

ST. PACIAN, BISHOP OF BARCELONA,

CONFESSOR,

WAS a great ornament of the church in the fourth century. He was illustrious by birth, and had been engaged in marriage in the world. His son Dexter was raised to the first dignities in the empire, being high chamberlain to the emperor Theodosius and *præfectus-prætorio* under Honorius. St. Pacian having renounced the world, was made bishop in 373. St. Jerom, who dedicated to him his Catalogue of illustrious men, extols his eloquence and learning, and more particularly the chastity and sanctity of his life. We have his Exhortation to Penance, and three letters to Sympronianus, a Novatian nobleman, on Penance, and on the name of Catholic; also a sermon on Baptism. See St. Jerom, Catal. Vir. Illust. c. 106. p. 195. t. 4. Ceillier, t. 6. Tillem. t. 8.

APPENDIX

ON THE

WRITINGS OF ST. PACIAN OF BARCELONA.

WHEN he was made bishop of Barcelona, in 373, there lived in the neighbourhood of that city one Sympronian, a man of distinction, whom the bishop calls brother and lord, who was a Donatist, and also engaged in the heresy of the Novatians, who following the severity of the Montanists, denied penance and pardon for certain sins. He sent St. Pacian a letter by a servant, in which he censured the church for allowing repentance to all crimes, and for taking the title of Catholic. St. Pacian answers him in three learned letters.

In the first he sums up the principal heresies from Simon Magus to the Novatians, and asks Sympronian which he will choose to stand by: entreats him to examine the true church with docility and candour, laying aside all obstinacy, the enemy to truth. He says the name Catholic comes from God, and is necessary to distinguish the dove, the undivided virgin church from all sects, which are called from their particular founders. This name we learned from the holy doctors, confessors, and martyrs. "My name," says he, "is Christian, my surname Catholic: the one distinguishes me, the other points me out to others." "*Christianus mihi nomen est; Catholicus vero cognomen: illud me nuncupat, istud ostendit; hoc probor, inde significor.*" He says that no name can be more proper to express the church, which is all obedient to Christ, and one and the same through the whole world. "As to penance," says he, "God grant it be necessary to none of the faithful; that none after baptism fall into the pit of death—but accuse not God's mercy, who has provided a remedy even for those that are sick.