

that which is due to the evidence or human authority upon which they depend. When such miracles are propounded, they are not to be rashly admitted: the evidence of the fact and circumstances ought to be examined to the bottom, and duly weighed: where that fails it is the part of prudence to suspend or refuse our assent. Also if it appears doubtful whether an effect be natural or proceed from a supernatural interposition, our assent ought to lean according to the greater weight of probability, and God, who is author of all events, natural and supernatural, is always to be glorified. If human evidence set the certainty of a miracle above the reach of any doubt, it must more powerfully excite us to raise our minds to God in sentiments of humble adoration, love, and praise; and to honour him in his saints, when by such wonderful means he gives us sensible proofs of the glory and favour to which he exalts them, and of the tenderness with which he watches over their mortal remains to raise them one day in a state of glorious immortality.

ST. THEODORE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, C.

AFTER the death of St. Deusdedit, archbishop of Canterbury, Oswi, king of Northumberland, and Egbert, king of Kent, sent a virtuous and learned priest, named Wighard, to Rome, that he might be consecrated bishop, and duly confirmed to that important see by the pope himself. Wighard and most of those who attended him died in Italy of the plague; and Vitalian, who then sat in St. Peter's chair, pitched upon Adrian, abbot of Niridian, near Naples, to be raised to that dignity. This abbot was by birth an African, understood Greek and Latin perfectly well, and was thoroughly versed in theology, and in the monastic and ecclesiastical discipline. But so great were his fears of the dignity to which he was called, that the pope was compelled by his entreaties and tears to yield to his excuses. He insisted, however, that Adrian should find a person equal to that charge, and should himself attend upon and assist him in instructing the inhabitants of this remote island in the perfect discipline of the Church. How edifying and happy was this contention—not to obtain—but to shun such a dignity! Adrian first named to the pope a monk called Andrew; but he was

judged incapable of the necessary fatigues on account of his bodily infirmities, though otherwise a person extremely well qualified. There was then at Rome a Grecian monk, named Theodore, a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a man of exemplary life, and well skilled in divine and human learning, and in the Greek and Latin languages, who was sixty-six years old. Him Adrian presented to the pope, and procured him to be ordained bishop, promising to bear him company into England.

Theodore, being ordained subdeacon, waited four months that his hair might grow, that it might be shaved in the form of a crown; for the Greek monks shaved their heads all over. At length Pope Vitalian consecrated him bishop, on Sunday the 26th day of March, in 668, and recommended him to St. Bennet Biscop, who had then come a third time to Rome, but whom the pope obliged to return to England with St. Theodore and Adrian, in order to be their guide and interpreter. They set out on the 27th of May; went by sea to Marseilles; and from thence by land to Arles, where they were entertained by the archbishop John, till Ebroin, mayor of the palace, had sent them permission to continue their journey. St. Theodore passed the winter at Paris with the bishop Agilbert, who had formerly been bishop of Winchester, in England. By his conversation the new archbishop informed himself of the circumstances and necessities of the church of which he was going to take upon him the charge: he also learned the English language. Egbert, king of Kent, hearing his new archbishop was arrived at Paris, sent one of the lords of his court to meet him, who, having obtained leave of Ebroin, waited on him to the port of Quentavic, in Ponthieu, now called St. Josse-sur-Mer. Theodore falling sick, was obliged to stay there some time. As soon as he was able to travel, he proceeded on his voyage, with St. Bennet Biscop, and took possession of his see of Canterbury on Sunday, the 27th of May, 669. Adrian was detained in France some time by Ebroin, who suspected that he was sent by the emperor to the kings of England on some designs against the French. He stayed a considerable time, first with Emmo, archbishop of Sens, and afterwards with St. Faro, bishop of Meaux. Ebroin being at last satisfied, he was permitted to follow St. Theodore, by whom he was made abbot of St. Peter's at Canterbury.

