

JUNE XXX.

ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE.

From his epistles and the Acts of the Apostles. See Tillemont, t. 1.

THOUGH St. Paul was not one of the twelve, yet so miraculous was his vocation by the immediate voice of Christ from heaven, so wonderful the manner in which he was sent by the express command of the Holy Ghost to instruct all nations ; so extraordinary was his rapture to the third heaven, by which (to use the words of St. Maximus) he was authorised and consecrated to the apostleship in heaven itself, and learned among angels what he was to teach among men ; so eminent was his gift of inspiration, and his spirit of prophecy : and lastly, so many and so great were the things which he suffered and did for the honour of God, and for the conversion of nations, that he has been justly entitled to hold a place among the apostles. His miraculous conversion the church commemorates on the 25th of January. After he was baptized, he staid some days at Damascus, and there preached Christ openly in the synagogue.(1) But he soon retired into Arabia, probably into the country near Damascus, which city was in the power of Aretas, king of Arabia, and father-in-law to Herod Antipas. It is not mentioned how long he lived in this retirement ; but coming back to Damascus, he began again to preach the faith, and confuted the Jews with wonderful force. That obstinate race seeing themselves unable to enter the lists against him, laid a plot to take away his life, and prevailed with the governor of Damascus, under Aretas, to promise them his concurrence.(2) They therefore kept continual watch, searched many houses, and obtained a guard of this governor to be placed at the gates to apprehend him ; but the holy convert was let down by the brethren in a basket over the wall by night. He had then continued three years partly at Damascus, and partly in his retire-

(1) Acts ix.

(2) See Dissertationes tres D. Pr. Walch : 1^o. De Ethnarchâ Judæorum Damascenorum Paulo insidiantium. Act. ix. 23, 24. 2^o. De Simone Coriario. Act. x. 6. 3^o. De Agabo Vate. Act. xx. 10. Gottæga, Anno 1758.

ment in Arabia, and took this occasion to go to Jerusalem to see St. Peter. St. Barnabas, who knew him, introduced him to SS. Peter and James, and satisfied them and the church of the sincerity of his conversion: for many of the Christians at first shunned his company, fearing some design in one who had been their most furious enemy.

In this and in every other circumstance of the establishment of our holy religion, it is observable how impossible it is for the most obstinate infidel to harbour the least suspicion of human contrivance. If the revelations, miracles, and mysteries which the apostles preached, had not been true, they never would have led St. Paul into the secret; one who was before their greatest persecutor. The authors of an imposture are extremely cautious, and infinitely suspicious and jealous. How opposite to this are the candour and sincerity of the apostles! So great a number maintained their testimony, though it cost them the sacrifice of their lives, and every temporal advantage, whilst any one of them who could have discovered a cheat, had every advantage to expect both from Jews and Gentiles. The evidence of their miracles, the humility of their hearts, the heroic sanctity of their lives, their constancy under torments even to death, in so great a cloud of witnesses, and innumerable other circumstances, put their doctrine and testimony beyond the reach of the least suspicion or possibility of error or imposture. But had we no other motive, the manifest sincerity of the apostles in the whole tenour of their conduct, and in particular with regard to St. Paul, as well as that of this illustrious convert towards them, and in the testimony which he gave through all persecutions to the same truth, gives the utmost degree of evidence to the history of his miraculous call, and to the whole Christian religion, in which the demonstration of one miraculous and supernatural fact evinces the divine original, and truth of the whole gospel dispensation.

St. Paul staid fifteen days at Jerusalem, during which time he enjoyed the conversation of St. Peter, and was very active in disputing against the Jews in their synagogue; but such was their obstinacy that they shut their ears to the truths of salvation; and not being able to withstand the force of his discourses and the evidence in which he placed the divine revela-

tion, they had recourse to rage and violence, the impotent weapon of disappointed malice; and they sought to take away his life. The disciples, therefore, that he might escape their snares, conducted him to Cæsarea, and thence sent him by sea to Tarsus, his native city. He remained there upwards of three years, and preached in the neighbouring countries of Cilicia and Syria with great success. The disciples who had fled from Jerusalem to Antioch, after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, disposed the hearts of many to receive the gospel. St. Barnabas coming thither in 43, made a motion to the other disciples that St. Paul might be sent for, not doubting but by the help of so able an assistant, the work of God would be advanced in that great city. The proposal being readily embraced, by an order of the apostles, he went to Tarsus, and brought St. Paul down to Antioch; where they diligently joined their labours for the space of a whole year; about that time the disciples at Antioch were first called Christians. Agabus, a prophet, coming with others from Jerusalem to Antioch, foretold a great famine; which accordingly happened the next year, which was the fourth of the Emperor Claudius, of the Christian æra, 44. This calamity afflicted the whole empire, but particularly Judæa. When the Christians of Antioch heard of the miseries which their brethren there suffered, they made a charitable collection to the utmost of their abilities, which they sent by St. Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, for the relief of the distressed in that church. The bearers of this seasonable alms, having executed their commission, came back to Antioch, which church then flourished exceedingly, and in it were many eminent doctors and holy prophets; among these, the chief were Barnabas, Simon, surnamed Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manahan, and Saul or Paul.

It seems to have been about this time, that St. Paul was favoured with his most extraordinary ecstasy, in which he was taken up into the third heaven or paradise, and heard and saw most sublime mysteries, which man could not utter; of which he speaks fourteen years after.⁽¹⁾ For his humiliation under these favours, he was molested with a sting of the flesh, and

(1) 2 Cor. 13.

the buffets of Satan,(1) by which St. Chrysostom and Theodoret understand persecutions, St. Basil(2) some corporal infirmity, as a violent head-ache; but St. Austin,(3) St. Jerom,(4) Bede, and St. Thomas, a temptation of the flesh; which opinion Godeau has attempted to prove by an elegant dissertation. This apostle, not satisfied with his incredible labours, chastised his body also with severe fasting, watchings, and other great mortifications, fearing lest whilst he preached to others, he might himself fall into dangers, and forfeit his crown.(5) Notwithstanding his immense fatigues and wonderful actions, he did not think he had attained anything, but forgetting all that was behind, he had his eyes open only to the duties and obligations that were before him, and upon what remained yet for him to do that he might finish his career.(6) As a man who is running a race, by looking behind could only be tempted to loiter, by imagining that he has already rode a good deal of ground: whereas by looking forward, he sees how far he has yet to go to carry the prize, and spurs himself forward lest he lose the advantages he may seem to have already gained. So did this apostle in the path of virtue, stretching himself forwards always with fresh vigour, and daily redoubling his fervour, to do what still remained for him to accomplish. He despised himself as an unprofitable servant, and condemned himself as falling short of what he owed to God, whom he always served in holy fear; for, though his conscience did not reproach him, he knew that he was not by this justified before God.(7) He gloried and pleased himself in persecutions and humiliations; in his own nothingness, weakness, and insufficiency, that God, his only strength and great All, might alone be considered and glorified in all things. In the fullest conviction and most sincere and feeling sentiment that he was the very abstract of miseries, poverty, and nakedness, and in a total forgetfulness and contempt of himself, he never ceased, with his whole heart, to give all honour and glory to God, and to excite his tongue, his soul, all his powers, and all created beings to praise his holy name.

(1) 2 Cor. xii. 7.

(3) Conc. 2, in Ps. 58.

(5) 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. vi. 5

(7) 2 Cor. xii.

(2) Regul. fusior. cap. ult.

(4) Ep. ad Eustoch.

