religious state, partly to express their obligation of becoming new men, and partly to put themselves under the special patronage of certain saints, whose examples they propose to themselves for their models.

was ready to break with the load ; yet the boats were not sunk. At the sight of this miracle, Peter, struck with amazement, fell on his knees, and cried out, " Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." The apostle, by this humility, whilst he sincerely professed himself unworthy to appear in the presence of his Lord, or to be in his company, deserved to receive the greatest graces. By this miracle Christ gave the apostles a type of their wonderful success in the new employment to which he called them, when he made them fishers of men. Upon this occasion, he bade Peter and Andrew follow him. This invitation they instantly obeyed, and with such perfect dispositions of heart, that St. Peter could afterwards say to Christ with confidence: *Behold, O Lord, we have left all things, and have followed thee.*(1) They were possessed of little, having only a boat and nets to leave ; but they renounced all future hopes and prospects in the world with so perfect a disengagement of heart, that they forsook with joy the whole world, in spirit and affection ; and what went far beyond all this, they also renounced themselves and their own will. In requital, Christ promised them, besides never-ending happiness in the world to come, even in this life, an hundred-fold of true joys and spiritual blessings, in an uninterrupted peace of the soul, which surpasseth all understanding, in the overflowing sweetness of divine love, and in the abundant consolations of the Holy Ghost. From this time, St. Peter and St. Andrew became constant attendants upon their divine Master. Jesus soon after this returned and made some stay at Capharnaum, cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, and after that miracle tarried some time in Galilee, healing many sick, casting out devils, and preaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath days with a dignity which bespoke his doctrine divine.

After the feast of the passover in the year 31, Christ chose his twelve apostles, in which sacred college the chief place was from the beginning assigned to St. Peter. Mr. Laurence Clarke(2) takes notice, that " in the enumeration of the twelve, all the evangelists constantly place Peter in the front. Our Lord usually directs his discourse to him, and he replies as the mouth of his fellows. Christ appeared to him after his resur-

(1) Matt. xix.

(2) Life of Christ. On St. Peter, p. 578.

rection before the rest of the apostles. He gave him a special command to feed his sheep. He was the first whom God chose to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. From these and other passages of the holy scripture, it is evident that St. Peter acted as chief of the college of the apostles; and so he is constantly described by the primitive writers of the church, who call him the head, the president, the prolocutor, the chief, the foreman of the apostles, with several other titles of distinction." Christ, who had always distinguished St. Peter above the rest of the apostles, promised to commit his whole church to his care, above a year before his sacred death,(1) and confirmed to him that charge after his resurrection,(2) having exacted of him a testimony of his strong faith, on the first occasion, and on the second, a proof of his ardent love of God, and zeal for souls. These two virtues are especially requisite in a pastor of souls; and the prince of the apostles was possessed of them in the most heroic and eminent degree. Enlightened by God, and passing over all visible and created things, he made the most glorious confession of his faith in Christ, as truly God and Son of the living God. When certain weak disciples deserted Christ, being offended at his doctrine concerning the wonderful mystery of the blessed eucharist, our Saviour asked the twelve, *Will you also go away?* St. Peter answered resolutely, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* As upon the testimony of his divine word, he readily assented to the most sublime mysteries; so by the most sweet and tender love, he was desirous to keep continually in his holy company, and thought it was to perish, ever to be separated from him. In a transport of this same love, he cried out when he beheld the transfiguration of our Saviour, *Lord it is good for us always to be here;* ever to be with thee, and to have our eyes fixed on the adorable object of thy glory. But this happiness was first to be purchased by labours and great sufferings. When he heard Christ foretel his barbarous death, this love moved him to persuade his Master to preserve himself from those sufferings he told them he was to undergo; for he did not then understand the advantages of the cross, nor the

(1) Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

(2) John xxi. 15. See Hawarden, Church of Christ showed, t. 1.

mystery of our redemption by it. For this he was called by Christ Satan, or adversary; and that reprimand opened his eyes, and was his cure. Out of love, he twice cast himself into the sea to meet Jesus; for his heart melted at his sight, and he had not patience to wait till the boat came up to the shore. This happened once after his resurrection, as we shall see in the sequel, but first long before, when the apostles were crossing the lake, and Jesus came from the shore, walking on the waves to meet them. St. Peter begged and obtained his leave to come on the waters to his divine Master. When he had stepped upon the waves, a sudden fear something abated his confidence, and he began to sink; but Jesus held him up by the hand.(1) By his confidence in God, we learn what we can do by the divine assistance; and by his fear, what we are of ourselves; also, that, no one receives from God the strength he stands in need of, but he who feels that of himself he is entirely without strength, according to the reflection of St. Austin.(2) St. Peter, influenced by this same strong love, offered himself to all sorts of difficulties and dangers, and to undergo death itself for his good Lord. Yet this zealous apostle, in punishment of a secret presumption, was permitted to fall, that we might learn with him more clearly to discover our own weakness, and fear the danger of pride. St. Peter had before given proofs of an exemplary humility. After the miraculous draught of fishes, he cast himself at our Lord's feet, begging he would depart from him, because he was a sinful man; and when our blessed Saviour offered to wash his feet at the last supper, he cried out in surprise and humility: *Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Thou shalt not wash my feet for ever.* But being terrified by his threat, that otherwise he should have no part with him, he with fervour offered also his hands and his head to be washed, if needful. In answer to which, Christ signified to him, that he who was clean from grievous sins, stood in need only of wiping away smaller stains and imperfections, an emblem of which was this washing of the feet.

Who is not moved to tremble for himself, and to walk always in holy fear, and in the most profound and sincere humility, when he sees so great an apostle, endowed with such eminent

(1) Matt. xiv.

(2) St. Aug. Serm. 76.

virtues, grace, and spiritual gifts, fall at last by surprise into secret presumption, and by it into the grievous crime of denying his divine Master? His protestation, that he was ready to die with him, was accompanied with some degree of confidence in his own courage and in the strength of his resolution; whereas an entire and perfect distrust in ourselves is an essential part of true humility. Instead of praying in the humble sentiment of his own weakness and frailty, he relied on his courage as if it was proof against all dangers. To curb this rising presumption, Christ foretold him, that before the crowing of the cock and break of day, he would thrice deny him.* Jesus still ranked St. Peter among his favourite apostles; and as he had made him, St. James, and St. John, witnesses of his transfiguration, and of other extraordinary mysteries; so in the garden of Gethsemani he took these three with him when he retired from the rest, and at a distance of a stone's throw from these three disciples fell into his agony and bloody sweat. Notwithstanding the courage of our fervent apostle, Christ was obliged to reproach him, with his two companions, that he was not able to watch with him one hour; when he ought to have been arming and strengthening himself by humble prayer against the assaults of the enemy. When Judas led the Jews to apprehend Christ, St. Peter's zeal for his master made him draw his sword against his unjust persecutors, and smite Malchus, one of the busiest among them. But Christ taught him that the arms of his disciples are patience and humility. St. Peter, by his presumption, and by having neglected to watch and pray, deserved to fall from his fervour into a state of lukewarmness. He followed Jesus still when he was in the hands of his enemies, but at a distance, as St. Luke takes notice. He who just before thought of dying for his Master, and drew his sword to defend him, thus became afraid of sharing in his disgrace. "Oh!" cries out St. Chrysostom,(1) "by what means was the vehement fervour of Peter so much cooled?" Nor did he stop here.

(1) Hom. 83, ol. 82, in Matt.

* The cock crows first about midnight, but the hour of his principal crowing is about break of day, which is called by St. Luke, and St. John, his crowing; and by St. Mark his second crowing.

