

of Stags, and sometimes Nancarvan, that is, the Vale of Stags. The school which he established in this place became most illustrious, and fruitful in great and holy men. By our saint's persuasion St. Illut renounced the court and the world, and learned at Llan-carvan that science which he preferred to all worldly treasures. He afterwards founded the great monastery of Llan-Illut. These two monasteries and that of St. Docuinus, all situated in the diocese of Landaff, were very famous for many ages, and were often governed by abbots of great eminence. St. Gildas, after his return from Ireland, entered the monastery of St. Cadoc, where he taught for one year, and copied a book of the gospels which was long preserved with great care in the church of St. Cadoc, and highly revered by the Welch, who used it in their most solemn oaths and covenants. After spending there one year, St. Gildas and St. Cadoc left Llan-carvan, being desirous to live in closer retirement. They hid themselves first in the islands of Ronech and Echni. An ancient life of St. Cadoc tells us, that he died at Benevenna, which is the Roman name of a place now called Wedon, in Northamptonshire. Some moderns take it for Benevento, in Italy, where they suppose him to have died. Chatelain imagines this St. Cadoc to be the same who is honoured at Rennes, under the name of Cado, or Caduad, and from whom a small island on the coast of Vennes is called Enes-Caduad. St. Cadoc flourished in the beginning of the sixth century, and was succeeded in the abbacy of Llan-carvan, by Ellenius, "an excellent disciple of an excellent master," says Leland. See the acts of St. Cadoc, in Capgrave; Usher's Antiquities, c. 13. p. 252. Chatelain's Notes on the Martyr, p. 399.

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## JANUARY XXV.

### THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

See Tillemont, T. 1. p. 192.

THIS great apostle was a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin. At his circumcision, on the eighth day after his birth, he received the name of Saul. His father was by sect a Pharisee, and a denizen of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia: which city had shown

a particular regard for the cause of the Cæsars; on which account Cassius deprived it of its privileges and lands; but Augustus, when conqueror, made it ample amends by honouring it with many new privileges, and with the freedom of Rome, as we read in the two Dions and Appian. Hence St. Paul, being born at Tarsus, was by privilege a Roman citizen, to which quality a great distinction and several exemptions were granted by the laws of the empire. (1) His parents sent him young to Jerusalem, where he was educated and instructed in the strictest observance of the law of Moses, by Gamaliel, (2) a learned and noble Jew, and probably a member of the Sanhedrim; and was a most scrupulous observer of it in every point. He appeals even to his enemies to bear evidence how comfortable to it his life had been in every respect. (3) He embraced the sect of the Pharisees, which was of all others the most severe, though by its pride the most opposite to the humility of the gospel. (4) It was a rule among the Jews that all their children were to learn some trade with their studies, were it but to avoid idleness, and to exercise the body, as well as the mind, in something serious.\* It is therefore probable that Saul learned in his youth the trade which he exercised even after his apostleship, of making tents.†

Saul, surpassing all his equals in zeal for the Jewish law and their traditions, which he thought the cause of God, became thereby a blasphemer, a persecutor, and the most outrageous enemy of Christ. (5) He was one of those who combined to murder St. Stephen, and by keeping the garments of all who stoned that holy martyr, he is said by St. Austin to have stoned him by the hands of all the rest; (6) to whose prayers for his enemies he ascribes the conversion of St. Paul: (7) "If Stephen," said he, "had not prayed, the church would never have had St. Paul."

After the martyrdom of the holy deacon, the priests and magistrates of the Jews raised a violent persecution against the

(1) Acts xxi. 29. xxii. 3.

(2) Ibid. xxii. 3.

(3) Ibid. xxvi. 4.

(4) Ibid. xxvi. 5.

(5) Gal. i. 14.

(6) Serm. 301.

(7) Ibid. 116. c. 4. Acts vi.

\* Rabbi Juda says, "That a parent, who neglects his duty, is as criminal as if he taught his son to steal." See Grotius and Sanotius on Acts xviii. 3.