(6) Phil. iii. 13.

and thank his goodness and mercy without intermission. He feared no dangers, was deterred by no difficulties, nor daunted by any torments, or death in any form, in so noble a cause; but rejoiced in the greatest sufferings, fatigues, and labours that he might make God every where known, and might endeavour with his whole strength to bring all men to his most sweet and holy love. He esteemed himself for this a debtor to the whole world, Greeks and Barbarians, the wise and the unwise, learned and unlearned, Jews and Gentiles. This pure love of God and ardent zeal for his glory, could not have kindled this holy flame and consumed in him all earthly affections, had he not been crucified to the world, and dead to himself. In this disposition he so studied Christ crucified as to put on his sentiments, and to animate himself with the perfect spirit of his divine meekness, patience, charity, and humility. He could say with confidence, that he carried the marks of the precious wounds of Christ in his own body, that with him he was nailed to the cross, that he would glory in no other thing save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he no longer lived himself, but that Christ lived in him. Can we wonder that a man so spiritual and divine, armed with the power of grace, commanding nature by the gifts of miracles, often seeing into futurity by an eminent spirit of prophecy, and raised above all things human, should trample under his feet the united legions of hell and the world banded against him? Can we be surprised that he should become the instrument of God to beat down, by the humility of the cross, the pride of the world, and subject so many nations to the humble law of the gospel? God was pleased to call his servant to this great work, at a time when the doctors at Antioch were employed in preaching, and were joined by the faithful in fasting and prayer, which pious public exercises have always attended the election of new ministers in the church. The Holy Ghost commanded, by some of the prophets, that Saul and Barnabas should be set apart for a special office of preaching. By this we are to understand the function of the apostleship that they might propagate the faith over all nations with full authority.(1) Thus was St. Paul assumed to

(1) Acts xiii.

the apostleship.(1) Though the other apostles lived by the gospel, he chose not to make use of that liberty, but to gain his subsistence by making tents,(2) such as were used by soldiers and mariners. Nevertheless, this apostle received sometimes the voluntary alms of the Christians, rejoicing in their charity, not for himself, but for their sake.(3) For as to himself, having tried all things, he was prepared for all, ever content with his condition wherever he was.(4) He knew how to live in want and in hunger, as well as in plenty. To defend the dignity of his apostleship upon which the success of his preaching depended, he mentioned once his revelations and privileges; but compelled by necessity for the salvation of many souls and conversion of nations: and he speaks of them in such a manner as to show that he gave all the glory to God alone, and made no account of them himself, but trembled and humbled himself more under such favours. In things which seemed to his advantage it is visibly his tongue only that mentions them, without the heart, when solicitude for the souls of his brethren betrayed the secret of his humility. But he glories in his infirmities, his heart speaks by the instrument of his tongue when he recounts whatever was a subject of confusion to him, and he styles himself from the sincere sentiment of his heart, a blasphemer, a persecutor, an abortive, the last of the apostles, and unworthy to bear that name.

We have, in the Acts of the Apostles, a summary account of the missions of St. Paul, after he had received the imposition of hands. Taking with him St. Barnabas in 44, he travelled from Antioch to Seleucia, and embarking there sailed to Cyprus. He preached first in the Jewish synagogue at Salamis; and afterwards up and down the island till he arrived at Paphos, a large city on the other side of the isle, in which resided Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul. This governor was a wise and prudent man; but was seduced by the magical arts of a Jewish impostor, one Barjesus, otherwise called Elymas, surnamed the Sorcerer. The proconsul was moved by

(1) Gal. i. 11, 12.

(2) 1 Cor. ix. 6, 12; Acts xviii. 3. See A. Lapeire, Calmet, and Synopsis Critic. ib.

(3) Phil. iv. 10.

(4) Ib. v. 11.

the reputation of the miracles of St. Paul, and desired to hear him speak. Elymas opposed the preaching of the apostle; but the saint by his malediction smote him with blindness for a time, so that he could not see the sun. Sergius Paulus, at the sight of this miracle, and by hearing St. Paul, was converted, and received the sacrament of baptism. Origen and St. Chrysostom tell us that Elymas recovered his sight by embracing the faith. Some think that our apostle took the name of Paul from this illustrious proconsul; and St. Luke from this time usually calls him so: others look upon it as more probable, that he changed his name upon his own conversion. St. Paul leaving Cyprus, went by sea to Perge in Pamphilia; where John Mark, who had followed the two apostles, doing little offices about the poor, forsook them, and returned to Jerusalem, not having courage to undergo the fatigues of the missions. Our apostle hastened from Perge to Antioch, the capital of Pisidia, and there preached in the synagogue on two Sabbath days. Many were induced by his discourses to believe in Christ; but the more obstinate Jews drove him and Barnabas out of their country. The apostles shook the dust off their shoes in testimony of their incredulity, and preached next at Iconium in Lycaonia. There God so blessed their labours, that many, both Jews and Gentiles, believed, and the two apostles continued a considerable time in that city to instruct the converts, till they were obliged to depart privately to escape being stoned by the enemies of truth who were enraged at their success. After this they visited Lystra, Derbe, and other towns and villages in that country. At Lystra, happened the cure of a man who had been lame from his birth, and had never walked, to whom St. Paul restored his strength and the use of his limbs, by bidding him to stand upright on his feet, in the midst of a public assembly. This made the heathens take St. Barnabas for Jupiter, on account of his gravity and comeliness, and St. Paul for Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. In this persuasion, the populace prepared to offer them sacrifice, and for that purpose the priests of Jupiter brought oxen dressed up with garlands, after the Gentile manner, to the place where they were. Paul and Barnabas rent their garments to testify their abhorrence of such

an attempt, and prevented their abominable sacrifices. Soon after, St. Paul was stoned by the same giddy mob, and was dragged out of the city for dead ; but by the care of the disciples, he recovered, and returned into the city with them. However, not to provoke his persecutors, he departed the next day with St. Barnabas to Derbe, where our preacher converted a great number. They returned by Lystra, Iconium, and other places (ordaining priests in every church) to Antioch in Syria, after an absence of about three years. During the four following years, St. Paul preached over Syria and Judæa ; and that interval seems to be the time, in which he carried the gospel from Jerusalem into the West, so far as Illyricum.(1)

The apostle, speaking of his missions, passes over the innumerable conversions, miracles, and wonders which he wrought, and only mentions his sufferings, for the cross was his glory. He tells us that he had undergone more labours, and suffered more frequent imprisonments, and more stripes, than any other. He was often near death by rivers, thieves, and dangers from Jews, and from false brethren, in towns, and in deserts ; he endured all manner of fatigues, frequent watchings, fasting, hunger, thirst, and nakedness. He had been five times publicly whipped by the Jews, receiving each time thirty-nine stripes ; and had been thrice beaten with rods by the Romans or Gentiles ; had thrice suffered shipwreck ; and been a day and a night in the depth of the sea,(2) that is, in a vessel which was so long shattered and tossed amidst the waves. After this progress we find him again at Antioch in 51, whence he went to Jerusalem, and assisted at the first general council held by the apostles at Jerusalem. St. Clement of Alexandria assures us that all the apostles were present at it. St. Luke mentions in it only St. Peter and St. James, and also assures us that St. Paul and St. Barnabas recounted in it the progress which they had made by their preaching among the Gentiles. St. Paul informs us,(3) that he was acknowledged by the church the apostle of the Gentiles. Judas and Silas being deputed by the council to carry its decrees to Antioch, Paul and

(1) Rom. xv. 19.

(2) 2 Cor. xi. 23.

(3) Gal. ii. 7.