St. Theodore made a general visitation of all the churches of the English nation, taking with him the abbot Adrian. He was everywhere well received, and heard with attention; and, wherever he came, he established sound morality, confirmed the discipline of the Catholic Church in the celebration of Easter, and introduced everywhere the Gregorian or Roman chanting in the divine office, till then known in few of the English churches, except those of Kent. He regulated all other things belonging to the divine service, reformed abuses, and ordained bishops in all places where he thought they were wanting. He confirmed St. Wilfrid in the see of York,⁽¹⁾ declaring the ordination of Ceadda irregular in two respects,—because he was intruded to the prejudice of St. Wilfrid, and because he had not received his consecration by lawful authority. Ceadda replied that he had been ordained against his inclinations, confessed himself unworthy of that dignity, and retired with joy to his monastery of Lestinguen. But St. Theodore made him bishop of the Mercians, or of Litchfield, which see was vacant by the death of Jaruman.

St. Theodore was the first archbishop of Canterbury, after St. Austin, who presided over the whole church of England. He was founder of a most famous school at Canterbury, which produced many great men: for Theodore and Adrian themselves expounded the scriptures, and taught all the sciences, particularly astronomy and ecclesiastical arithmetic for calculating Easter; also how to compose Latin verses. Many under them became as perfect in the Latin and Greek languages as they were in their own tongue. Britain had never been in so flourishing a condition as at this time since the English first set foot in the island. The kings were so brave, says Bede, that all the barbarous nations dreaded their power; but withal such good Christians, that they aspired only after the joys of the kingdom of heaven, which had been but lately preached to them. All men's minds seemed only bent on the goods of the life to come, to use the words of our venerable historian. St. Theodore established schools in most parts of England, and it is hard to say whether we ought most to admire the zeal and unwearied labours of the pastors, or the docility, humility, and insatiable ardour of

(1) Eddi in Vita S. Wilfr. c. 15.

the people, with whom to hear, to learn, and to practise seemed one and the same thing.

In 670, St. Theodore held a national council at Heorutford, which Cave, Mabillon, and many others, take to be Hertford; though it seems more probably to have been Thetford, as Ralph Hidgen(1) and Trevisa(2) positively affirm. And in this council Bisi, bishop of the East-Angles, sat next to the archbishop. It is ordained in one of the canons, that no man leave his wife, unless in the case of adultery; and that even in this case, a true Christian ought not to marry another. This synod enacted, that a council should be assembled annually on the 1st of August at Cloveshoe, which Mr. Somner proves to be Abingdon in Berkshire, which was on the borders of the Mercian kingdom, and was anciently called Shovesham, and originally Clovesham. The archbishop quotes, in this synod, for the regulation of Easter, and other points, a book of canons; by which Dr. Smith understands the council of Chalcedon, some others St. Theodore's Penitential: but no such decisions are found in either; and it was probably a code of canons of the Roman Church which was here appealed to. The Eutychian and Monothelite heresies having made great havoc in the East, St. Theodore held another synod, in 680, at Hetfield, now called Bishop's Hatfield, in Hertfordshire, in which the mystery of the Incarnation was expounded, the five first general councils were received, and the abovesaid heresies condemned.

In 678, at the request of King Egfrid, St. Theodore divided the see of York into three bishoprics, and constituted so many new bishops in the room of St. Wilfrid, who refused to come into that project. In the following year, St. Theodore ordained St. Erconwald bishop of London. War breaking out between Egfrid, king of the Northumbers, and Ethelred, king of the Mercians, a great battle was fought near the Trent, in which Elfwin, the amiable young brother of Egfrid was slain. Upon this news, St. Theodore relying upon the divine assistance, immediately set out, to extinguish the flame of war which both kings were bent on carrying on with greater fury than before the engagement: but the authority of the good bishop, and the religious motives which he made use of, disarmed them at once,

(1) Polychron. l. 5, p. 239.

(2) *Ib.* p. 309.

and our saint was so happy as to cement a firm and cordial peace between the two nations, upon no other condition than that of paying the usual mulct to King Egfrid for the loss of his brother. Few things have rendered the name of St. Theodore more famous than his Penitential or Code of Canons, prescribing the term of public penance for penitents, according to the quality and enormity of their sins.* By this Penitential, it appears, (1) that when a monk died, mass was said for him on the day of his burial, on the third day after, and as often again as the abbot thought proper: also that the holy sacrifice was offered for the laity, and accompanied with fasting. (2)

St. Theodore being above fourscore years of age, and seized with frequent fits of sickness, was desirous to be reconciled to St. Wilfrid. He therefore requested the exiled holy prelate to come to him at London, begged his pardon for having consented

(1) Cap. 16.