He who does not always advance, loses ground; and a soul which falls from fervour into a state of tepidity is guilty of an abuse of divine grace, and is in danger of perishing in the first snare. Accordingly, bad company soon completed the misfortune of this apostle. He mingled with the servants of the high-priest, and other enemies of Christ, in the lower hall of Caiphas's palace. Here, at the reproach of the portress that had let him in, and soon after a second time, at that of another maid, he renounced all knowledge of him. The cock then crowed; yet Peter took no notice. About an hour after, another of the assistants said he was one of the disciples of Jesus; which others confirmed, because his accent betrayed him to be a Galilæan; and a cousin of Malchus, whose ear had been cut off, assured that he had seen him in the garden. Hereupon Peter protested a third time, with oaths and curses, that he knew not the man. Thus one sin, if it be not blotted out by speedy repentance, draws a soul, as it were by its own weight, into greater precipices.

How grievous soever this sin of St. Peter was, he never lost his faith in Christ, as appears from Christ's words to him,(1) and as the fathers observe.(2) For, "though he had a lie in his mouth, his heart was faithful," as St. Austin says;(3) his sin, nevertheless, was most heinous; but his repentance was speedy, perfect, and constant; and it bore a proportion to the heinousness of his crime. At the time of his third denial, the cock crowed the second time; yet this exterior sign did not suffice alone to make the sinner enter into himself; but Jesus, turning, looked on him, not so much with his corporeal eyes, as visiting his soul with his interior grace, says St. Austin;(4) and this it was that wrought in him the wonderful change, by which in a moment he became a perfect penitent. "Look on us, O Lord Jesus, that we may bewail our sins, and wash away our guilt," cries out St. Ambrose.(5) Our blessed Redeemer has cast this gracious eye of his mercy on all the sinners whom

(1) Luke xxii. 23.

(2) St. Ambr. l. 10 in Luc. S. Chrys. hom. 39, ol. 38, in Matt. St. Hilary in Matt. St. Leo, Sermon. 68.

(3) L. contra Mendac. c. 6.

(4) L. 1, de Gr. Chr. et pecc. Orig. c. 45.

(5) L. 10, in Luc.

he ever drew to repentance: his goodness disdains none. We therefore ought to cast ourselves at his feet, and though most undeserving of such a favour, most earnestly to beg that he afford us this gracious look, upon which our eternal salvation depends. St. Peter by it was pierced with grief, and the most sincere repentance; and instantly quitted the fatal company and occasions, and going forth gave full vent to a flood of tears, which flowed from a heart broken with contrition. "For Peter, when he had denied Christ, did not weep for fear of punishment; but this was the most bitter to him, and worse than any punishment, that he had denied him whom he loved," as St. Chrysostom observes.⁽¹⁾ He thought not of any excuses from the circumstances of surprise, frailty, or compulsion: nor did he say anything to extenuate his guilt. A true penitent sees the enormity of his sins with all their exaggerating circumstances; and is his own most severe accuser. This apostle set no bounds to his sorrow; and his cheeks are said to have been always furrowed with the streams of tears which he often shed to the end of his life. And as he fell by presumption, he ever after made the most profound humility the favourite and distinguishing part of his virtue, as St. Chrysostom remarks.⁽²⁾ From his example we must be apprized, that if we confide in our own strength, we are vanquished without fighting. This great model of pastors learned by his fall to treat sinners with tenderness and compassion; and Christ, by the graces and dignity to which he exalted him after his fall, shows his boundless mercy, and how perfectly true repentance blots out sin.

After the resurrection of our Divine Saviour, Mary Magdalen and the other devout women that went early on the Sunday morning to the sepulchre, were ordered by an angel to go and inform Peter and the rest that Christ was risen. Our apostle no sooner heard this, but he ran in haste with St. John to the sepulchre. Love gave wings to both these disciples; but St. John, running faster, arrived first at the place, though he waited there, doubtless out of respect; and St. Peter first entered the sepulchre, and saw the place where the sacred body had been laid. After their departure, Christ appeared to Mary

(1) St. Chrys. Hom. 5, in Rom. ii.

(2) Hom. 83, ol. 82, in Matt.

Magdalen; and afterwards, on the same day, to St. Peter, the first among the apostles.(1) This favour was an effect of his tender mercy, in which he would not defer to satisfy this apostle's extreme desire of seeing him, and to afford him comfort in the grief of his bitter compunction, by this pledge of his grace, and this assurance of his pardon.(2) The angel that appeared to Saint Mary Magdalen, had ordered that the apostles should go from Jerusalem into Galilee, where they should see their divine Master, as he had foretold them before his sacred death. Accordingly, some days after, St. Peter, whilst he was fishing in the lake of Tiberias, saw Christ on the shore; and not being able to contain himself, in the transport of his love and joy, he threw himself into the water, and swam to land, the sooner to meet his Lord. St. John and the rest followed him in the boat, dragging the net loaded with one hundred and fifty-three great fishes, which they had taken by casting on the right side of the boat, by Christ's direction. When they were landed, they saw upon shore some live coals, and a fish broiling upon them, with bread lying near it. This repast Jesus had prepared for them. After it was over, he thrice asked St. Peter, whether he loved him more than the rest of his disciples: St. Peter told him, that He knew his love to be most sincere; and he was troubled in mind at the repetition of his question, fearing lest Christ discerned in his heart some secret imperfection or defect in his love. How different are now his modesty, fear, and humility from his former presumption? He dares not answer that he loved his master more than the others did, because he presumes not to judge of their hearts, and is mistrustful of the sincerity of his own, having now learned the whole extent of true humility. The vehemence of his love goes much beyond what any words could ever express. Yet he says only with trembling, that he loved; this he speaks as one most earnestly imploring the divine aid, that he might be enabled to love his master with his whole strength. "Do not you see," says St. Chrysostom,(3) "that the better he is grown, the more modest and timorous he is become? He does not speak arro-

(1) 1 Cor. xv. Luke xxiv.

(2) St. Chrys. hom. 38, in 1 Cor.

(3) St. Chrys. hom. 88, ol. 87, in Joan. t. 8, p. 526, ed. Ben.

gantly, or contradict; he is not self-confident; therefore is he disturbed." By this triple public testimony of his love, he was to repair the scandal of his former denial. "Let him confess by love who had thrice denied through fear," says St. Austin.(1) By the ardour of his zeal and love was he to be qualified for the commission which he received hereupon to feed Christ's sheep and lambs, that is, his whole flock; for he who enters the sanctuary under the least partial influence of any other motive than that of love, is a base hireling, and a slave of avarice and vain glory; not a pastor of souls, or minister of Christ. St. Peter's greater love for Christ, and zeal for the interest of his glory raised him to the high charge with which he was intrusted by his divine Master. Upon this passage, St. Chrysostom writes as followeth: "Why does Christ, passing by the rest, now speak to Peter alone? He was eminent above the rest, the mouth of the disciples, and the head of that college. Therefore Paul came to see him above the rest. Christ says to him: If thou lovest me, take upon thee the government or charge of thy brethren.* And now give the proof of that fervent love which thou hast always professed, and in which thou didst exult. Give for my sheep that life which thou professedst thyself ready to lay down for me." Jesus after this, foretold St. Peter his martyrdom by the cross; and this apostle was well pleased to drink the bitter cup, and to make his confession as public as his denial had been, that he might make some reparation for his former sin. His singular affection for Saint John prompted him to ask what would become of him, and whether he should not bear him company; but his Master checked his inquisitive curiosity.

Christ appeared to the apostles, assembled together on a certain mountain in Galilee,(2) where he had appointed to meet them, and gave them a commission to preach the gospel throughout all nations, promising to remain with his church all days to the end of the world. He manifested himself also to five hundred disciples at once.(3) When the apostles had spent

(1) In Joan. hic.

(2) Matt. xxviii.

(3) 1 Cor. xv. 5.