Barnabas bore them company so far. St. Peter came after them, and meekly suffered the generous reproof of St. Paul. Our apostle staid some time in that city to confirm in the faith the newly converted flock; and then set out to visit the churches he had founded in the east, but would not admit John Mark again into his company. Upon which St. Barnabas took him, and went into Cyprus. St. Chrysostom(1) says that both St. Paul and St. Barnabas had good reasons for what they did, but sought only the greater glory of God, and they parted in perfect charity, as appears by the affectionate mention St. Paul makes of Barnabas in his other epistles. "Would to God," says this holy doctor, "that all our disputes had never any other motive but that of duty, nor any other end than the good of souls." Upon this occasion St. Paul made Silas, or Sylvanus, his companion, and visited the churches in Syria, Cilicia, and Pisidia. At Lystra, in Lycaonia, he took St. Timothy for his disciple, and circumcised him, to show his condescension to the Jews, though he refused to circumcise Titus, to assert the liberty of the gospel, which freed men from the servitude of the old law, and the obligation of its ceremonial precepts. These being all types of Christ, were to cease when they were fulfilled by the new law of the gospel, to which they gave place as figures to the reality.(2)

From Lycaonia St. Paul passed into Phrygia and Galatia. He tells us, that the Galatians received him as an angel from God, and would willingly, had it been possible, have pulled out their very eyes to have given them to him.(3) The apostle desired then to go into Lesser Asia, but was hindered by the Spirit of God, or by a special revelation for that time; as he was also from passing into Bithynia. St. Chrysostom admires how joyfully and readily he acquiesced in the divine will, inquiring no reasons, alleging no motives, because in all things he sought only the divine will. Whilst he remained at Troas, preaching the gospel, in a vision in the night, a Macedonian seemed to stand before him, entreating him to come into his country, and help that people. The evangelist St. Luke begins in this place first to use the term *we*, and to speak in the first

(1) Chrys. hom. 34. in Act. (2) Matt. xi. 13. (3) Gal. iv. 13.

person,(1) whence most interpreters date from this time his attending upon St. Paul in the ministry of the word. He had been converted at Antioch, and Bishop Pearson will have him to have been a disciple of St. Paul at Antioch eight years before; but from this time he became his inseparable companion, and seems never after to have left him. St. Paul being thus invited into Macedon, took ship with Silas, Luke, and Timothy, and went to Samothracia, an isle in the Ægean Sea, not far from Thrace; and the next day arrived at Neapolis, a port of Macedon. From thence they proceeded to Philippi, a famous city, and a Roman colony. There St. Paul preached in a Jewish proseuche, or oratory, which stood by the side of a river at a little distance from the town, and converted among others, Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a seller of purple in that city, though a native of Thyatira. This devout woman and her family so earnestly pressed St. Paul to lodge with her, that he was obliged to accept of her entertainment: so long as the holy men continued in this city, they resorted every day to the same place of devotion. After several days, being on their road thither, they were met by a young woman possessed by a devil,* who was in great reputation in that country for sooth-

(1) Acts xvi. 10.

* This damsel is called *ἐνγασπίμβος* and Pythonissa, or one possessed with an evil spirit of divination. Acts. xvi. 16. That this is the signification of both those words, is evident from Lev. xix. 31, xx. 27. Deut. xviii. 11. 1 Reg. xxviii. 7, &c. Also from other writers, both Christians and Pagans, as Plutarch, (lib. de defectu Orac. p. 737.) Suidas and Hesychius, in their Lexicons; also Galen and Aristophanes, apud Syn. Critic. This name was derived from the priests and priestesses of those idols which gave oracles, especially from the most famous priestess of the oracle of Apollo, or Python, at Delphos, called from him Pythia. In like manner, in most other oracles, the image was not pretended to speak, but in some a priest, in others a priestess or Pythonissa gave the oracles, as in those of Apollo at Potara, of Jupiter Belus at Thebes, of Jupiter at Dodona, Ammon, &c. as is evident from Herodotus, Livy, Strabo, Pausanias, Macrobius, Plutarch, Virgil, &c. See Banier's Mythology, and Rollin's Ancient History. The enthusiasm, violent convulsions, and ravings of these priests and priestesses, whenever they gave oracles, and discovered hidden things, such as the devil could know, and was permitted by God to manifest, show they were at that time possessed and inspired by an evil spirit, though some oracles were only cheats of juggling priests. Sometimes persons who were not such priests, or priestesses, were possessed with a like spirit of divination, and frequently discovered secret things. Such was the damsel here mentioned.

saying, and of which her masters made a great profit. This girl cried out after the saints: "These men are servants of the most high God, who preach unto us the way of salvation." Thus she continued to follow them some days. As Christ would not suffer the devil to confess him, lest his lying tongue should prejudice the truth among men, and because he would not admit the spirit of darkness to any commerce with the works of light; so St. Paul at length commanded this evil spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of the damsel; and the devil, though unwilling, obeyed, and left her that instant. The covetous masters of the girl saw this miraculous cure would prove a great loss to them, and stirred up the populace against the preachers, hurried them before the magistrates, by whose order they were scourged as seditious persons, and afterwards thrust into the inner dungeon, and there laid on their backs with their feet fastened in great wooden stocks. In the night they were praising God aloud, when an earthquake shook the prison, the doors flew open, and the fetters fell off all the prisoners; but no one went out of the dungeon. The jailor was awaked by the earthquake and noise; and seeing the prisons open, imagined the prisoners had all made their escape; wherefore, in the apprehension that his life must pay for that accident, he was going to dispatch himself with his sword, had not St. Paul prevented him, hastily crying out: "Do thyself no harm; we are all here." The man, equally surprised at the miracle, and at the apostle's goodness, threw himself at the feet of the holy men, and desired to be baptized, with his whole house. The magistrate, the next morning, sent an order for the enlargement of the servants of God. St. Paul, who had alleged nothing to prevent his scourging, then complained that a Roman citizen had been whipped against the laws, and refused to depart without more ample satisfaction. This he did to intimidate the judges, and procure their favour for the protection of the converts. The magistrates, trembling at the name of a Roman citizen, came in person, craved pardon of the prisoners, and submissively entreated them to depart.

The apostles having laid in this city the foundation of a very eminent church as appears from St. Paul's epistle to the Phi-

lippians, took leave of the devout Lydia, and the rest, and travelling through Amphipolis and Apollonia, arrived at Thessalonica, the capital of Macedon. St. Paul there preached three Sabbath-days in the synagogue, and converted some Jews, and a great number of Gentiles, who by their patience became the model of the whole church, and were particularly dear to their spiritual father.(1) The unbelieving Jews envied that city the prosperity of the gospel, and gathering together a number of wicked ruffians, beset the house of Jason, a considerable man, who entertained the apostles; but St. Paul and Silas having been removed by the Christians, and concealed in a more secret place, the mob seized upon Jason, and carried him before the magistrates, who obliged him to give bail and security for his good behaviour. When the tumult was over, Paul and Silas left the town in the night, and went to Berea. The Jews of this place listened to the gospel with joy, and many Gentiles were also converted. A tumult at length obliged St. Paul to quit that town; but Silas and Timothy staid behind some time to instruct the converts, whilst St. Paul made for Athens, whither he afterwards sent for Timothy and Silas. The city of Athens had not so far degenerated in the sciences, but it was still stored with many learned and wise men. The inhabitants were very superstitious; and so careful were they that no deity should want due honour from them that they had an altar inscribed, "*To the unknown God.*" Whether by this title they meant all unknown pretended gods of other nations, or the true God of the Jews, is uncertain; for the pagans often styled this latter the unknown God, because he had no particular name, like their false deities.* St. Paul preached to the Jews in their synagogue, and to the Gentiles in all public places, even in the Areopagus itself, the supreme court of magistrates, most venerable over all Greece for their great wisdom and learning. Dionysius, one of these

(1) 1 Thess. ii. 7.