† Those tents were for the use of soldiers and mariners, and were made of skins sewn together. Some think that his business was that of making tapestry and hangings for theatres.

church at Jerusalem, in which Saul signalized himself above others. By virtue of the power he had received from the high priest, he dragged the Christians out of their houses, loaded them with chains, and thrust them into prison.(1) He procured them to be scourged in the synagogues, and endeavoured by torments to compel them to blaspheme the name of Christ. And as our Saviour had always been represented by the leading men of the Jews as an enemy to their law, it was no wonder that this rigorous Pharisee fully persuaded himself that *he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*.(2) By the violences he committed, his name became every where a terror to the faithful. The persecutors not only raged against their persons, but also seized their estates and what they possessed in common,(3) and left them in such extreme necessity, that the remotest churches afterwards thought it incumbent on them to join in charitable contributions to their relief. All this could not satisfy the fury of Saul, he breathed nothing but threats and the slaughter of the other disciples.(4) Wherefore, in the fury of his zeal, he applied to the high priest and Sanhedrim for a commission to take up all Jews at Damascus who confessed Jesus Christ, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, that they might serve as public examples for the terror of others. But God was pleased to show forth in him his patience and mercy; and, moved by the prayers of St. Stephen and his other persecuted servants, for their enemies, changed him, in the very heat of his fury, into a vessel of election, and made him a greater man in his church by the grace of the apostleship, than St. Stephen had ever been, and a more illustrious instrument of his glory. He was almost at the end of his journey to Damascus, when, about noon, he and his company were on a sudden surrounded by a great light from heaven, brighter than the sun.(5) They all saw the light, and being struck with amazement fell to the ground. Then Saul heard a voice, which to him was articulate and distinct; but not understood,\* though heard by the rest: *Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?* Christ said not: Why dost thou persecute my disciples, but me: for it is he, their

(1) Acts viii. 3. xxii. 4. xxvi. 10.

(2) Acts xxvi. 9.

(3) Heb. x. 32.

(4) Acts x. 1.

(5) Acts ix. xxii. xxvi.

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\* So the Greek word *ἀκούειν* is often used in scripture, as 1 Cor. xiv. 2. And thus the text is very reconcilable with Acts xxii. 9.

head, who is chiefly persecuted in his servants. Saul answered: *Who art thou, Lord?* Christ said: *Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad:* "to contend with one so much mightier than thyself. By persecuting my church you make it flourish, and only prick and hurt yourself." This mild expostulation of our Redeemer, accompanied with a powerful interior grace, strongly affecting his soul, cured his pride, assuaged his rage, and wrought at once a total change in him. Wherefore, trembling and astonished, he cried out: *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* What to repair the past? What to promote your glory? I make a joyful oblation of myself to execute your will in every thing, and to suffer for your sake afflictions, disgraces, persecutions, torments, and every sort of death. The true convert expressed this, not in a bare form of words, nor with faint languid desires, nor with any exception lurking in the secret recesses of his heart; but with an entire sacrifice of himself, and an heroic victory over the world with its frowns and charms, over the devils with their snares and threats, and over himself and all inclinations of self-love; devoting himself totally to God. A perfect model of a true conversion, the greatest work of almighty grace! Christ ordered him to arise and proceed on his journey to the city, where he should be informed of what he expected from him. Christ would not instruct him immediately by himself, but, St. Austin observes,(1) sent him to the ministry\* which he had established in his church, to be directed in the way of salvation by those whom he had appointed for that purpose. He would not finish the conversion and instruction of this great apostle, whom he was pleased to call in so wonderful a manner, but by remitting him to the guidance of his ministers; showing us thereby that his holy providence has so ordered it, that all who desire to serve him, should seek his will by listening to those whom he has commanded us to hear, and whom he has sent in his own name and appointed to be our guides. So perfectly would he abolish in his servants all self-confidence and presumption, the source of error and illusion. The convert, rising from the ground, found

(1) Qu. Evang. l. 2. c. 40. et. præf l. de doct. Christ. p. 32.