* Προϊστάρω τῶν ἀδελφῶν. St. Chrys. hom. 88, ol. 87, in Joan. t. 6, p. 525, ed. Ben.

some time in Galilee, they returned to Jerusalem, where, ten days before the feast of Pentecost, Christ favoured them with his last appearance, and commanded them to preach baptism and penance, and to confirm their doctrine by miracles.(1) Faith being essentially dark, mysterious, and supernatural; and the dispensations of providence, and of the divine grace and mercy being above the reach of human reason, the great and necessary knowledge of these most important saving truths can only be conveyed to men by the divine revelation. This in the new law of the gospel, was immediately communicated to the apostles, with a charge that they should promulge and propagate it in all nations of the earth. Poor illiterate men, destitute of every human succour, were made the instruments of this great work; and at their head was placed an ignorant fisherman, whose knowledge, when he was called to the apostleship, did not reach beyond his nets and boat. Yet this little troop triumphed over the wisdom of philosophers, the eloquence of orators, the authority of the greatest princes, the force of customs, policy, interest, superstition, and all the passions of men; over the artifices and persecutions of the whole world confederated against them. So powerful was the Spirit of God which enlightened their understandings, and spoke by their mouths; such was the evidence of their testimony, confirmed by innumerable incontestable miracles, and by the heavenly temper and sanctity which their words and actions breathed; and lastly, sealed by their blood. So bright and illustrious in this holy religion were the indications of its divine original, that he who takes an impartial review of them, will be obliged to cry out with Hugh of St. Victor, and Picus of Mirandula: "If I could be deceived in thy faith, thou alone, O Lord, must have been the author of my error, so evident are the marks of thy authority which it bears." To all who sincerely seek after truth, this revelation is a pillar of light; though to the perverse, God often turns it into a cloud of darkness. Their pride and passions are haunts to which the beams of this sun, though most bright and piercing, are impervious.

The extraordinary gifts and graces by which the apostles were qualified for this great function, were the fruit of the

(1) Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv 44.

descent of the Holy Ghost, who shed his beams upon them on Whitsunday. After the ascension of Christ, they waited the coming of that Divine Spirit in retirement and prayer. In the mean time, St. Peter proposed to the assembly the election of a new apostle, whereupon St. Matthias was chosen. The prince of the apostles, having received the Holy Ghost, made a sermon to the Jews, who were assembled about the disciples upon the fame of this prodigy, and he converted three thousand by the mildness and powerful unction of his words. "We should have a share of this courage; and the ardour of the Holy Ghost would make every thing easy to us, if we were worthy to receive it, and if we drew this grace down upon us as the apostles did by assiduity in prayer, and by our charity towards our brethren," says St. Chrysostom.(1) We have great reason to admire the change which the grace of the Holy Ghost wrought in St. Peter, both in the intrepidity and courage which he showed, and still more in his humility, patience, and meekness. He appeared always so ready to yield to every one, and to humble himself before all the world, that he seemed to forget the rank which he held in the Church, only when God's honour called upon him to exert his authority; and the natural warmth and vehemence of his temper was no more to be discerned in his actions, only in the fervour and constancy with which he underwent all manner of labours and dangers for the cause of God and his Church. The new converts received with the faith a share of the same Spirit. They persevered in the participation of the holy mysteries and in prayer, and selling all their possessions, gave the price to the apostles to be distributed among the poor brethren. Their humility, simplicity of heart, meekness, patience, and joy in suffering were such, that they seemed on a sudden to be transformed into angels, to use the expression of St. Chrysostom,(2) so perfectly were they disengaged from the earth. The abundant effusion of the Holy Ghost, the advantage of persecutions, and the inflamed words and example of the apostles effected this change in their hearts, by the power of the right hand of the Most High

The preaching of the apostles received a sanction from a wonderful miracle, by which St. Peter and St. John raised the

(1) Hom. 4, in Act.

(2) Hom. 7, in Act.

admiration of the people. These two apostles going to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, which was one of the hours for public prayer among the Jews, they saw a man who was lame from his birth, and was begging alms at the gate of the temple, which was called The Beautiful; and being moved with compassion, St. Peter commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ, to arise and walk. These words were no sooner spoken, but the cripple found himself perfectly whole, and St. Peter lifting him up, he entered into the temple walking, leaping, and praising God. After this miracle, St. Peter made a second sermon to the people, the effect of which was the conversion of five thousand persons. Upon this, the priests and Sadducees, moved with envy and jealousy, prevailed upon the captain of the guard of the temple to come up with a troop of soldiers under his command, and seize the two apostles, and put them into prison, upon pretence of a sedition. Next morning they were summoned before the great court of the Sanhedrim, in which Annas, Caiphas, John, and Alexander appeared busiest in carrying on the prosecution against them. The point of the sedition was waved, because groundless; and St. Peter boldly declared, that it was in the name of Jesus, in which all men must be saved, that the cripple had been made sound. The judges not being able to contest or stifle the evidence of the miracle, contented themselves with giving the apostles a severe charge not to preach any more the name of Jesus. But to their threats St. Peter resolutely replied: "Whether it be just to obey you rather than God, be you yourselves judges." The two apostles being discharged, returned to the other disciples, and after they had prayed together, the house was shaken, for a miraculous sign of the divine protection; and the whole company found themselves replenished with a new spirit of courage. The converts learned from the example of their teachers, so perfect a spirit of disinterestedness, contempt of the world, and thirst after eternal goods, that they lived in common, and the rich, selling their estates, laid the price at the feet of the apostles, that it might be equally distributed to such as had need. But neither miracles, nor the company and example of the saints could extinguish the passion of avarice in the hearts of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Being rich, they pretended to vie with the most charitable, and sold

their estate; but whilst they hypocritically pretended to resign the whole price to the public use, they secretly retained a part to themselves. St. Peter to whom God had revealed their hypocrisy, reproached them singly, that they had put a cheat upon their own souls, by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost in the person of his ministers. At his severe reprimand, first the husband, and afterwards the wife, fell down dead at his feet.

The apostles confirmed their doctrine by many miracles, curing the sick, and casting out devils. The people laid their sick on beds and couches in the streets, "That when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them and they might be delivered from their infirmities." The high priest Caiphas, and the other heads of the Sanhedrim were much incensed to see their prohibition slighted, and the gospel daily gain ground; and having apprehended the apostles, they put them into the common prison; but God sent his angel in the night, who, opening the doors of the prison, set them at liberty; and early the next morning they appeared again preaching publicly in the temple. The judges of the Sanhedrim again took them up, and examined them. The apostles made no other defence but that they ought rather to obey God than men. The high priest and his faction deliberated by what means they might put them to death; but their sanguinary intentions were overruled by the mild counsel of Gamaliel, a famous doctor of the law, who advised them to wait the issue, and to consider whether this doctrine, confirmed by miracles, came not from God, against whom their power would be vain. However they condemned the servants of God to be scourged. The apostles after this torment went away full of joy, that they had been judged worthy to bear a part in the ignominy and sufferings of the cross, the true glory and advantages of which they had now learned. This their spirit, says St. Chrysostom,⁽¹⁾ was the greatest of their miracles. Many Jewish priests embraced the faith of Christ; but the daily triumphs of the word of God, raised a persecution in Jerusalem, which crowned St. Stephen with martyrdom, and dispersed the faithful, who fled some to Damascus, others to Antioch, and many into Phœnicia, Cyprus, and other places. The apostles themselves remained still at

(1) Hom. 14, in Act.

Jerusalem to encourage the converts. The disciples preached the faith in all places whither they came; so that this dispersion, instead of extinguishing the holy fire, spread it the more on all sides. On this occasion St. Philip the deacon converted many Samaritans, who were esteemed, though schismatics, to belong rather to the Jewish nation than to the Gentiles, and Christ himself had preached among them. St. Peter and St. John went from Jerusalem to Samaria to confirm the Samaritan converts, and St. Peter had there his first conflict with Simon Magus. In the mean time, the persecution had ceased at Jerusalem after the conversion of St. Paul. The favourable dispositions of the emperor Tiberius might contribute to restore this calm. That prince was one of the worst of men, and so cruel a tyrant, that Theodorus Gadareus, his preceptor, sometimes called him a lump of flesh, steeped in blood. Yet from the account sent him by Pilate concerning the miracles and sanctity of Christ, he had entertained a high opinion of him, had some thoughts of enrolling him among the gods, and testified his inclinations in favour of the Christians, threatening even with death those who should accuse or molest them, as we are assured by Tertullian,(1) St. Justin,(2) and others.