* Lucian, or the author of the dialogue *Philopatria*, swears by the unknown God of Athens, and says, that arriving at that city, he had adored him. Pausanius mentions altars at Athens to unknown gods. See Grotius on this passage, or Calmet's dissertation.

judges, embraced the faith; also Damaris, an illustrious woman in the city, and some others. But though the philosophers were not able to enter the lists against a man full of the spirit of God, and instructed by his light, yet many of them derided his doctrine concerning the resurrection of the dead, and others who were struck with the thunder of his discourses, said only they would hear him some other time. At Athens St. Timothy came to St. Paul out of Macedon, but Silas was detained longer behind, probably by business or sickness. The apostle hearing that his dear converts at Thessalonica were under persecution from their fellow-citizens ever since his departure, was much concerned lest some of them should lose courage, and sent Timothy to comfort and strengthen them. Paul himself was conducted by a call of the Holy Ghost from Athens to Corinth, where he lodged in the house of Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who were of the same trade with himself. Aquila was a native of Pontus, but had resided at Rome till Claudius banished all the Jews out of that city; upon which occasion he came to Corinth. St. Paul worked with him at his trade of tent-making, and on the Sabbaths taught in the Jewish synagogue, and brought many, both Jews and Greeks, over to the faith. It was from Corinth that he wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians, both in the same year, 52. These are the first of his writings. He suffered much in this city from persecutions, and from the obstinacy of wicked men. Nevertheless, he persevered for the sake of the good; and Christ assured him that he had a numerous people in that place.(1) Novatus, elder brother to the philosopher Seneca, who having been adopted by L. Junius Gallio, a noble Roman, and from him called Gallio, was at that time proconsul of Achaia. The Jews carried St. Paul before him; but being a man of integrity and moderation, he answered the accusers that he was judge of wrong and injustice, not of controversies of religion: and so dismissed the cause, and acquitted the apostle. St. Paul, having staid at Corinth eighteen months, went to Cenchrea, in order to go to Jerusalem for the following passover. In this port he shaved his head, and made the religious vow of the Nazarites, who

(1) Acts xviii. 9, 10,

bound themselves to drink no wine, and to let their hair grow till a limited time, when they again cut it, and offered certain sacrifices. By his conforming to this Jewish rite, St. Paul made himself a Jew with the Jews, to gain them to Christ.

Embarking at Cenchrea, he sailed first to Ephesus, and thence to Cæsarea in Palestine, and from that place by land travelled to Jerusalem, where he kept the festival. He then went to Antioch, and travelled again through Galatia, Phrygia, and other parts of Asia, everywhere encouraging the faithful, and watering his young plants. Coming back again from Capadocia to Ephesus, he staid there almost three years, preaching both in public places and private houses, and performing great miracles,* even by handkerchiefs, and aprons that had touched his body.(1) During three months he addressed himself to the Jews, but seeing their invincible obstinacy, he turned to the Gentiles. Seven sons of Sceva, a prince of the Jewish priesthood, (that is, probably, chief of one of the twenty-four sacerdotal families,) attempted to cast out devils, in the name of Jesus, though they were not Christians but Jews. The devil answered that he knew them not, and assailed them with great fury. Thus was their vanity punished, and all were moved by this example to treat that holy name with respect. Many seeing the folly of their superstitions, burned their books of magic and judiciary astrology. These persons had before been converted to the faith and baptized,† but out of ignorance and fondness for the foolish superstitions of divination, had still retained such practices and books: their eyes being opened by the instructions of the apostle, they burned the books of that detestable art, and came confessing their sinful deeds; that is, not only acknowledging themselves sinners in general terms, but declaring their actions or sins in detail to the priests. We

(1) Acts xix.

* Julian the Apostate (apud St. Cyril Alex. l. 3, p. 100,) confessed the miracles of St. Paul, but said, "He went beyond all the conjurers and impostors that ever were upon earth." ὑπερβαλλειν πάντας παραχαῖ τῆς γύψτας καὶ ἀπατεῶνας.

† Πεπιστευκότων.

must take notice that one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, being instructed at first only in the rudiments of Christianity, and John's baptism, coming to Ephesus after the first preaching of SS. Peter and Paul in that place, preached Christ with great zeal. Being afterwards more fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he taught at Corinth with great success, watering what St. Paul had planted.

By the labours and miracles of our apostle, the word of God spread every day exceedingly at Ephesus ; and he found there a great door open to him, but had many adversaries. He suffered much from the persecutions of the Jews, was every hour exposed to divers dangers ; and protests, upon oath, that he died daily ; that is, he was continually exposed to the danger of death. He fought with beasts *according to man* ; (1) that is, according to Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and other fathers, also A. Lapeire, Calmet, Tillemont, &c., he was exposed to be devoured by them in the amphitheatre, though he was delivered by God. He was again in imminent danger of that death in the same place. In the year 57, Demetrius, a covetous silversmith, who made a great gain by selling silver images of Diana, finding this trade much diminished by the preaching of St. Paul, stirred up the city against him. The stately rich temple of Diana at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world, and the image of that goddess kept there, was pretended to have been formed by Jupiter, and dropt down from heaven : it was held in great veneration through all the Grecian and Roman provinces ; and the heathens got little silver images made in imitation of it. Upon the alarm that the honour of this tutelar goddess was attacked, the whole city was in the greatest combustion imaginable ; and every one cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." It was in vain to argue or reason with a mob, especially heated with rage, and stirred up by interest and superstition. St. Paul was sought for to be exposed to wild beasts on the theatre, but could not be found. However, his two companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, zealous Macedonians, were seized on, hurried to the theatre, and the wild beasts were

(1) 1 Cor. xv. 32. See Calmet's Diss. on this subject, p. 206, and Tillemont, note 40.

called for to be let loose upon them. St. Paul desired to show himself, and to speak in behalf of his companions; but the overseers of the theatrical games, who were his friends, sent to him to assure him, that he would only endanger himself without rescuing them. One Alexander, a Jewish convert, offered to speak; but the mob suspecting him to be a friend of the apostle, would not hear him; though he would doubtless have thrown the blame on St. Paul, if he was, as is generally thought, that Alexander the coppersmith, of whom the apostle complains, that he had done him much evil, and greatly withstood his words, and whom he delivered over to Satan for his apostacy, for blaspheming Christ, and reproaching Christianity.(1) But the mob raised an outcry against this apologist for near two hours together, wherein nothing was heard, but "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And Alexander himself was secured. At length the town-clerk, who kept the register of the games, discreetly addressed the populace, and put them in mind, that if any man had offended them, the courts of justice were open, and ready to do them right; but that by their riot they had rendered themselves obnoxious to the laws, if any one should call them to an account for that day's tumult. By this discourse the multitude was appeased, and immediately dispersed; and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander were released without hurt. St. Paul had made an excursion in the year 55 to Corinth, and wrote his epistle to the Galatians full of zeal and apostolic vigour, because they were a rough uncultivated nation, and had received false doctors, who pretended to establish an obligation of practising the Jewish ceremonies, and of joining circumcision with the gospel. In 56 he wrote to the Corinthians, being informed that an unhappy division threatened that church, some being for Cephas, others for Paul, others for Apollos, as if these teachers did not all preach the same Christ.

Soon after the tumult mentioned above, St. Paul left Ephesus, and went by Troas a second time into Macedon, whence he sent his second epistle to the Corinthians, whom he visited shortly after a third time. St. Austin was persuaded(2) that he then

(1) 2 Tim. iv. 14. 1 Tim. i. 20.

