

a vision, the desolation which barbarians would soon after spread in Italy, and the destruction of his own monastery, which he foretold before his death, in 555. The abbey of La-Val-Benois* being demolished, the body of the saint was translated to Forcalquier, where it is kept with honour in a famous collegiate church which bears his name, and takes the title of Concathedral with Sisteron. St. Marius is called in French St. May or St. Mary, in Spain St. Mere, and St. Maire, and in some places, by mistake, St. Maurus. See fragments of his life compiled by Dynamius, extant in Bollandus. with ten preliminary observations.

JANUARY XXVIII.

ST. AGNES, V. M.

A SECOND commemoration of St. Agnes occurs on this day in the ancient Sacramentaries of Pope Gelasius and St. Gregory the Great; as also in the true Martyrology of Bede. It was perhaps, the day of her burial, or of a translation of her relics, or of some remarkable favour obtained through her intercession soon after her death.

ST. CYRIL,

PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA.

From Socrates, Marius Mercator, the councils, and his works. See Tillemont, T. 14. p. 272. Ceillier, T. 13. p. 241.

A.D. 444.

ST. CYRIL was raised by God to defend the faith of the Incarnation of his Son, "of which mystery he is styled the doctor, as St. Austin is of that grace," says Thomassin. He studied under his uncle Theophilus, and testifies (1) that he made it his rule

(1) Ep. 56. and 35. apud Lupum.

* In Latin Vallis Bodonensis. Baillet any many others call it at present Beuvons or Beuvoux: but there is no such village. Bevons indeed is the name of a village in Provence, one league from Sisteron: but the ruins of the abbey La-Val-Benois are very remarkable, in a village called St. May, in Dauphiné, sixteen leagues from Sisteron, in which diocess it is. See many mistakes of martyrologists and geographers, concerning this saint and abbey rectified by Chatelain, p. 424.

never to advance any doctrine which he had not learned from the ancient Fathers. His books against Julian the Apostate show that he had read the profane writers. He often says himself that he neglected human eloquence : and it is to be wished that he had wrote in a clearer style, and with greater purity of the Greek tongue. Upon the death of Theophilus, in 412, he was raised by the people to the patriarchal dignity. He began to exert his authority by causing the churches of the Novatians in the city to be shut up, and their sacred vessels and ornaments to be seized ; an action censured by Socrates, a favourer of those heretics ; but we do not know the reasons and authority upon which he proceeded. He next drove the Jews out of the city, who were very numerous, and enjoyed great privileges there from the time of Alexander the Great. Seditions and several acts of violence committed by them excited him to this, which grievously offended Orestes the governor, but was approved by the emperor Theodosius : and the Jews never returned. St. Cyril sent to conjure the governor by the holy gospels that he would consent to a reconciliation, and that he would join in sincere friendship with him : but his offers were rejected. This unhappy disagreement produced pernicious effects. Hypatia, a pagan lady, kept a public school of philosophy in the city. Her reputation for learning was so great, that disciples flocked to her from all parts. Among these was the great Synesius, who afterwards submitted his works to her censure. She was consulted by philosophers of the first rank on the most intricate points of learning, and of the Platonic philosophy in particular, in which she was remarkably well versed.(1) She was much respected and consulted by the governor, and often visited him. The mob, which was no where more unruly or more fond of riots and tumults than in that populous city, the second in the world for extent, upon a suspicion that she incensed the governor against their bishop, seditiously rose, pulled her out of her chariot, cut and mangled her flesh, and tore her body in pieces in the streets, in 416, to the great grief and scandal of all good men, especially of the pious bishop.*(2) He had imbibed certain prejudices from his

(1) Synesius, ep. 153.

(2) Vie d'Hypatie par l'abbé Goujet. Mémoires de Littérature, T. 5.

* It is very unjust in some moderns to charge him as conscious of so horrible a crime, which shocks human nature. Great persons are never to

uncle against the great St. Chrysostom : but was prevailed on by St. Isidore of Pelusium and others to insert his name in the *Dyptics* of his church, in 419 : after which, pope Zozimus, sent him letters of communion.*

Nestorius, a monk and priest of Antioch, was made bishop of Constantinople in 428. The retiredness and severity of his life, joined with a hypocritical exterior of virtue, a superficial learning, and a fluency of words, gained him some reputation in the world. But being full of self-conceit, he neglected the study of the Fathers, was a man of weak judgment, extremely vain, violent, and obstinate. This is the character he bears in the history of those times, and which is given him by Socrates, and also by Theodoret, whom he had formerly imposed upon by his hypocrisy. Marius Mercator informs us that he was no sooner placed in the episcopal chair, but he began to persecute with great fury, the Arians, Macedonians, Manichees, and Quartodecimans, whom he banished out of his diocess. But though he taught original sin, he is said to have denied the necessity of grace ; on which account he received to his communion Celestius and Julian, who had been condemned by the popes Innocent and Zozimus, and banished out of the West by the emperor Honorius, for Pelagianism. Theodosius obliged them to leave Constantinople, notwithstanding the protection of the bishop Nestorius and his mercenary priests broached also new errors from the pulpit, teaching two distinct persons in Christ, that of God, and that of man, only joined by a moral union, by which he said the Godhead dwelt in the humanity merely as in its temple. Hence he denied the Incarnation, or that God was made man ; and said the Blessed Virgin ought not to be styled the mother of God, but of the man who was Christ, whose humanity was only the temple of the divinity, not a nature hypostatically assumed by the divine Person ; though at length convicted by the voice of antiquity, he allowed her the title of mother of God, but continued to deny the mystery.

be condemned without proofs which amount to conviction. The silence of Orestes, and the historian Socrates, both his declared enemies, suffices to acquit him.