St. Peter who had staid at Jerusalem during the heat of the persecution, after the storm had blown over, made a progress through the adjacent country, to visit the faithful, as a general makes his round, says St. Chrysostom,(3) to see if all things are every where in good order. At Lydda, in the tribe of Ephraim, he cured a man named *Æneas*, who had kept his bed eight years, being sick of a palsy; and at Joppe, being moved by the tears of the poor, he raised to life the virtuous and charitable widow *Tabitha*. The apostle lodged some time in that town, at the house of Simon the Tanner; which he left by the order of an angel to go to baptize *Cornelius* the centurion, a Gentile. Upon that occasion God manifested to the Prince of the Apostles, both by this order, and by a distinct vision, the great mystery of the vocation of the Gentiles to the faith. It seems

(1) Apolog. c. 5 et 21.

(2) Apol. l. ol. 2. On these acts of Pilate concerning Christ, see Universal History, vol. 10, p. 625.

(3) Hom. 21, in Act.

to have been after this, that the apostles dispersed themselves into other countries to preach the gospel, beginning in the adjoining provinces. In the partition of nations which they made among themselves, St. Peter was destined to carry the gospel to the capital city of the Roman empire and of the world, says St. Leo. But the apostles stopped some time to preach in Syria and other countries near Judæa before they proceeded further; and St. Peter founded the church of Antioch, which was the metropolis not only of Syria, but of all the East. St. Jerom,(1) Eusebius,(2) and other ancient writers assure us, that Antioch was his first see. It was fitting, says St. Chrysostom, that the city which first gave to the faithful the name of Christians, should have for its first pastor the Prince of the Apostles. Origen(3) and Eusebius(4) call St. Ignatius the second bishop of Antioch from St. Peter. St. Chrysostom says St. Peter resided there a long time; the common opinion is seven years, from the year thirty-three to forty.* During this interval he made frequent excursions to carry the faith into other countries. For though several of the apostles chose particular sees for themselves among the churches which they founded, they did not so confine themselves as to forget their universal commission of preaching to all nations. St. Peter was at Jerusalem in 37, when St. Paul paid him a visit, and staid with him fifteen days.(5) Our great apostle preached to the Jews dispersed throughout all the East, in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and the Lesser Asia, before he went to Rome, as Eusebius testifies. The same is confirmed by the inscription of his first epistle. He announced the faith also to the Gentiles, as occasions were offered, throughout these and other countries, as appears by many instances. St. Peter is the only apostle whom the gospel mentions to have been married before his vocation to the apostleship; though we are

(1) Catal. c. 1, et in Galat. c. xi.

(2) In Chron.

(3) Hom. 6, in Luc

(4) Hist. l. 3, c. 36.

(5) Gal. i. 19.

* According to the unanimous testimony of the ancients, Christ suffered in the year of the consulate of the two Gemini, which was the twenty-ninth of the vulgar era. St. Peter founded the see of Antioch in the year 33, the fifth from Christ's crucifixion: sat there seven years, and afterwards twenty-five complete years at Rome.

assured by ancient fathers and historians that St. Philip and some others were also married men when they were called by Christ. St. Clement of Alexandria,(1) St. Jerom, and St. Epiphanius expressly affirm, that from the time of their call to the ministry, or the commencement of their apostleship, they all embraced a state of perpetual continency; and St. Chrysostom proposes St. Peter as an illustrious model of chastity.(2) So mortified and abstemious was the life of this great apostle, that St. Gregory Nazianzen relates,(3) that his diet was only one penny-worth* a day of an unsavoury and bitter kind of pulse called lupines, and sometimes of herbs; though on certain occasions he ate of what was set before him.

Peter planted the faith in many countries near Judæa before the dispersion of the apostles, which happened twelve years after the death of Christ, in the fortieth year of the vulgar Christian æra. In the partition of nations among the apostles, St. Peter chose Rome for the chief seat of his labours, and having preached through several provinces of the East, by a particular order of divine providence, he at length arrived there, that he might encounter the devil in that city, which was then the chief seat of superstition, and the mistress of error. Divine providence, which had raised the Roman empire for the more easy propagation of the gospel in many countries, was pleased to fix the fortress of faith in that great metropolis, that it might be more easily diffused from the head into all parts of the universe. St. Peter foresaw, that by triumphing over the devil in the very seat of his tyranny, he opened a way to the conquest of the rest of the world to Christ. It was in appearance a rash enterprise for an ignorant fisherman to undertake the conversion of the capital of the empire, and the seat of all the sciences; to preach the contempt of honours, riches, and pleasures in that city, in which ambition, avarice, and voluptuousness had fixed their throne. The humility of Calvary suited not the pride of the capitol. The ignominy of the cross was very contrary to the splendour of that pomp which dazzled

(1) Strom. l. 3, p. 448.

(2) L. de Virginit. c. 82.

(3) S. Naz. Or. 16, et Carm. 140.

the eyes of the masters of the world. Peter neither knows the humour, nor the genius, nor the policy, nor even the language of the people. Yet he enters alone this enemy's country, this fortress of impiety and superstition; and he preaches Jesus crucified to this great city. First, he announced this wonderful mystery to the Jews who lived there, whose apostle he was in the first place: then he addressed himself to the Gentiles, and he formed a church composed of both. Eusebius, (1) St. Jerom, and the old Roman Calendar, published by Bucherius, say that St. Peter held the see of Rome twenty-five years; though he was often absent upon his apostolic functions in other countries. According to this chronology, many place his first arrival at Rome in the second year of the reign of Claudius, of Christ, 42; but all circumstances prove it to have been in the year 40, the twelfth after the death of Christ, in 39, (2) Lactantius mentions only his last coming to Rome under Nero,* a few

(1) Euseb. in Chron.

(2) See Solierus in Histor. Chronol. Patriarcharum Antiochen. ante tom. 4, Julij, Bolland. p. 7, Item Cuperus, Diss. de Divisione Apostolorum, ib. p. 12, and Henschenius in Diatribâ Præliminari ante tom. 1. Aprilis.

* Nothing can be more incontestible in history, than that the city of Rome was honoured by the presence, preaching, and martyrdom of the prince of the apostles, and that he was the founder and first bishop of that see. Hence Rome is styled by the more venerable ancient councils, The See of Peter. In this the concurring testimony of all ancient Christian writers, down from St. Ignatius, the disciple of this apostle, is unanimous. Eusebius tells us, that one motive which brought him to Rome was to defeat the impostures of Simon Magus, who had repaired thither from the East, whence St. Peter had expelled him. "Against that bane of mankind, (Simon)," says this parent of Church History, "the most merciful and kind providence conducts to Rome Peter, the most courageous, and the greatest among the apostles, and him who for his prowess was the chief, and the prince of all the rest." Παραπόδας ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς Κλαυδίου Βασιλείας ἡ πανάγαθος καὶ φιλανθρωποπάτης τῶν ὅλων πρόνοια τὸν καρτερόν καὶ μέγαν τῶν ἀποστόλων τὸν ἀρετῆς ἐνεκα τῶν γοιπῶν ἀπάντων προήλορον Πέτρον ἐπὶ τὴν Ρώμην ὡς ἐπὶ τηλικέτον λυμῶνα βίω χειραγωγῇ. Eus. Hist. l. 2, c. 14, ed. Vales.

Mr. Whiston, in the Memoirs of his own Life, p. 599, writes as follows: "Mr. Bower, with some weak Protestants before him, almost pretends to deny that St. Peter ever was at Rome; concerning which matter take my own former words out of my three Tracts, p. 53. Mr. Baratier proves most thoroughly, as Bishop Pearson has done before him, that St. Peter was at Rome. This is so clear in Christian antiquity, that it is a

years before his martyrdom.(1) If he staid at Rome from the year 40 to 42, he returned speedily into the East; for in 44 he was thrown into prison at Jerusalem by king Agrippa;(2) and being miraculously delivered by an angel, he again left that city, and travelling through many countries in the East he established in them bishops, as St. Agapetus assures us. He was at Rome soon after, but was banished from that city when, on account of the tumults which the Jews there raised against the Christians, as Suetonius relates, the emperor Claudius expelled them both, in the year 49. But they were soon allowed to return. St. Peter went again into the East, and in 51 was present in the general council held by the apostles at Jerusalem, in which he made a discourse to show that the obligation of the Jewish ceremonies was not to be laid on the Gentile con-

(1) Lactant. de Mort. Persec. See Baluze, Not. ib. and Ceillier, t. 1.