(2) S. Aug. Ep. 118, ad Jan.

regulated, as he had promised in his letter, the rite and manner of assisting at the divine mysteries, in particular that the body of our Lord should not be received at supper, but only by persons fasting; which is certainly a precept of the apostles, as the same father observes. From Corinth, in 58, the apostle wrote to the Romans, expressing a great desire to see the faithful of that illustrious city, and a purpose to pay them a visit. After three months stay in Greece, having gathered large alms of the Christians in Macedon and Achaia for the poor of Jerusalem, he set out for Syria, but stopped some time at Philippi, and a whole month at Troas.(1) In this city the day before his departure the faithful assembled to receive the holy communion and to hear him preach, and such was their ardour that they passed the hour of dinner, and also that of supper, though it was on a Sunday, and in Easter time; but neither he nor his auditors knew any hunger but that of holy zeal on such an occasion. Thus they remained till midnight when the devil sought to disturb their devout assembly; but his malice only turned to his own confusion. While the apostle was preaching in a room in the third story, a young man, called Eutychus, being overcome by sleep, fell down to the ground, and was taken up dead. But St. Paul immediately restored him to life, and continued his instructions till break of day. The apostle left Troas on Monday the 17th of April, and went on foot to Assos, where taking ship he sailed to Mitylene, a city in the isle of Lesbos; thence to Samos, another island in the Ægean sea, and at length landed at Trogyllium, a promontory of Ionia. The day following, he proceeded to Miletus, a famous city in Caria, where he was met by the priests and elders of Ephesus, thirty miles from this latter city. He made them a most moving farewell discourse, and their parting was most tender.

From Miletus St. Paul went to the isle of Coos, and the next day to Rhodes; in a third to Patara, a city of Lycia, where he went on board another vessel bound for Tyre in Phœnicia, at which port he arrived after five days sail. Certain prophets among the Christians at Tyre conjured him not to go up to

(1) Acts xx. S. Chrys. Hom. 43, in Act.

Jerusalem, foretelling him what evils he had there to suffer. When they were not able to prevail they embraced and prayed with him on the shore. From Tyre he went by sea to Ptolemais, and thence to Cæsarea. There Agabus, the prophet, foretold him that he should be put in chains at Jerusalem, and the Christians endeavoured to dissuade him from that journey; but he answered them, that he was ready not only to be bound, but also to die for the name of Jesus Christ.

Thence he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he lodged in the house of Mnason, a Cyprian. This was the fifth visit which he paid to the church of Jerusalem, where he arrived in the year 58, about the twenty-third after his conversion. At Jerusalem he distributed the alms he brought, and was advised by St. James and the priests to defray the expenses of the sacrifices of four Nazarites, whose term was expired. He complied with this devotion, that he might prove to the Jews that he did not condemn their law, and this his intention he declared to the priests, performing himself the legal purifications.

When he had been seven days in Jerusalem, certain Jews who had opposed him in Asia, being come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, stirred up the Jews of that city against him. For seeing him with Trophimus, an Ephesian and a Gentile, in the city, they falsely imagined that he had carried him into the temple, and so had profaned it. Upon an outcry that he contemned the temple and the law of Moses, the people ran together, and laying violent hands upon the apostle, drew him out of the temple that they might beat and kill him. Claudius Lysias, a Roman tribune, had the command of the garrison that was kept in the castle Antonia, to prevent riots and seditions, to which the Jews were very prone, especially at the time of the three great festivals. This officer was immediately informed of the tumult, and taking a body of soldiers, he marched down upon the rioters, who, being awed by his presence, left off beating St. Paul, and the tribune took him out of their hands; but commanded him to be bound with two chains. Lysias suspected him to be a certain Egyptian who had been the author of a late sedition; but finding himself mistaken, he gave the prisoner leave to speak to the people. St. Paul with

great tranquillity gave them an account of his miraculous conversion, and of his commission to preach to the Gentiles. At the mention of this last article the populace began to cry out with great rage, demanding his death. Lysias, to learn from him the state of the affair, commanded that he should be tied to a pillar in order to be scourged. Whilst the executioner was binding his hands, the apostle asked the centurion who stood by, if a Roman could be whipped, and even unheard, without either crime or trial? The centurion intimated this to Lysias, who, hearing that he was a Roman citizen, began to be afraid, and ordered him to be loosed, saying himself had purchased that privilege for a large sum of money. Lysias had led him into the castle Antonia; and the next day he sent to the high priest and all the council to come and give him a meeting out of the camp or district of the castle where the garrison was, that from them he might inform himself what the matter was. When St. Paul began to speak, Ananias the high priest, bade some of the standers-by to strike him on the face. The apostle was ready in his heart to turn the other cheek, but to encourage his followers, exerted himself boldly in the cause of truth, and checked so unjust a violence offered to one who was in the hands of a Roman magistrate, and had committed no offence. He therefore reproached him, and threatened that God would smite him, calling him a whited wall, that is, a hypocrite. St. Austin says, these words were a prophecy. This Ananias was soon after deposed from the high priesthood by Agrippa the younger; and having hastened the ruin of his country by forming a dangerous faction in it, was slain one of the first, together with his brother, by another faction which was headed by his own son. Yet the apostle when he was put in mind who the person was, made his excuses that he did not know him to be the high priest, or he would have spoken to him with more respect: so much did he honour the very shadow of a priesthood which was then extinct. The resurrection of Christ being a capital point of our faith, St. Paul then cried out, that he was impeached for maintaining the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees, being zealous advocates for that article against the Sadducees at these words, declared themselves for the apostle,

and a warm contention arose among the Jews themselves. Lysias fearing lest St. Paul should be torn to pieces in the tumult, sent a party of soldiers to fetch him out of the council into the castle. Jesus Christ, to show that he is nearest his servants when they are in the most grievous afflictions, appeared to St. Paul the second night after this danger, and encouraged him, with an assurance that he should give testimony to him at Rome.

Forty Jews having conspired to murder him, Lysias sent him under a strong guard to Felix, the governor of the province, who resided at Cæsarea. The high priest Ananias followed him thither to accuse him, taking with him Tertullus, an eloquent orator or lawyer, who after an insinuating address, opened the charge against the apostle, whom he impeached for stirring up seditions, and preaching the new religion of the Nazareans or Christians. St. Paul having obtained leave from Felix, entered upon his defence, with telling the governor, it was a great comfort to him that he was to plead his cause before one who had long sat judge of that nation. He then easily cleared himself from the calumny of sedition and of having profaned the temple; and confessed that he worshipped God in the way which his accusers called heresy, but added, that it was agreeable to the sense of the prophets, and the faith of his forefathers; and that in the expectation of the resurrection of all men, good and bad, he was careful to live with an unblamable conscience towards God and man. The accusation as to religion was of no weight with Felix: yet he detained the apostle in prison two years, partly to please the Jews, and partly hoping to receive money from the Christians for his releasement. This Felix was a wicked man, raised to that dignity from a slave, and in governing his province, he carried extortions and tyranny to the greatest height.*

* He was brother to Pallas, a freedman, who under Agrippina, the last wife of Claudius, was keeper of the imperial treasure, and had the chief management of the state during the last years of the reign of Claudius. The senate bestowed on him the most abject flatteries, and even Scipio did not blush to say he thought Pallas entitled to the thanks of the whole body; for that he being descended from the ancient kings of Arcadia,

