

garius, compiled by an anonymous monk of St. Symphorian's, at Autun, who had been an eye-witness to many of the saint's actions, and wrote very soon after the translation of his relics. Also the life of this saint, written in a more elegant style, but with some mistakes and omissions, by Ursinus, a monk at Poitiers, some time later. Both these lives are published by Du Chesne, *Historiæ Francorum coetanei*, t. 4. p. 600. 625. and Mabillon, *Actâ Bened.* t. 2. Both these authors recount many miracles wrought at the translation of this saint's relics, &c. A third life of St. Leodegarius, written by a monk of Morlach, in Austrasia, in the eighth or ninth century, adds little that is material to the two former, except an account of a succession of miracles down to the eighth age. See likewise Bulteau, *Hist. de l'Ord. de S. Ben.* 1. 3. c. 32. t. 1. p. 561. Bie, the Bolandist, p. 355 to 491. Griffet, *Mélanges Historiques*, t. 1. p. 167.*

OCTOBER III.

ST. DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, BISHOP OF ATHENS, M.

See Acts xvii.; Tillemont, t. 2; Cave, p. 66.

THE great apostle of the Gentiles, esteeming himself equally a debtor to the learned and to the unlearned, arrived at Athens about the year 51, seventeen years after our Lord's crucifixion,

about the year 676, quite routed the pretended Clovis, whom Ebroin had set up to dispute that crown with him. Dagobert II. was assassinated in 678, by whose death Theodoric expected to become King of Austrasia, and the whole French monarchy; but the inhabitants of Austrasia, dreading to fall under the tyranny of Ebroin, chose Pepin and Martin dukes of their country, and had for some time no king, though Theodoric took the title. (See *Mem. de l'Acad. des Belles Lettres*, t. 6.) Ebroin was himself assassinated in 688, and was succeeded by four short-lived mayors of the palace in Neustria and Burgundy. Duke Pepin of Herstal, or Herstal, (grandson of Pepin, surnamed the Old, and father of Charles Martel, and grandfather of Pepin the Short, king of France,) was attacked by Theodoric III. but defeated him, and that prince saw himself reduced to the necessity of constituting him mayor of the palace for the whole French monarchy in 690, a little before his death. King Theodoric III. was buried in the abbey of St. Vedast, at Arras, which he had munificently endowed.

* Baronius and many others follow the mistakes of Ursin, and falsely make St. Leodegarius mayor of the palace.

and boldly preached the faith in that city, which had been for many ages the chief seat of the muses, where the chief studies of philosophy, oratory, and polite literature flourished. All matters belonging to religion were, by an ancient law of that state, to be determined by the great council of the Areopagites, which was still observed; for, though the Athenians were fallen under the Roman yoke, yet, out of regard to their learning, and to the ancient dignity of their republic, the Romans restored to them many of their ancient privileges, with the name and title at least of their liberty. St. Paul therefore was summoned to give an account of his doctrine in the Areopagus.* The apostle appeared undaunted in that august and severe assembly of proud sages, though Plato so much dreaded a like examination at this tribunal, that he on no other account dissembled his sentiments of the unity of God, and other like truths, of which he was himself perfectly satisfied, especially after his travels into Egypt, as St. Justin Martyr testifies.(1) St. Paul explained before these learned senators the Christian maxims of repentance, purity of manners, the unity and omnipresence of God, his judgments, and the resurrection of the dead. The divine unction with which he delivered these great truths was an eloquence with which these masters of philosophy and oratory were unacquainted. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead shocked many, and was a great stumbling-

(1) Cohortatio ad Græcos.

* The Areopagus was so called from *The Hill of Mars*, Ἀρεῖος πάγος, without the walls of Athens, where it stood. This council is thought to have been as ancient as the Athenian nation, though Solon gave it a new form and dignity. The number of the members or judges was not determined, but was sometimes two or three hundred, though at first only seven. For some time no one was admitted among them who had not been archon, that is, the supreme yearly magistrate of the commonwealth, by whose name the year was counted, as at Rome by the consuls. Nor was any one to be adopted into it who was not of the strictest morals, and his conduct without reproach. The assemblies of this court were always held in the night, and the severity of its proceedings made its sentence extremely dreaded. The reputation of the integrity of its judges procured it the highest respect and veneration, so that its decisions were received as oracles. See Rollin, *Hist. Ancienne*, t. 4, p. 420; *Potter's Antiquities of Greece*, and FF. Catrou and Rouille, *Hist. Rom.* l. 57, t. 14, p. 61; also Joan. Henrici Mai, *Diss. de Gestis Pauli in Urbe Atheniensi*, edit. ann. 1727, et Jodni Meursii *Areopagus ap Gronovium An' Græcar.* t. 3, p. 207, ad 213.