(2) Acts xii.

shame for a Protestant to confess that any Protestant ever denied it. This partial procedure demonstrates that Mr. Bower has by no means got clear of the prejudices of some Protestants, as an impartial writer of history, which he strongly pretends to be, ought to do, and he has in this case greatly hurt the Protestant cause, instead of helping it."

N. B. Mr. Baratier, a Protestant divine, printed at Utrecht in 1740 his *Chronological Inquiry* about the most Ancient Bishops of Rome. from Peter to Victor, in which he demonstrates that St. Peter was at Rome, as Bishop Pearson had done before by a learned dissertation in his posthumous works.

Eusebius, l. 2. c. 17. and St. Jerom, Catal. c. 11. relate, that St. Peter met at Rome Philo, the most learned Jewish philosopher, who flourished at Alexandria, and was famous for the smoothness and sweetness of his eloquence, in which he seemed to rival Plato. In his moral writings he depreciates the dignity of the Mosaic divine precepts and history, by intermixing false Platonic notions, and by remote allegorical comments; in which latter, Origen, in some degree, became too much his imitator. Philo was sent to Rome by the Jews of Alexandria, in the year 40, on an embassy to Caius Caligula, by whom he was very ill-treated; an account of which, with a genuine natural description of the folly, pride, inconstancy, and extravagances of that tyrant, he has left us in his discourse against Flaccus. In his book, on the *Contemplative Life*, he describes the Therapists of Egypt in his time, who, according to Eusebius and St. Jerom, were Christian ascetics, or persons particularly devoted to the divine service and heavenly contemplation, under a rule of certain regular exercises of virtue. Photius pretends (cod. 105.) that Philo was converted to the faith by St. Peter at Rome, whither he made a second voyage in the reign of Claudius. But notwithstanding his friendship and commerce with St. Peter, he seems to have been too much intoxicated with the pride of the world, and never to have opened his eyes to the truth. His nephew, Tiberius Alexander, a philosopher, apostatized to idolatry, and was made by the Romans governor of Judæa in 46.

verts. His determination was seconded by St. James, bishop of Jerusalem, and formed by the council into a decree. The same synod confirmed to St. Paul, in a special manner, the apostleship of the Gentiles,(1) though he announced the faith also to the Jews when occasion served. St. Peter, whilst he preached in Judæa, chiefly laboured in converting the Jews. They being tenacious of the legal ceremonies, the use of them was for some time tolerated in the converts, provided they did not regard them as of precept; which being always condemned as an error in faith, was called the Nazarean heresy.* After the council at Jerusalem, St. Peter went to Antioch, where he ate promiscuously with the Gentile converts, without observing the Jewish distinction of unclean meats. But certain Jewish converts from Jerusalem coming in, he, fearing their scandal, withdrew from table, at which action the Gentile Christians took offence. To obviate the scandal of these latter, St. Paul publicly rebuked his superior,(2) lest his behaviour might seem to condemn those who did not observe the Jewish ceremonial precepts, and lest they might apprehend some disagreement in the doctrine of the two apostles. St. Peter, whilst he studied to avoid what might give offence to the weak Jewish converts, had not sufficiently attended to the scandal which the Gentile proselytes might take at his action. Nevertheless St. Austin justly observes, that both these apostles give us on this occasion

(1) Acts xv. 22.

(2) Gal. ii. 2.

* The ceremonial precepts and rites of the Jewish law were all typical, pointing out a Redeemer to come; and were therefore to cease by their accomplishment; as shadows they were banished by the reality. The various legal uncleannesses were sensible emblems of the spiritual uncleanness of sin, which was wiped away by the death of Christ. God also would signify by so many peculiar laws in this respect, that the Jews were his chosen people, separated from the world; and he would put them in mind what cleanness of heart he requires. The distinction of unclean meats was likewise a trial of obedience, and a bar to familiar commerce with infidel nations, to preserve the people of God from infection amidst an idolatrous world, as Theodoret observes, in Levit. qu. 1. It was removed when all nations were adopted into the Church. The flesh of animals, called in the Levitical law unclean, was usually unsavoury and unwholesome. This distinction of unclean meats is mentioned in general long before Moses, in the divine precepts given to Noah, and was perhaps almost as old as the world. See the Interpreters in Levit. xl. l. &c.

great lessons of virtue;(1) for we cannot sufficiently admire the just liberty which St. Paul showed in his rebuke, nor the humble modesty of St. Peter;* "But," says that father,(2) "St. Peter sets us an example of a more wonderful and difficult virtue. For it is a much easier task for one to see what to reprehend in another, and to put him in mind of a fault, than for us publicly to acknowledge our own faults, and to correct them. How heroic a virtue is it to be willing to be rebuked by another, by an inferior† and in the sight of all the world?" "This example of Peter," says he in another place,(3) "is the most perfect pattern of virtue he could have set us, because by it he teaches us to preserve charity by humility." Every one can correct others; but only a saint can receive well public rebuke. This is the true test of perfect humility, and heroic virtue: this is something far more edifying and more glorious than the most convincing apologies. St. Gregory the Great says of this conduct of St. Peter:(4) "He forgot his own dignity for fear of losing any degree of humility. He afterwards commended the epistles of St. Paul as full of wisdom, though we read in them something which seems derogatory from his honour. But this lover of truth rejoiced that all should know that he had been reproved, and should believe the reproof was just."

St. Peter wrote two canonical epistles. The first he dates from Babylon, by which, St. Jerom and Eusebius tell us, he meant Rome, at that time the centre of idolatry and vice. The Jews usually called such cities by that figurative name; as they gave to a city infamous for debaucheries the name of Sodom, to an idolatrous country that of Egypt, to a race accursed by God that of Canaan. Rome is also called Babylon in the Apoca-

(1) S. Aug. Ep. 82.

(2) St. Aug. in Gal. ii. p. 949.

(3) S. Aug. Serm. 350. ed. Ben.

(4) Hom. 18. in Ezech. p. 1294.

* This is the answer which St. Austin gives to the senseless slander of Porphyrius, who had charged these holy apostles, on this occasion, with hypocrisy and pride. It is strange to see this absurd calumny, equally inconsistent with the circumstances of this fact, and with the avowed character of these holy men, renewed in our days, in an express dissertation on this passage, among the works of one who professed himself a Christian. See the posthumous works of Dr. Conyers Middleton.

† Posterioriorem.

lypse. This name might be frequently given it among the Christians of that age.* This epistle seems to have been written between the years 45 and 55. It is chiefly addressed to the converted Jews, though the apostle also speaks to the Gentile converts, as St. Austin observes. His principal view in it was to confirm them in faith under their sufferings and persecutions, and to confute the errors of Simon and of the Nicolaites. Erasmus, Estius, and all other judicious critics, admire in the style a majesty and vigour worthy the prince of the apostles, and a wonderful depth of sense couched in a few words. His second epistle was written from Rome a little before his death, and may be regarded as his spiritual testament. In it he strongly exhorts the faithful to labour earnestly in the great work of their sanctification, and cautions them to stand upon their guard against the snares of heresy. It is a tradition at Rome, that St. Peter converted the house of Pudens, a Roman senator, into a church, which now bears the name of St. Peter's, *ad vincula*. Many ancient Martyrologies mention a feast of "The dedication of the first church in Rome consecrated by St. Peter." The Christians only seem to have built churches at Rome after the persecution of Severus; but had before oratories and chapels in such manner as the persecutions would allow; and the most sacred of these were afterwards converted into churches. St. Paul mentions a Christian in Rome called Pudens,(1) whom some think to have been this senator. We cannot doubt but St. Peter preached the gospel over all Italy, as Eusebius, Rufinus, and others assure us; and likewise in other provinces of the West, according to the commission which the apostles received to carry the gospel over the whole earth. Whence they did not confine themselves to single cities, except that St. James fixed his residence at Jerusalem for the sake of the Jews. Our island among other places lays claim to

(1) 2 Tim. iv. 21.