(2) Cap. 19, 77.

* Spelman thought this Penitential too long to be inserted in his edition of the English councils, (t. 1, p. 154;) and was imitated by Wilkins.—(Conc. Britan. tom. 1.) Luke D'Achery published one hundred and twenty articles of this work, (Spicilegii, t. 9,) which Labbe reprinted. (Conc. t. 6, p. 537.) James Petit published a part of this Penitential, in two volumes, quarto, with several dissertations and foreign pieces; but his edition is less accurate than the former, and many canons are added from other later Western penitentials, in some of which Theodore is himself quoted, and some decisions occur which stand in need of amendment. The six-score articles which contains a summary account of the discipline of the Latin and Greek churches, are the chief part of what can be depended upon to be the genuine work of St. Theodore. In these it is remarkable, that the apostolical temporary precept of the council at Jerusalem, of abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, was still observed in some churches. That among the Greeks in the seventh century, even the laity received the communion every Sunday, and they who failed three times together were excommunicated. That children brought up in monasteries were permitted to eat flesh till fourteen years of age; the boys might be professed at fifteen, and girls at sixteen.—Lastly, that the penitential canons then began to be mitigated, by shortening the term of penances. St. Theodore prescribed but one year for fornication, three for adultery, and seven for murder. This relaxation gradually crept into the Oriental church, after Nectarius had abolished the office of penitentiary or public censor. In condescension to the weakness of many penitents, St. Theodore introduced the modern penitential canons of the Greeks into those churches, whose discipline he regulated, and was, in process of time, followed by many others in the West; as appears from several penitentials made in imitation of his, the authority of which is not to be compared to that of the ancient penitential canons in their decisions. The Penitentiary of Ecbright archbishop of York, in 740, was compiled upon this model.

with the kings to his deprivation, without any fault on his side, did all he could to make him amends, and restored him to his entire see of York ; for which purpose he wrote strong letters to Alfrid, king of Northumberland, who had succeeded his brother Egfrid ; to Ethelred, king of the Mercians ; to Elfleda, abbess of Streneshal, and others who opposed St. Wilfrid, or were interested in this affair ; and he had the comfort to see his endeavours every where successful. St. Theodore was twenty-two years archbishop, and died in 690, aged fourscore and eight years ; his memory is honoured on the 19th day of September, which was that of his death. He was buried in the monastery of St. Peter, which afterwards took the name of St. Austin. See Bede, l. 4, c. 1, 2, 21, l. 5, c. 8, and the lives of St. Wilfrid, and of St. Bennet Biscop. Ceillier, t. 17, p. 740. Wilkins, Concil. Magnæ Britan. t. 1, p. 42, and the learned Mr. Johnson's Collection of Canons of the Church of England, vol. 1, ad an. 673.

SS. PELEUS, PA-TERMUTHES, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS.

THE holy confessors who were condemned to the mines in Palestine, during the course of the last general persecution, built little oratories, where they met to the divine service, which under their sufferings was their solid comfort. Firmilian, governor of Palestine, informed the Emperor Galerius of the liberty they had taken, and the tyrant sent an order that they should be sent, some to the mines in Cyprus, others to those on Mount Libanus, and others to other places. Firmilian being in the mean time beheaded himself for his crimes, the officer upon whom the command was devolved after his disgrace, removed the servants of God to the new places of their banishment, according to the tenour of the imperial rescript ; but first caused four of their number to be burned alive. These were Peleus and Nilus, two Egyptian priests, Elias, also a priest, and Pa-Termuthes, an Egyptian of singular learning and reputation. This last was the person to whom Eusebius and St. Pamphilus addressed their apology for Origen. See Eus. Hist. de Martyr. Palestine, c. 13.