He was absolute and uncontrollable so long as he was shielded under the protection of Pallas; but after the fall of that minister it was more easy for the Jews to send complaints against him to Nero; and this induced him to keep St. Paul prisoner in order to court their favour, unless he could have got some money by setting him at liberty. In the mean time, he frequently called the apostle before him, taking much delight to hear him discourse; but curiosity and covetousness were his motives, and his passions got the better of all the impressions of grace. He had three wives, among whom, she that held the first rank, was Drusilla, daughter to the elder Agrippa, an impious apostate from Judaism, and an adulteress who had abandoned her own husband Aziz, king of Emesa, preferring the bed of this profligate idolater. Some days after the first hearing of St. Paul at Cæsarea, Felix being with Drusilla, sent for the apostle before him, and hearing him discourse on justice, chastity, and the judgment to come, trembled. But stifling his remorse, he said: "Go away for the present, I will call thee at a convenient time." O criminal delay! O words, enemies to all grace! cries out St. Austin. Hurry of worldly affairs, dissipation, sloth, pleasures, and what not, will never afford this convenient time, till the unhappy soul on a sudden shall see herself buried in hell; and shall feel herself awaked

was pleased, for the public good, to forget the prerogatives of so ancient a nobility, and condescended to be one of the emperor's ministers. That illustrious body returned Cæsar thanks for the honours with which he had recompensed the services of this miscreant; exceedingly extolled the disinterestedness of so worthless a slave; and proposed, as an example of the ancient love of poverty, a man who, by rapine, was possessed of three hundred millions of sesterces, or two millions four hundred thousand pounds of our money. The senate caused this its decree in his honour to be grav'd on a plate of brass, and fix'd upon the statue of Julius Cæsar. Pliny the Younger from this example concludes, how vain and despicable honours are, which are often prostituted on the worst of villains; (l. 7, ep. 29;) and that, only ambition, and a desire to advance themselves, could induce the senators so strangely to disgrace their dignity to the dishonour of the republic; whereas, the highest rank to which they could aspire, was only to be first in a senate that could praise Pallas (Id. t. 8, ep. 6.) This favourite minister shared in the disgrace into which Agrippina began to fall, in the year 55, the second of the reign of her son Nero: he was then turned out of his employments, and afterwards poisoned, in 62.

from her lethargy by the smart of the unquenchable flames. The other conferences of this judge with St. Paul, were equally fruitless. Neither could he extort from him any money, the apostle having other uses for his alms. Two years after, this governor was recalled to Rome, in the year 60; and being accused by the Jews before Nero, he only escaped the punishment which his crimes deserved, by immense sums of money.

Porcius Festus succeeded him in the government of Judæa, a man of somewhat better character. St. Paul was again impeached by the Jews before him, but appealed to the emperor, that he might not be abandoned to the rage of malicious prosecutors; and his appeal was admitted by the governor, being a right and privilege granted by the laws to Roman citizens, to secure their lives and fortunes from the arbitrary dealings of corrupt magistrates. Agrippa the younger (after the death of his father, the elder Agrippa, in 44) saw Judæa a second time reduced into a Roman province; but in 48, upon the death of his uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, was declared by the emperor Claudius king of that small territory, being between the Libanus and Antilibanus, with the power of appointing the high priest of the Jews. The tetrarchate of Galilee, and some other small principalities, were afterwards added to his dominions. This prince came to Cæsarea to compliment the new governor, bringing with him his sister Berenice, a lewd and vicious woman, as may be seen in Josephus. Festus asked the advice of Agrippa what he could write to the emperor concerning his prisoner; and that prince, who had heard much of St. Paul, was very desirous to see him. Therefore, the governor caused him the next day to be brought before him. The apostle in a solemn audience, addressed himself to the young king, and explained to him the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; and related his own miraculous conversion. Festus, a worldly man, addicted to his passions, and unacquainted with such spiritual truths, admired the saint's eloquence and sublime doctrine; but said he was beside himself, and that much learning had made him mad. St. Paul calmly replied, that his words were not the effects of madness, but were serious and sober truths;

and, for a proof, appealed to the king, who was not a stranger to the writings of the prophets that were accomplished in Christ. Agrippa could not but confess that he had *almost* persuaded him to become a Christian. It was only *almost*, because he shut his heart against the motion of grace, the Christian faith not being the fashionable religion in the world. They who neglect to listen to the call of heaven, and to improve the favourable visit of the Holy Ghost, in punishment of their abuse of grace, usually perish in their sin. St. Paul returned his hearty wishes, that both the king and the whole honourable assembly were, not in part only, but entirely as much Christians as himself, unlike him only in the chains which he bore on that account. Agrippa told Festus, that he might have been discharged forthwith, had not his appeal to Cæsar bound him to appear at Rome. For the appeal being once received in a court, the inferior judge had no power either to acquit or condemn.

Pursuant to this appeal, Festus delivered St. Paul to Julius, a centurion of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus. The apostle had with him Luke, Aristarchus, and some others. In September they went on board a ship of Adramyttium, a port of Mysia, and sailed northward. They cast anchor at Sidon, where Julius, who was a courteous man, permitted St. Paul to go on shore to see his friends, and to refresh himself. Putting out from thence they had a tedious voyage with contrary winds, sailed near Cyprus, and coasted along Cilicia and Pamphylia, till they arrived at Myra, in Lycia, where this ship finished its voyage. They then went on board a ship of Alexandria bound for Italy, carrying two hundred and seventy-six persons. The winds were so contrary that it was several days before they were brought opposite to Cnidus, a promontory and city of Caria: hence they were carried over against Salmone, a promontory of Crete, which they doubled, and came to a place called the Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea or Thallassa, in that island. It being then October and the seas dangerous, St. Paul advised the centurion and mariners to winter in that place; they would not listen to the proposals, and were for wintering at Phœnice, a much better haven on another side of the island. They, therefore, sailed forward; but soon

after there arose a violent north-east wind, which bore upon them so furiously that the seamen could not govern the ship, and were forced to give it up to the mercy of the winds and waves, which carried it to a small island called Claudia, on the south-west of Crete. Here they were obliged to undergird the ship to save it from splitting. The next day, being more violently tossed by the storm, they threw overboard the merchant goods, and, two days after, also the tackle and furniture of the vessel. So violent was the storm, that they were fourteen days without once seeing the sun, moon, or stars, and almost without eating. Nothing but horror surrounding them they were all grown hopeless and comfortless, when St. Paul assured them that the vessel indeed would be lost, but that they should all escape with their lives, and be saved on an island. God had sent an angel to him the night before with the message : " Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar ; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." For his sake God granted the lives of all the company, consisting of two hundred and seventy-six souls. The mariners happening by the sounding in the night to find but twenty, and soon after but fifteen fathom of water, perceived some land was near, and not daring to venture any further for fear of sands or rocks, they let down four anchors, and earnestly wished for day. The sailors laid a plot to save themselves in the boat, which they privately let down ; but St. Paul informed the centurion of their design, and advised him to prevent such an accident, for the rest must have been left to perish if no one remained capable of steering the vessel. The soldiers therefore cut the ropes which held up the boat on the side of the ship, and let it fall into the sea, that the sailors might not be able to leave the vessel. The apostle comforted the company by repeating the strongest assurances that not one of them should be lost, nor so much as a hair of any man's head perish. For fourteen days they had eaten next to nothing ; he, therefore, persuaded them to take some nourishment cheerfully ; and when they had all plentifully refreshed themselves they threw the rest of the provisions into the sea, to lighten the vessel. When it was day they descried land. and weighing anchor made for shore up a

creek, but unexpectedly fell into a place where two currents of the sea meet. There the vessel ran a-ground, and the head of the ship being fixed in a sand-bank, the stern was broken to pieces by the violence of the waves, and the vessel bulged. In this extremity the soldiers were for killing the prisoners lest they should escape upon coming to land; but the centurion being desirous to save Paul, would not suffer it, and the whole company arrived safe on shore, some by swimming, others on planks of the vessel. "Behold," says St. Chrysostom,(1) "what it is to live in the company of a saint, though a prisoner, and to have him for a protector in all dangers."