* Calmet demonstrates that in St. Peter's epistles we cannot understand either Babylon in Chaldæa, which was then in ruins, as Pliny and Strabo testify, and had been abandoned by the Jews some years before, or Babylon in Egypt, which was then no more than a castle, &c.

the happiness of having been visited by St. Peter, though this is only supported by modern vouchers, as may be seen in Alford, Usher, and Cressy. Lactantius writes,(1) that the two great apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, foretold at Rome, that God should in a little time send a prince against the Jews, who should overcome them, and level their metropolis with the ground: that during the siege of it, they should pine with hunger and thirst, even to the eating of one another: that after it should be taken, they should see their women grievously tormented before their eyes, their virgins deflowered, their young men torn asunder, their babes dashed to pieces, their country wasted with fire and sword; and the whole nation banished out of their own land, because they had exalted themselves above the most gracious and approved Son of God. St. Athanasius(2) mentions that SS. Peter and Paul had often fled from persecutors in times of danger, till, being assured of their martyrdom by a revelation, they courageously went to meet it. Our Saviour, immediately after his resurrection, had foretold St. Peter in what manner he should glorify him in his old age, and that he should follow him even to the death of the cross.(3) He afterwards revealed to him the time of his death.(4) Several triumphs over the devil prepared him for that crown. To give a clear view of his last glorious conflict, it is necessary to introduce the history of that remarkable event, by a short account of the last adventure of his celebrated antagonist. Simon Magus, after passing through divers provinces, came to Rome, and there gained a high reputation. St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and Theodoret, assure us, that divine honours were paid him there, and that a statue was erected to him in the isle of Tiber, by the emperor Claudius and the senate, with this inscription: "Simoni Deo Sancto."* If Simon

(1) L. 4, 21.

(3) John xiii. 36; xxi. 18, 19.

(2) Apol. pro fugâ, p. 713.

(4) 2 Pet. i. 14.

* Several moderns have called in question this statue, and fancy that St. Justin was led into a mistake by a statue which was dug up in the isle of Tiber, near two hundred years ago, dedicated to Semo Sancus, or Sangus, a demigod of the Sabines, with this inscription: "Semoni Sancho Deo Fidio sacrum Sex. Pompeius, ~~Sp~~ F. Mussianus—donum

inclined the humour of Messalina that way, she was capable of being carried to all sorts of extravagances, and of persuading Claudius to the same; for that emperor is justly called a child with grey hairs, a greater idiot having never worn the purple.

dedit." In answer to this surmise of Salmatius, Le Clerc, and some others, the judicious Tillemont makes the following reflections: (Note on Simon Magus t. 2, p. 340.) "Justin Martyr affirms, that a statue was erected in Rome to Simon Magus, as to a god; this he repeats twice in his great apology addressed to the emperor, to the senate, and to all the people of Rome; and sufficiently intimates that it was the emperor Claudius and the senate who caused this statue to be set up. It is evident that St. Cyril of Jerusalem thus understood him. St. Irenæus, (l. 1, adv. Hær. c. 20, p. 115,) Tertullian, (Apol. c. 13,) Eusebius, (Hist. l. 2, c. 14,) St. Cyril of Jerusalem, (Cat. 6, p. 53,) St. Austin, (L. de Hæres, c. 1. p. 8,) and Theodoret, (Hæret. Fab. l. 1, c. 1,) assert the same. Tertullian, Eusebius, and St. Austin say it was raised by public authority: and Tertullian and St. Cyril make mention of the same inscription. Can any one imagine that St. Justin, a person then living in Rome, well acquainted with all the mythology of the heathens, writing to the emperors and senate, could have fallen into so ridiculous a mistake, of which the meanest artizan could have convinced him? On the other side, the heathens could not fail to take notice of such a blunder, and turn it to the scorn of the apologist and his religion. Yet this they never did; otherwise the author would have excused himself in his second apology; and could never have the boldness to cite this very passage in his dialogue with Trypho. (p. 349.) Irenæus and Tertullian (than whom no man was better acquainted with the follies of paganism) could not have had the assurance to repeat so gross a blunder, had the heathens shown it to be such. St. Austin was no stranger to the Sancus or Sanguis of the Sabines; for he makes mention of him, (l. 18, de Civ. c. 19,) yet he says, that a statue was, by public authority, erected, not only to Simon, but also to his Helena; which he did not take from St. Justin, no more than Theodoret did the circumstance that the statue of Simon was of brass. Moreover, the difference between Semoni Sanco, or Sango, and Simoni Sancto is obvious; and the word Fidio quite changed the sense, meaning that god to be the Roman Fidius who presided over oaths. If Justin thought this denoted the quality of the Son of God, why did he not take notice of it? Lastly, the statue of Semo was erected by a private person, not by the emperor or senate. Several statues were consecrated to Semo Sancus, besides this in the isle of Tiber; one is mentioned by Baronius, (ad. an. 44,) which was erected on the Quirinal hill; and two others have been found in Italy. (Gruter, Inscript. p. 96, 97, 98.) It is clear in Gruter, that the Romans sometimes added the epithet Sanctus to their gods, and that of Deus, though not so often as Divus, to those whom they had known only men. St. Irenæus and St. Cyril say this statue was erected by the order of Claudius; St. Austin says at the instance of Simon himself. The Romans offered sacrifices to Caligula and Domitian in their lifetime: Philostratus says that Apollonius Tyaneus was worshipped for a god whilst living. Athenagoras informs us, that about the year 180 the city of Troas erected several statues to one Nerullinus, offered sacrifices to one of them and pretended that it

Messalina being slain for her public adulteries and other crimes. in the year 48, Claudius took to wife his niece Agrippina, by an incest till then condemned in the Roman state. Being a greater firebrand than Messalina had ever been, she pushed Claudius on many acts of cruelty; for out of mere stupidity, and without malice, he could sport himself in blood. She prevailed on him to adopt Nero, who was her son by Domitius, her first husband. Claudius left a son of his own by Messalina, called Britannicus. Agrippina afterwards poisoned Claudius, in the year 51; and by a complication of crimes, opened the way to the imperial throne for her son Nero. The young prince soon set aside his mother, but governed five years with great clemency, leaving the direction of all things to his master Seneca, and to Burrhus, the prefect of the prætorian cohorts; except that he poisoned his brother Britannicus, whilst they were supping together, in the year 55. But after he had killed his own mother Agrippina, in 58, he became the greatest monster of cruelty and vice that perhaps ever disgraced the human species. Simon Magus found means to ingratiate himself with this tyrant; for Nero was above all mortals infatuated with the superstitions of the black art to the last degree of folly and extravagance. To excel in this was one of his greatest passions; and for this purpose he spared no expense, and stuck at no crimes. But all his endeavours were fruitless. When Tiridates, a Par-

gave oracles and healed the sick, even when Nerullinus himself lay sick. (Legat. pro Christ. p. 29.) And SS. Paul and Barnabas had a great deal of difficulty to hinder those of Lystra from offering sacrifices to them." Thus Tillemont. The learned Mr. Reeves, in his notes on this apology of St. Justin, (p. 50,) says, "We must also observe, that our martyr himself was a Samaritan, and lived in the next age; that he was a person of great learning and gravity; of a genius wonderfully inquisitive about matters of this nature; that he was at this time at Rome, where every one could inform him of what god this was the statue, as easily as any one about London could tell now whose the statue is at Charing cross; that he presented this apology to the emperors and senate, and pressed for the demolishing of this statue, which if it was grounded on so notorious a mistake, must have a very ill effect upon his apology and cause, and must needs be resented," &c. See this fact defended by Baron, ad. an. 44. n. 55. Spenser, Not. in Orig. contra Cels. l. 1, p. 44. Hammond, diss. 1, de Epis. Grotius, l. 3. Oper. p. 488. Halloix in St. Justin, and especially Weston, in an express dissert. p. 17.