block, though Plato and other eminent philosophers among them had established many sublime sentiments with regard to the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of a life to come; but that our flesh, which putrefies in the earth, and perishes to all our senses, shall, by the power of God, be raised again the same that dies, was what many of these wise men of the world looked upon as a dream, rather than a certain truth. Many, however, among them were exceedingly moved with the sanctity and sublimity of this new doctrine, and with the marks of a divine mission with which the preacher delivered himself; and they said to him they would hear him again upon that subject on some other day. Some whose hearts were touched by a powerful grace, and who with simplicity sought after the truth, not the idle gratification of curiosity, pride, or vanity, without delay addressed themselves to the apostle, and received from him full satisfaction of the evidence of the divine revelation which he preached to them. Among these there was a woman named Damaris; but the most remarkable among these converts was Dionysius, one of the honourable members or judges of this most venerable and illustrious senate.* We are assured by the testimony of St. Diony-

* During the three first ages it was a usual reproach of the heathens, that the Christians were poor/miserable persons. See Celsus, (ap. Orig. l. 3, n. 4,) Cecilius, (ap. Mim. Felic.) Lucian, (Dial. de Morte Peregrini, n. 12,) &c. This the Christian Apologists allow in part; but sometimes testify, that there were among them persons illustrious for their birth, dignities, and learning. See Origen, (l. 3, adv. Cels. n. 49, ed. Ben.) Tertullian, (Apol. c. 37, ad Scap. c. 4,) &c. Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Gamaliel, the eunuch of Queen Candace, St. Barnabas, &c. were Jews of birth and fortune. Among the Gentiles, King Abgar, the proconsul Sergius Paulus, St. Thecla, and those whom St. Paul saluted in the house of Nero, are early instances that several persons of rank embraced the faith. Flavius Clemens, Flavia Domitilla, and Glabrio, who had been Trajan's colleague in the magistracy, St. Nazarius, martyr under Nero, (see Tillem. t. 2, p. 93,) the senator Apollonius, St. Felicitas, and her seven sons, and many other martyrs, show the same. It is indeed clear from 1 Cor. i. 26, that the number of such that came over to the faith when it was first preached, was small in proportion to the multitude of converts. The reason is assigned by Lactantius: "More among the poor believe the word of God than among the rich, who are bound down by many impediments, and are chained fast slaves to covetousness and other passions; so that they are not able to look up towards heaven, but have their mind bowed down and fixed on the earth." (Instit. l. 7, c. 1, p. 517.) The Pagans called the Christians poor, though many were such only by choice. "Nec de ultima plebe consistimus, si

sus of Corinth,(1) that St. Dionysius the Areopagite was afterwards constituted bishop of Athens; and that this was done by St. Paul himself we are informed by the Apostolical Constitutions, by Aristides cited by Usuard, and by several ancient martyrologists. Aristides, quoted by Usuard, and St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, styled him a martyr. The Greeks, in their menologies, tell us that he was burnt alive for the faith at Athens.* His name occurs in ancient calendars on the 3rd of

(1) Ap. Eus. Hist. l. 3, c. 4; l. 4, c. 23.

honores vestros et purpuras recusamus." (Minucius Felix in Octav. p. 311.) That the first preachers of the faith were strangers to profane learning, was a demonstration of the finger of God in its establishment. (See John Lamius, De Erudit. Apostol. an. 1738.) Yet in the second age many scholars of the first rank became champions of Christianity; witness Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Melito, Athenagoras, Pantaenus, &c. In the third, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Heraclas, Dionysius, Minucius Felix, &c.

* Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis, in 814, wrote his *Areopagatica*, in which, upon the authority of spurious and fabulous records, he pretends, that St. Dionysius, the first bishop of Paris, is the same person with the Areopagite; of which mistake, some traces are found in certain other writings. This opinion was unknown before the ninth century, nor was it thought of even by the monk who wrote the life St. Dionysius of Paris in 750. In a great number of ancient Martyrologies the festivals of these two saints are mentioned as on two different days, and the place and circumstances of their martyrdoms are distinguished. In ancient breviaries, missals, calendars, and litanies the apostle of France is placed after the saints who suffered under Marcus Aurelius; and we are assured by St. Gregory of Tours, and other authentic monuments, that he only arrived in Gaul in 250. The author of the Life of St. Fuscian, Fulbert of Chartres, and Lethaldus, distinguish the two Dionysiuses. See this fully proved by F. Sirmond, *Diss. de Duobus Dionys.* t. 4, Op. p. 354, and Dr. Lanoy, in express dissertations, Morinus, l. De Ordinationibus, part. 2, c. 2. Gerard Du Bois, *Hist. Eccl. Paris*, l. 1, c. 3. D. Dionysius de S. Marthe, *Gallia Christiana Nova*, t. 7, p. 6. Tillemont, t. 4, &c. It is adopted in the Paris, Sens, and other French Breviaries; also by Orsi, Mamachi, and the most accurate and late historians in France, Italy, or other countries.

The works which have gone under the name of the Areopagite, at least ever since the sixth century, consist of a book, Concerning the Celestial Hierarchy; another, Of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy; a treatise, Of the Divine Names; another, Of Mystical Divinity; and ten Epistles, whereof the four first are written to the monk Caius, the fifth to Dorotheus, the sixth to Sosipater, the seventh to Bishop Polycarp, the eighth to the monk Demophylus, the ninth to Bishop Titus, and the tenth to St. John. They are maintained to be the genuine works of the Areopagite, in express dissertations, by D. Claude David, a Maurist monk, in 1702; by D. Bernard of Sept-Fonds, under the name of Adrian, in 1708; F. Honoratus of St. Mary, a Carmelite friar, in 1720, &c.; but it is now the opinion almost generally received among the learned, that

October. The cathedral of Soissons is in possession of his head, which was brought thither from Constantinople, in 1205. Pope Innocent III. sent to the abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, the body of this saint, which had been translated from Greece to Rome.

they are suppositions, and were compiled only in the fifth century. Their style is swelling, lofty, and figurative; they are written with care and study, and with a great deal of artifice in the polishing and disposition of the periods, and in the exact method which is observed in the order of the arguments. The doctrine contained in them is everywhere orthodox; and though some parts are abstracted and subtle, the works are useful. The first uncontroverted work in which they are mentioned, is the conference between the Severians (a sect of Eutychians) and the Catholics, held in the Emperor Justinian's palace, in 532, in which these heretics quoted them. St. Maximus and other writers in the following ages made frequent use of them. The author of the letters unjustifiably personates the Areopagite, as is manifest from the seventh, in which he says he observed, at Heliopolis, the miraculous eclipse which happened at the death of Christ. In the eighth, it is said the monk Demophilus had treated harshly and expelled out of the sanctuary a priest and a penitent layman, because he found the latter confessing his sins there to him. The author of the letter reproves him severely, because the priest was his superior, and because he ought not to have shown such inhumanity to a penitent sinner. Upon which occasion he relates, that when a zealous pastor, named Carpus, was weary in endeavouring in vain to reclaim an obstinate sinner, Christ in a vision mildly rebuked him, telling him, he was ready to die a second time for the salvation of sinners. In the book, *On the Heavenly Hierarchy*, the nine choirs of angels, and their different functions, are explained, with several subtle questions concerning them. The author says, that one of their functions is to sing without ceasing: *Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of thy glory.* Which is said also by St. Athanasius and St. Gregory Nazianzen. (Or. 38.) The book, *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is much more useful; for in it are explained the ceremonies of baptism, of the mass, consecration of the holy chrism, the ordination of a bishop, priest, and deacon, the manner of blessing a monk, and the burial of the dead, in which the bishop prays for the remission of the sins of the person deceased. The author adds, that prayers are only useful to those who died well. In the beginning of this book he recommends to Timothy, to whom it is addressed, to keep secret all he shall say to him, and not to discover anything concerning our mysteries, except to those who have been baptized. And chap. 7, he says, he had not set down the words of any of the sacred consecrations and blessings, because it was not lawful to commit them to writing, lest they should be divulged, and exposed to be profaned. He mentions the sign of the cross used in sacred ordinations and consecrations. In the treatise, *On the Divine Names*, many epithets and names given to the three Divine Persons in the Trinity are expounded. In that, *On Mystical Divinity*, the author, after having invoked the succour of the Holy Trinity, and prayed to be raised to that eminent degree in which God discovers his divine secrets to pure souls, he teaches Timothy, that it is only by the disengagement of the affections from all sensible things, and from the inordinate love of our-