The land they had made to was the island of Malta, which was then subject to the Romans. The inhabitants treated the distressed strangers with great humanity, making for them large fires to dry their clothes, and cherish their limbs, which were benumbed with cold. While St. Paul was busied in throwing a bundle of sticks on the fire, a viper, dislodged by the heat, came out of the wood, and fastened on his hand; but he shook it off into the flames, without receiving any hurt. The people expected he would swell soon, drop down, and die, and cried out he must be some murderer pursued by divine vengeance. But seeing the miraculous event, they said, he must surely be some god. Publius, the principal person in the island, probably the Roman governor, entertained the whole crew at his house for three days with great kindness. His hospitality was recompensed; for his father being at that time sick of a fever and dysentery, St. Paul went in, prayed, laid his hands on him, and restored him to his health. When this was reported abroad, others brought their sick to the apostle, and they were cured by him. This made the islanders honour their guests exceedingly, and furnish them with plenty of all necessary provisions. After three months' stay in this island, St. Paul and his company set sail for Rome, in an Alexandrian vessel, named the *Castor and Pollux*, which had lain there all the winter. They touched at Syracuse in Sicily, and at Reggio in Calabria, and landed at Puzzuolo near Naples. Finding some Christians there, the apostle was prevailed on to stay

(1) Eom. 53, in Acta.

seven days with them. Hence he proceeded near one hundred miles by land to Rome. The Christians of that capital hearing of his coming, several of them went out to meet him, some as far as to Forum Appii, forty-eight miles, others to Tres Tabernæ, now called Cisterna, twenty-two miles from Rome. He arrived at that city in the beginning of spring, in the year 61. Julius the captain delivered his prisoners to the Præfectus Prætorio, Afranius Burrhus, an officer of great wisdom and moderation, and of chief authority during the first years of Nero, whose brutish temper was much restrained by the counsels of Seneca and Burrhus, till the death of the latter in 62. St. Paul was treated with great indulgence, and permitted to live in a house which he hired, only with a constant guard upon him, and always fettered with a chain; one end of which was, probably, according to the Roman custom, fastened about the guard, who was obliged to accompany him everywhere, but was often changed. During his custody he preached freely to those who resorted to him, first to the Jews, afterwards with much greater fruit to the Gentiles. No accusers appearing against him, after two years he was set at liberty. Here St. Luke ends his history of the Acts of the Apostles, which from the thirteenth chapter, is a narrative of the travels of St. Paul. The Philippians sent Epaphroditus, their bishop, with money to St. Paul for his relief during his imprisonment, and the apostle wrote to them his most tender epistle in 62, in which he exhorts them to be upon their guard against false teachers, who pretended that the law of circumcision obliges Christians. Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, an eminent citizen of Colossæ in Phrygia, served St. Paul in his confinement, and the apostle obtained of his master his pardon and liberty by his most tender and eloquent epistle to Philemon. He sent by Onesimus, the same year, 62, his epistle to the Colossians, who had been converted to the faith, not by St. Paul, but by Epaphras, who was their bishop. The apostle warns them against a superstitious worship of angels, which certain disciples of Simon Magus endeavoured to introduce. It was also in Italy that he wrote his epistle to the Hebrews, probably about the year 63.

Some time after his enlargement, he returned again from

Rome into the East, as he had promised in all the above-mentioned epistles. There he undertook new voyages, preached again over many countries, and suffered over again chains, prisons, torments, conflicts and continual dangers of death. He had a design when he wrote to the Romans of visiting Spain; but this, Pope Gelasius thinks,(1) he never executed. He in this journey, established the faith in Crete, and left St. Titus bishop there; as he did St. Timothy at Ephesus. He wrote his first epistle to this latter out of Macedon; according to St. Jerom from Nicopolis in Epirus, which was then reckoned part of Macedon. He wrote to St. Titus from Greece, or Achaia, under which name the Romans then comprehended also Peloponnesus, and whatever provinces of old Greece they did not attribute to Macedon. The apostle went back into Asia, and at Troas lodged with one Carpus. He made several other voyages in which he had much to suffer.(2) He had excommunicated Hymenæus and Philetus at Ephesus, for denying the resurrection of the body.

No distance of nations could confine the ardour of this apostle's zeal. From the East he returned again to Rome. St. Athanasius assures us,(3) that God had made known to him by a revelation, that he should suffer martyrdom in that city; whereupon, instead of flying, he with joy hastened thither. St. Austin and other fathers testify the same; and this foresight of his death may be also gathered from the assurance with which he speaks of it in his second epistle to Timothy. He came this second time to Rome, about the year 64. St. Dionysius of Corinth insinuates, that it was in company with St. Peter.(4) We learn from the epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians,(5) that several persons of the emperor's household had before this embraced the faith.* St. Luke informs us that St. Paul found many

(1) Conc. t. 4, p. 1253.

(3) Apol. pro fuga, p. 713.

(5) Phil. iv. 20.

(2) 2 Tim. ii. 11.

(4) Eus. l. 2, c. 25.

* That Seneca, the philosopher, was converted to the faith, and held a correspondence with St. Paul, is a groundless fiction. That great man was a native of Cordova in Spain, and the son of a Roman knight. He

Christians in Rome upon his first coming thither; St. Peter had begun to preach there probably sixteen years or more, before the arrival of St. Paul. Suetonius testifies, that Claudius banished the Jews out of Rome for the tumults raised by them concerning Christ. Tacitus tells us, that Pomponia Græcina, an illustrious lady under Claudius, married to A. Plautius

applied himself to the study of eloquence, and principally of moral philosophy, under the stoic Attalus, to whose lectures he listened with extraordinary attention and avidity, as he testifies. (Ep. 108.) He attained to a great reputation for integrity, learning, and eloquence, and his first writings were read by every one at Rome, and were made the general model and standard. But his style being very faulty, his books contributed very much to deprave the taste of true eloquence at Rome, which had begun to decline from the latter end of the reign of Augustus. He abounds in a variety of bright thoughts, but they are often false, though generally striking, because his turns are singular, and tend to dazzle and surprise by a false sparkling and air of paradox. His phrases are loose and unconnected, and his antitheses studied. The beauties of nature, and an easy flowing style, the language as it were of the things themselves, are not to be found in him, says the judicious Crevier. But his defects themselves are seducing, as Quintilian observes; and the great compass of his learning, the liveliness of his imagination, and the elevation of his thoughts, gained him many admirers, and a crowd of imitators, who often copied only his defects. The many excellent lessons of moral virtue which are delivered in his works, seem the only reason why some would have him to have been a disciple of St. Paul. But, if we inquire into his conduct, we shall find his virtue fall short of that of a moral heathen. His great abstemiousness and some other virtues are justly commended; and all the good that was done by Nero during the five first years of his reign, was certainly owing to the wise counsels of Seneca and Burrhus. But it is no less notorious, that the air of the court infected the virtue of this philosopher. His immense riches, his stately palace and villas, his most sumptuous furniture, in which himself counts five hundred tables of cedar, supported by ivory feet, all alike jewels above price, and every other thing most costly, very ill suited with his stoic philosophy. Much less excusable are the excessive usuries with which he oppressed and pillaged great part not only of Italy, but also of Britain; and likewise his complaisance to Nero on many unwarrantable occasions, as his flattery after the poisoning of Britannicus, and upon the murder of Agrippina his mother, his acceptance of the palace and gardens of Britannicus after his unjust death, &c. To his last breath he was an enthusiastic advocate for suicide; after his veins were opened, he took hemlock, and when the poison did not operate, would be removed into a hot bath to accelerate his own death. He encouraged his wife Paulina to attempt to die with him, though Nero ordered her veins to be bound up, and her life to be saved. With his last breath he ordered libations to Jupiter, and bid his friends always remember the virtuous life he had led, which pride was very opposite to the maxims of St. Paul. Nor can his reputation be entirely cleared as to the guilt of the conspiracy of Piso, for which he died in the year 65. See Tillemont, Hist. Emp. &c.