thian prince, who was a magician, came to Rome, and was crowned by Nero, king of Armenia, in the forum, the tyrant hoped to learn of him some important secrets of that detestable superstition. The most skilful of the Parthian magicians exhausted all their science to satisfy him; but only gave the world a new proof of the emptiness of that art. Pliny concludes from this want of success in Nero, and Tillemont repeats the same of Julian the Apostate, that seeing the utmost skill of those who have most addicted themselves to this deceitful art, joined with the greatest power and impiety, was never able to effect anything by it, every one must rest convinced, that magic is not less vain and idle, than it is impious and execrable. Simon Magus, by his vain boastings, and illusions, could not fail to please this tyrant. The fathers assure us that this famous magician had promised the emperor and people to fly in the air, carried by his angels, thus pretending to imitate the ascension of Christ. Accordingly he raised himself in the air by his magical power, in presence of the emperor. St. Peter and St. Paul, seeing the delusion, betook themselves to their prayers; upon which the impostor fell to the ground, was bruised, broke a leg, and died a few days after in rage and confusion. This wonderful event is related by St. Justin, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Austin, St. Philastrius, St. Isidore of Pelusium, Theodoret, and others. Dion Chrysostomus, a heathen, writes that Nero kept a long time in his court a certain magician, who promised to fly.(1) And Suetonius says,(2) that at the public games a man undertook to fly in the presence of Nero, but fell in his first essay, and his blood even stained the balcony in which the emperor stood. This history Baronius, Tillemont, Ceillier, and Orsi, understand of Simon Magus.

The great progress which the faith made in Rome, by the miracles and preaching of the apostles, was the cause of the persecution which Nero raised against the church, as Lactantius mentions. Other fathers say, the resentment of the tyrant against the apostles was much inflamed by the misfortune of Simon Magus; and he was unreasonable enough to make this credible. But he had already begun to persecute the Christians from the

(1) Or. 21.

(2) In Neron. c. 12.

time of the conflagration of the city, in 64. St. Ambrose tells us, (1) that the Christians entreated St. Peter to withdraw for a while. The apostle, though unwillingly, yielded to their importunity, and made his escape by night; but, going out of the gate of the city, he met Jesus Christ, or what in a vision appeared in his form, and asked him, "Lord, whither art thou going?" Christ answered, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." St. Peter readily understood this vision to be meant of himself, and taking it for a reproof of his cowardice, and a token that it was the will of God he should suffer, returned into the city, and, being taken, was put into the Mamertine prison with St. Paul. The two apostles are said to have remained there eight months, during which time they converted SS. Processus and Martinian, the captains of their guards, with forty-seven others. It is generally asserted that when they were condemned, they were both scourged before they were put to death. If St. Paul might have been exempted on account of his dignity of a Roman citizen, it is certain St. Peter must have undergone that punishment, which, according to the Roman laws, was always inflicted before crucifixion. It is an ancient tradition in Rome that they were both led together out of the city by the Ostian gate. St. Prudentius says, that they suffered both together in the same field, near a swampy ground, on the banks of the Tiber. Some say St. Peter suffered on the same day of the month, but a year before St. Paul. But Eusebius, St. Epiphanius, and most others affirm, that they suffered the same year, and on the 29th of June. St. Peter when he was come to the place of execution, requested of the officers that he might be crucified with his head downwards, alleging that he was not worthy to suffer in the same manner his divine Master had died before him.* He had preached the

(1) St. Ambr. Serm. 68.

* "Ille tamen veritus, celsæ decus æmulando mortis,
Ambire tanti gloriam magistri—
Noverat ex humili cælum citius solere adiri."

S. Prud. de Cor. Hymn. 6, alias 12.

So also Orig. in Gen. apud Eus. l. 3, c. 1; S. Chrys. Hom. 5, in 2 Tim. 2, S. Hier. de Script.

cross of Christ, had bore it in his heart, and its marks in his body, by sufferings and mortification, and he had the happiness to end his life on the cross. His Lord was pleased not only that he should die for his love, but in the same manner himself had died for us, by expiring on the cross, which was the throne of his love. Only the apostle's humility made a difference, in desiring to be crucified with his head downwards. His master looked towards heaven, which by his death he opened to men; but he judged that a sinner formed from dust, and going to return to dust, ought rather in confusion to look on the earth, as unworthy to raise his eyes to heaven. St. Ambrose,(1) St. Austin,(2) and St. Prudentius ascribe this his petition partly to his humility, and partly to his desire of suffering more for Christ. Seneca mentions, that the Romans sometimes crucified men with their heads downward; and Eusebius(3) testifies that several martyrs were put to that cruel death. Accordingly the executioners easily granted the apostle his extraordinary request. St. Chrysostom, St. Austin, and St. Asterius say he was nailed to the cross; Tertullian mentions that he was tied with cords. He was probably both nailed and bound with ropes.* F. Pagi places the martyrdom of these two apostles in the year 65, on the 29th of June.†

(1) In Ps. 118.

(2) Serm. 253.

(3) Hist. l. 8, c. 8.

* The oldest pontificals and calendars say, that St. Peter was crucified and buried near Nero's palace, on the Vatican, in the same place where his great church now stands. See Schelestrate, t. 1. Ant. Eccl. p. 402. Berti, t. 2. Diss. Hist. p. 12. Bozius, and Aringhi, Roma Subterranea.

† To settle the chronology of St. Peter's history, it is necessary first to determine the year in which Christ died. When the consulates, by which years were most frequently dated in the Roman empire, began to be confused, and were soon after extinct, Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian by extraction, a learned abbot in Rome, in the last year of the Emperor Justin, of the Christian era 527, published a Paschal Cycle, in which he computed the dates of the years from the first day of January following, reputed the time of the birth of Christ, on the 25th of December. George Syncellus mentions Panodorus, an Egyptian monk, in the reign of Arcadius, in the fifth age, who in a chronicle had made use of this epoch, in which several orientals had imitated him. Dionysius Exiguus first made use of it in the West; but before the close of the eighth century, its use was so universal, that it has been called the Common Christian Era; though Bede, in 731, both in his history, and in his learned book, De Temporum Ratione, and some others, date their era one year before Dio-

St. Gregory writes, that the bodies of the two apostles were buried in the catacombs, two miles out of Rome.(1) The most ancient Roman Calendar, published by Bucherius, marks their festival at the catacombs on the 29th of June. An ancient his-

(1) St. Greg. l. 3, ep. 30.

nysius, and from the feast of the incarnation of Christ, or the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, the 25th of March. Modern chronologists discovering that this common era was erroneous, and that the birth of Christ certainly preceded it, have run into opposite extremes, and by their different opinions, and perplexed dissertations, have rendered the exact chronology of the first period of our holy religion the more obscure and unsettled. To avoid ambiguity, and to throw a light on this part of sacred history, it is necessary to premise some short observations which may serve as a clue to conduct us through this labyrinth. The neglect of the deference due to the authority of the fathers who lived near those times, has been a source of many mistakes, which their testimony removes, and presents a system most consistent both with itself, and with the gospel history. By this rule Christ will be proved to have been born in the year of Rome 749, according to the computation of Varro, the fortieth of Augustus, and the fifth before the common era, in the consulate of Augustus twelve, and L. Cornelius Sulla. He was beginning his thirtieth year when he was baptized; celebrated from that time four Passovers, and was crucified on the 25th of March, in the 33rd year of his age, of the common era 29, the two Gemini being consuls, as Tertullian, (adv. Jud. c. 8,) St. Austin, (l. 18, de Civ. c. 54,) Victor Aquitanus, (in Chron.) the Liberian Calendar, and many other old calendars quoted by Henschenius, testify. (See Berti, Diss. Hist. 6, t. 1, p. 232, and Orsi, t. 1.) The death of Christ happened in the fifteenth year of Tiberius reigning alone, as Tertullian, (adv. Jud. c. 8,) Lactantius, (l. 4, Inst. c. 10,) S. Prosper, &c., assure us; i. e. in the eighteenth since he was associated with Augustus in the government of all the provinces. It is objected, that this full moon fell not that year on a Friday. But the astronomical cycles have been often altered; nor do we know those which the Jews followed. Samuel Petit demonstrates them to have been confused, especially after Herod had introduced the Roman correction and calendar, nor do we know how the Jews reconciled to it their lunar month Nisan; their manner of observing the new moon, as described by Lamy, and their Veadar, demonstrate them not to have been nice in these cycles. Usher and Lancelot contradict the gospel when they say Christ was thirty-three or thirty-four years old when he was baptized; and whereas St. Ignatius Martyr, St. Austin, &c., say Christ lived only thirty-three years, they prolong his life to thirty-seven years.