We admire in this glorious saint, and other illustrious primitive converts, the wonderful change which faith produced in their souls. It not only enlightened their understandings, discovering to them new fields of the most sublime and important knowledge, and opening to their meditation the boundless range of eternity, and of the infinite riches of the divine good-

selves, that we can be raised to the contemplation of the divine obscurity, that is, the incomprehensible Godhead. He admonishes him not to divulge this mystical theology in the presence of those who cannot persuade themselves that there is anything above natural and sensible objects; and who, being plunged in worldly affections, and material things, have not as yet acquired a purity of soul by the study of mortification, and the exercise of virtues. He repeats a saying of St. Bartholomew, that, "Theology is both copious and short; the gospel is an abridged word, yet diffusive, and of boundless extent."

It is certain that this author had learned from the lessons of some sincere and true contemplatives, several just notions and useful maxims concerning mystical theology; though he sometimes mixes certain notions, and uses terms borrowed from the Platonic philosophy, as St. Francis of Sales uses some taken from the modern scholastic Aristotelian philosophy. By this term of mystical theology we are not to understand any acquired habit or science, such as speculative theology is, but an experimental knowledge and relish of God, which is not acquired, and which no one can set himself to obtain, but to which a soul is raised by God in prayer or contemplation. Or, it is a state of supernatural passive prayer, in which a soul which has previously crucified in herself earthly affections, and being disengaged from worldly things, and exercised in heavenly conversation, is raised to God in such a manner that her powers are fixed on him without reasoning, and without corporeal images painted by the imagination. In this state, by the most fervent quiet prayer, and an internal view of the mind, she beholds God as an immense eternal light, and in an ecstasy contemplates his infinite goodness, love, and other adorable perfections; and in this operation, all her affections and powers seem transformed into him by sweet love, she either remaining in the quiet prayer of pure faith, or employing her affections in the most ardent acts of praise, adoration, &c. Our author thus describes this state: (Eccl. Hier. c. 1,) "The sovereign blessedness of God, the very essence of the divinity, the principle of deification, by which those are deified who are to be raised to this gift of union, has bestowed on men the gift of mystic theology, in a spiritual and immaterial manner, not by moving them exteriorly to divine things, but by inspiring their will interiorly, by the irradiation of a lively and pure faith." We are assured by those who treat of this state, that no one who has not learned it by some degree of experience, can form a notion of it, any more than a blind man can conceive an idea of colours, or one understand Hebrew who has not learned something of that language, says St. Bernard. Let no one aim at, or desire it; let no one dwell on it, or take any complacency in himself about it; for such a disposition leads to pride, presumption, and fatal illusion; but let every one study in every state through which God shall be pleased to conduct him, and by every means, to improve himself in simplicity of heart, sincere profound humility, and pure and fervent charity.

ness, justice, and mercy ; but it also exerted the most powerful influence upon their wills. A spirit of the most sincere and profound compunction and humility was created in them, with a perfect contempt of the world, and all earthly things, and an entire disengagement of their hearts from all inordinate attachment to creatures. The fire of pure and ardent charity was also kindled in their hearts, which consumed all the rust of their passions; and purged their affections. From these virtues of humility and charity, which Christ declares to be the foundation of his spirit in a soul, arose an unalterable meekness, peace, fortitude, and constancy, with the whole train of virtues. Thus, by their conversion to the faith, they were interiorly changed, and became quite new men, endued with a temper truly heavenly, and animated with the spirit of Christ. The light of faith spreads its beams upon our souls. Why then has it not produced the same reformation and change in our wills and affections? This it cannot do whilst we refuse to open our hearts to this grace, and earnestly set not ourselves to remove all obstacles of self-love and the passions. Yet, till this change be wrought in our affections, we are earthly, strangers to the spirit of Christ, and want the mark of meekness and charity, by which those are to be known that belong to him. A Christian is not a mere name, or empty profession ; it is a great and noble work ; a work of difficulty which requires assiduous application, and continual pains ; and in which the greater our endeavours and advances have been, with the greater ardour do we continually strive to advance higher towards perfection, saying with St. Paul, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect ; but I follow after. I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do : forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*(1)

ST. GERARD, ABBOT.

THE county of Namur gave birth to this saint, who, being nearly related to Haganon, duke of Lower Austrasia, and

(1) Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.