\* St. Austin doubts not but Ananias was a bishop, or at least a priest. The Greeks give him a place in their calendar on the 1st of October, and style him bishop of Damascus and martyr.

that, though his eyes were open, he saw nothing. Providence sent this corporal blindness to be an emblem of the spiritual blindness in which he had lived, and to signify to him that he was henceforward to die to the world, and learn to apply his mind totally to the contemplation of heavenly things.

He was led by the hand into Damascus, whither Christ seemed to conduct him in triumph. He was lodged in the house of a Jew named Judas, where he remained three days blind, and without eating or drinking. He, doubtless, spent his time in great bitterness of soul, not yet knowing what God required of him. With what anguish he bewailed his past blindness and false zeal against the church, we may conjecture both from his taking no nourishment during those three days, and from the manner in which he ever after remembered and spoke of his having been a blasphemer and a persecutor. Though the entire reformation of his heart was not gradual, as in ordinary conversions; but miraculous in the order of grace, and perfect in a moment; yet a time of probation and a severe interior trial (for such we cannot doubt that he went through on this occasion) was necessary to crucify the old man and all other earthly sentiments in his heart, and to prepare it to receive the extraordinary graces which God designed him. There was a Christian of distinction in Damascus, much respected by the Jews for his irreproachable life and great virtue; his name was Ananias. Christ appeared to this holy disciple, and commanded him to go to Saul who was then in the house of Judas at prayer: Ananias trembled at the name of Saul, being no stranger to the mischief he had done in Jerusalem, or to the errand on which he was set out to Damascus. But our Redeemer over-ruled his fears, and charged him a second time to go to him, saying: *Go, for he is a vessel of election to carry my name before Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel; and I will show him how much he has to suffer for my name.* Tribulation is the test and portion of all the true servants of Christ. Saul in the mean time saw in a vision a man entering, and laying his hands upon him, to restore his sight. Ananias, obeying the divine order, arose, went to Saul, and laying his hands upon him, said: *Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to thee on thy journey, hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he recovered his eye-sight. Ananias

added: *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldst know his will and see the just one, and shouldst hear the voice from his mouth: and thou shalt be his witness unto all men to publish what thou hast seen and heard. Arise therefore, be baptized and washed from thy sins, invoking the name of the Lord.* Saul then arose, was baptized, and took some refreshment. He staid some few days with the disciples at Damascus, and began immediately to preach in the synagogues, that Jesus was the Son of God, to the great astonishment of all who heard him, who said: *Is not this he who persecuted at Jerusalem, those who invoked the name of Jesus, and who is come hither to carry them away prisoners?* Thus a blasphemer and a persecutor was made an apostle, and chosen to be one of the principal instruments of God in the conversion of the world.

St. Paul never recalled to mind this his wonderful conversion, without raptures of gratitude and praise to the divine mercy. The church in thanksgiving to God for such a miracle of his grace, from which it has derived such great blessings, and to commemorate so miraculous an instance of his Almighty power, and to propose to penitents a perfect model of a true conversion, has instituted this festival which we find mentioned in several calendars and missals of the eighth and ninth centuries, and which Pope Innocent III. commanded to be observed with great solemnity. It was for some time kept a holyday of obligation in most churches in the West; and we read it mentioned as such in England in the council of Oxford in 1222, in the reign of king Henry III.(1)

## SS. JUVENTINUS AND MAXIMINUS,

### MARTYRS.

From the elegant panegyric of St. Chrysostom, T. 2. p. 578. ed Montf. and from Theodoret, Hist. l. 3. c. 11.

A.D. 363.

THESE martyrs were two officers of distinction in the foot-guards of Julian the Apostate.\*

(1) Conc. Labbe, T. xi. p. 274.

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\* Julian, surnamed the Apostate, rebelled against Constantius, his cousin-german, in the Spring, in 360, and by his death, in November, 361, obtained the empire. He was one of the most infamous dissemblers that ever lived.