As to St. Peter, we are assured by St. Jerom (l. de scriptor. in S. Paulo,) that he suffered in the thirty-seventh year after Christ's crucifixion; consequently in the year of the common era 65, the twelfth of Nero. He therefore governed the church thirty-seven years. The apostles remained in Judæa twelve years from the ascension of Christ, before their dispersion into other nations, as the ancients agree; but we count the first and the last only begun. This brings the apostolic history to the forty-first year of the Christian era. St. Peter then came to Rome,

tory read in the Gallican church in the eighth century says, their bodies only remained there eighteen months. From those catacombs where now stands the church of St. Sebastian, the body of St. Paul was carried a little further from Rome, on the Ostian road; and that of St. Peter to the Vatican hill, probably by the Jewish converts who lived in that quarter. At present the heads of the two apostles are kept in silver bustoes in the church of St. John Lateran. But one half of the body of each apostle is deposited together in a rich vault, in the great church of St. Paul, on the Ostian road; and the other half of both bodies in a more stately vault in the Vatican church, which sacred place is called from primitive antiquity, "The Confession of St. Peter, and Limina Apostolorum," and is resorted to by pilgrims from all parts of Christendom. The great saint Chrysostom never was able to name either of these holy apostles without raptures of admiration and devotion; especially

and fixed there his episcopal chair. Eusebius writes in his chronicle: "Cum primum Antiochenam fundasset ecclesiam, Romam proficiscitur, ubi evangelium prædicans, 25 annis ejusdem urbis episcopus perseverat." And St. Jerom, (in Catal.) "Secundo Claudij anno ad expugnandum Simonem Magundum Romam pergit, ibique 25 annis cathedram sacerdotalem tenuit." Sulpicius Severus, (l. 2, Hist.) Paulus Orosius, (l. 7, c. 6,) St. Leo, (Serm. 8, in Nat. Apost.) &c., affirm the same, which is likewise clearly expressed in the Liberian Calendar, and in all the oldest pontificals. Bede, De ratione Temp. St. Prosper, &c. are vouchers for the same point. St. Peter suffered death in the year 65, Nerva and Vestinus being consuls, in the thirty-seventh from the crucifixion of Christ, and the twelfth of Nero. The Liberian Calendar writes: "Passus est tertiâ ante Calendas Julias, Consulibus Nerva et Vestino." Lactantius (l. 1, de Mortibus Persec.) says the apostles had preached twenty-five years before the reign of Nero, when Peter came to Rome; by which he does not affirm that he had not been at Rome before; and these twenty-five years exactly coincide with our chronology. Nero certainly raised his persecution immediately after the burning of Rome, in the year 64, of his reign the eleventh, as is clear from Suetonius, Tacitus, and Sulpicius Severus, (l. 2.) This last writer and St. Epiphanius (hær. 27,) say, the apostles were not cut off in the beginning, but in the twelfth year of Nero. Papebroke calls it the eleventh, because Nero began his reign in October; but Petavius demonstrates (Doctr. Temp. l. 11, c. 14,) that the years of the reigns of the Roman emperors were always counted from the beginning of the first year, not from the day upon which they entered upon their reigns. Tillemont imagined that the apostles suffered a year later, but does not remove the objection raised from the absence of Nero, who went into Greece before the month of June, and passed there the remaining part of the year; and in the following, laid

when he mentions the ardent love of St. Peter for his divine Master. He calls him "the mouth of all the apostles, the leader of that choir, the head of that family, the president of the whole world, the foundation of the Church, the burning lover of Christ." *

St. Peter left all things to follow Christ, and in return received from him the promise of life everlasting, and in the bargain a hundred fold in this present life. O thrice happy exchange! O magnificent promise! cries out St. Bernard. O powerful words, which have robbed Egypt, and plundered its richest vessels! which have peopled deserts and monasteries with holy men, who sanctify the earth and are its purest angels, being continually occupied in the contemplation and praises of God, the ever glorious uninterrupted employment of the blessed, which these spotless souls begin on earth to continue for all eternity in heaven. They have chosen with Mary the better part, which will never be taken from them. In this how great is their everlasting reward! How pure their present comfort and joy! and yet how cheap the purchase! For, what have they left? what have they bartered? Only empty vanities; mere nothings; nay, anxieties, dangers, fears, and toils.—Goods which by their very possession are a burden; which by their loss or continual disappointments, perplex, fret, disturb and torment; and which, if loved with attachment, defile the soul. Goods which Crates, the heathen philosopher, threw into the sea, to be rid of their troubles, saying: "Go into the deep, ye cursed incentives of the passions. I will drown you, lest I be drowned by you."† I am too weak to bear your burden. To possess you without defiling my heart, to enjoy you without covetousness, pride, or ambition, is a difficult task, and

violent hands upon himself, on the 9th of June, as we learn from Xiphilin's epitome of Dion Cassius. See Solerius Bolland. in Hist. Chronol. Patriarch. Antioch. ante Tomum 4, Julij.

* 'Ο Πέτρος ὁ κορυφαῖος τῷ χορῷ, τό στόμα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἁπάντων, ἡ κεφαλὴ τῆς πατρίας ἐκείνης ὁ τῆς δικεμένης ἀπάσης προστάτης, ὁ θεμέλιος τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ὁ θεσμός ἐραστοῦ τῷ Χριστῷ. St. Chrys. Hom. in 2 Tim. iii. 1, t. 6, p. 982, ed. Ben.

† Abite in profundum, malæ cupiditates: ego vos mergam, ne mergar à vobis.

the work of an extraordinary grace, as truth itself hath assured us. Happy are they who follow the Lord without incumbrance or burden ; who make their journey to him without the load of superfluous baggage or hindrance ! All are entitled to this present and future happiness, who repeat these words of St. Peter in their hearts and affections, though they are seated on thrones, or engaged by the order of providence in secular affairs. They used the world as if they used it not, living in it so as not to be of it, and possess its goods so as to admit them into their houses not into their hearts. They are solicitous and careful in their temporal stewardship, that they may be able to give an account to their Master, who has intrusted them with it ; yet live in their affections as strangers on earth, and citizens of heaven. Those on the other side are of all others most unhappy, who in some measure imitate the hypocrisy of Ananias and Saphira, whilst they repeat the sacred words of the apostle with lying mouths ; who renounce the world in body only, and carry in affection its inordinate desires and lusts, its spirit and contagion, into the very sanctuaries which are instituted to shelter souls from its corruption.

ST. HEMMA, WIDOW.

SHE was nearly allied to the holy emperor, St. Henry, and having sanctified the world and her family by her holy example in a married state, after the death of her husband, she founded the great double Benedictin monastery of Gurk, in Carinthia, for twenty monks and seventy-two nuns, in which she took the religious veil, and died the death of the saints in 1045.* See Papebroke, Jun. t. 5. p. 499.

* The Archbishop of Saltzburg, by the authority of Pope Alexander II. and the concurrence of Henry IV. founded a bishopric at Gurk in 1073, to which the revenues of this abbey were united in 1120, the nunnery being extinguished, and the monks made regular canons, who still serve that church, and are of the congregation of Lateran.