(who, in four years' successful war, had first reduced the south-east part of Britain, near the Thames, into a Roman province), was accused of practising foreign superstitions; by which historians generally understand the Christian religion, which had then been preached in Rome by St. Peter and his disciples. She was referred to her husband's judgment, who, in presence of a meeting of relations, according to ancient custom, examined into the matter, and, with their approbation, pronounced her innocent. This happened about the year 57, before the faith was deemed a crime at Rome, though an attachment to old superstitions always disposed many to oppose it. Great numbers, and among these many illustrious persons, had embraced it when Nero began the first general persecution of the church. St. Chrysostom tells us⁽¹⁾ that St. Paul converted among others a beloved concubine of Nero, and that she thereupon changed her course of life, forsook the court, and served God in great sobriety and virtue, which provoked the tyrant, and was the first occasion of St. Paul's imprisonment. The same father adds, that this apostle, whilst in prison, converted one who was cup-bearer to the emperor, which incensed the tyrant more than ever. St. Paul informs us that when he was put in prison he was abandoned by all who had any credit at court; but says, that he received the greater comfort and strength from God in his first appearing before Nero.⁽²⁾ One Alexander, a copper-smith, was a great stickler against him,⁽³⁾ perhaps the same Alexander whom he had excommunicated a little before. He was probably some Jew or apostate Christian, whose fall was owing to pride and envy. St. Clement I., pope, who was then in Rome, and a disciple of St. Peter, says, that jealousy was one of the principal causes of this apostle's martyrdom.^(4.)

His confinement must have continued at least a year; for, in his second epistle to Timothy, he desires him to come from Ephesus to Rome before winter⁽⁵⁾ Yet he did not suffer before the following year. During his second imprisonment, besides

(1) Hom. 46, in Act. et l. 1, de vit. Monast. c. 4.

(2) 2 Tim. iv. 16.

(3) Ib. v. 14.

(4) St. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1, ad Cor. cap. 5.

(5) St. Chrys. Hom. 8, in Epies. iii. 1.

this second epistle to Timothy, he wrote one to the Ephesians, in which he takes the title of prisoner of Jesus Christ, as that which is of all others the most honourable. Upon which words St. Chrysostom writes: "To be a prisoner for Christ is a title more illustrious and more glorious than to be an apostle, a doctor, or an evangelist. This is truly a great dignity, far beyond that of any kingdom or consulate. One who loveth Christ would rather be in chains for his sake than be in heaven. No glittering diadem so adorns the head as a chain borne for Christ. Were the choice offered me either of heaven or of this chain, I would take the chain. If I might have stood with the angels above, near the throne of God, or bound with Paul, I should have preferred the dungeon. Nothing is more happy or more glorious than to wear this chain. I do not call Paul so happy for having been taken up in a rapture into paradise as that he bore this chain. Had you rather have been the angel loosing Peter, or Peter in chains? I would rather have been Peter. This gift of chains is something greater than to stop the sun, to move the world, or to command the devils." This apostle had always looked upon death as his gain, and had sighed continually with a longing desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.(1) St. Hilary, writing on Psalm cix. 5. says, this is the disposition of him who ardently loves God. "He cannot bear a retardment; he grieves at all delays. Thus we see the saints weep to see the dissolution of their bodies so slow. The ardour of those who love is impatient. Our Lord even commands us to pray that his kingdom may be hastened; and St. Paul laments, that by staying in the flesh he is absent from the Lord."(2) This apostle represents all inanimate creatures as groaning in pain, and desiring, according to their manner, their deliverance from the slavery of corruption, and their renovation at the last day to serve for the greater glory of the elect; and adds, that we who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.(3) The will of God, and zeal for promoting his honour on earth, tempered the sorrow of

(1) P. II. i. 31, 22.

(2) 2 Cor. v. 6, 8.

(3) Rom. viii. 19.

this delay; and he always rejoiced in an entire resignation of himself to the sweet appointments of heaven.(1) But at length the happy term of his labours and dangers approached, and he beheld with joy the great moment, in which Christ called him to his glory. The Holy Ghost had discovered to him the day and the hour long before, as St. Prudentius assures us.* His martyrdom happened in the year 65, on the 29th of June. St. Sulpicious Severus says,(2) that it fell out before the war in Judæa, which broke out in May, in the twelfth year of Nero, of Christ 66.†

St. Paul was beheaded, as St. Peter of Alexandria,(3) Eusebius, St. Jerom, St. Chrysostom, Prudentius, and other ancient writers testify; and his dignity of a Roman citizen did not allow him to be crucified. He suffered at the Salvian waters, which piece of ground St. Gregory the Great, part of whose estate it was, gave, on that account, to the church where his body rested.(4) By the manner in which St. Clement, pope,(5) speaks of his death, it seems that Nero himself was present at it. It appears by Eusebius,(6) that this apostle's body, in the second century, lay on the Ostian road, where his church now stands. His head is kept in the church of St. John Lateran; but his

(1) Phil. i. 21.

(2) St. Sulp. Sever. Hist. Eccl.

(3) Can. 9.

(4) St. Greg. M. l. 12, Ep. 9.

(5) St. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1, ad Cor. c. 5. (6) Hist. l. 2, c. 25.

* " Ipse prius sibi met finem citò dixerat futurum
Ad Christum eundum est: jam resolvor, inquit.
Non hora vatem, non dies fefellit."

Prud. de Cor. hymn. 6, alias 12.

† Bishop Pearson, in his Annals of St. Paul, and Dom Maur, in his accurate Chronological Tables, t. 1, place the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul on the 22d of February, in the year of Christ 68, the fourteenth of Nero, which year that tyrant never lived to complete, falling by his own hand on the 11th of June, after having reigned thirteen years, seven months, and twenty-seven days, his generals having rebelled against him, and the senate having condemned him to a cruel death of slaves, he filled up the number of his sins by becoming his own executioner. Thus did God revenge on him the blood of his martyrs. But the Liberian Calendar and all antiquity assign the 29th of June for the day of the martyrdom or deposition of these two apostles, not of any translation of their relics. And it has been made appear, in the life of St. Peter, that they suffered in the year 65, of Nero 12.

body lies with St. Peter's, half in the Vatican, and half in his own church, in sumptuous vaults. His chains were also preserved in Rome, and St. Chrysostom, who earnestly desired to travel from Antioch to Rome, that he might salute them, and apply them to his eyes, says they made the devils tremble, and were revered by the angels.(1) That father has expressed his extraordinary veneration for this apostle in his homilies upon his canonical epistles, and in seven panegyrics,(2) in which he paints his charity, his zeal, his patience, his sufferings, and the thunder of his sacred and inspired eloquence, with the most tender and affecting devotion, with a loftiness both of style and sentiment, as unparalleled as his theme, and with an eloquence truly worthy so great an apostle, and so incomparable a panegyrist. If with this holy father we study the spirit of St. Paul in his life and sacred writings, so as to form our own upon this perfect model, then we shall begin to learn what it is to be true disciples of Christ.

The day of the death of the renowned conquerors has been forgotten, whilst that of a poor artisan is every where honoured, says St. Chrysostom.(3) The same father takes notice,(4) that men have a greater respect for the tomb of this apostle, than they ever had for any living prince that had reigned in Rome. It was enclosed in a magnificent church, built by Constantine the Great, of which Prudentius has given us an admirable description.(5) The palaces of kings and princes have nothing so great or admirable. Here people come from all parts of the world, with wonderful piety and zeal, to implore the succour and intercession of this apostle; even emperors humbly prostrate themselves before his tomb, says St. Austin.(6)

ST. MARTIAL, BISHOP OF LIMOGES.

St. GREGORY of Tours informs us, that he was one of the first apostles of France, whither he was sent from Rome with St. Dionysius of Paris, about the year 250. He was the first bishop

(1) St. Chrys. Hom. 8, in Ephes.

(2) St. Chrys. t. 2, p. 476, ed. Ben.

(3) Hom. 26, in 2 Cor.

(4) Hom. 4, in 2 Tim.

(5) Hymn. 6, alias 12.

(6) St. Aug. Ep. 42.