^a We have nothing further of the life of this father, until the year 428, when his zeal was first exerted in defence of the faith against Nestorianism : we shall introduce this period of his labours, with some account of the author of this heresy.

The people were shocked at these novelties, and the priests, St. Proclus, Eusebius, afterwards bishop of Dorylæum, and others, separated themselves from his communion, after having attempted in vain to reclaim him by remonstrances. His homilies, wherever they appeared, gave great offence, and excited every where clamours against the errors and blasphemies they contained. St. Cyril having read them, sent him a mild expostulation on the subject, but was answered with haughtiness and contempt, Pope Celestine, being applied to by both parties, examined his doctrine in a council at Rome: condemned it, and pronounced a sentence of excommunication and deposition against the author, unless within ten days after notification of the sentence, he publicly condemned and retracted it, appointing St. Cyril as his vicegerent in this affair, to see that the sentence was put in execution.(1) Our saint, together with his third and last summons, sent Nestorius twelve propositions with anathemas, hence called anathematisms, to be signed by him as proof of his orthodoxy, but the heresiarch appeared more obstinate than ever. This occasioned the calling of the third general council opened at Ephesus, in 431, by two hundred bishops, with St. Cyril at their head, as pope Celestine's legate and representative.(2) Nestorius, though in the town, and thrice cited, refused to appear. His heretical sermons were read, and depositions received against him, after which his doctrine was condemned, and the sentence of excommunication and deposition was pronounced against him and notified to the emperor.

Six days after, John, patriarch of Antioch, arrived at Ephesus with forty-one oriental bishops; who secretly favouring the person, but not the errors, of Nestorius, of which they deemed him innocent, had advanced but slowly on their journey to the place. Instead of associating with the council, they assembled by themselves, and presumed to excommunicate St. Cyril and his adherents. Both sides had recourse to the emperor for redress, by whose order, soon after, St. Cyril and Nestorius were both arrested and confined, but our saint the worst treated of the two. Nay, through his antagonist's greater interest at court, he was upon the point of being banished, when three legates from Pope Celestine, Arcadius and Projectus, bishops,

(1) Conc. T. 3. p. 343. Liberat. in Breviar. c. 4.

(2) St. Leo, Ep. 72. c. 3. Conc. T. 3. p. 656. 980.

and Philip, a priest, arrived at Ephesus, which gave a new turn to affairs in our saint's favour. The three new legates having considered what had been done under St. Cyril, the condemnation of Nestorius was confirmed, the saint's conduct approved, and the sentence pronounced against him declared null and invalid. Thus, matters being cleared up, he was enlarged with honour. The Orientals, indeed, continued their schism till 433, when they made their peace with St. Cyril, condemned Nestorius, and gave a clear and orthodox exposition of their faith. That heresiarch, being banished from his see, retired to his monastery in Antioch. John, though formerly his friend, yet finding him very perverse and obstinate in his heresy, and attempting to pervert others, entreated the emperor Theodosius to remove him. He was therefore banished to Oasis, in the deserts of Upper Egypt, on the borders of Libya, in 431, and died miserably and impenitent in his exile. His sect remains to this day very numerous in the East.* St. Cyril triumphed over this heresiarch by his meekness, intrepidity, and courage; thanking God for his sufferings, and professing himself ready to spill his blood with joy for the gospel.(1) He arrived at Alexandria on the 30th of October, 431, and spent the remainder of his days in maintaining the faith of the church in its purity, in promoting peace and union among the faithful, and the zealous labours of his pastoral charge, till his glorious death in 444, on the 28th of June, that is, the 3rd of the Egyptian month Epiphi, as the Alexandrians, the Copts, and the Ethiopians unanimously affirm, who by abridging his name call him Kerlos, and gave him the title of Doctor of the world. The Greeks keep the 18th of January in his honour; and have a second commemoration of him again on the 9th of June.(2) The Roman Martyrology mentions him on this day. Pope Celestine styles him, "The generous defender of the church and faith, the Catholic doctor, and an apostolical man."(3)

(1) Ep. ad Theopomp. T. 3. Conc. p. 771.

(2) Smith on the present state of the Greek church, p. 13. Thomassin Tr. des Fêtes, l. 1. ch. 7.

(3) Conc. T. 3. p. 1077.

* They have a liturgy under the name of Nestorius, and two others which they pretend to be still more ancient. See Renaudot, liturg. orient. T. 2. and Le Brun, liturg. T. 3. The former contains a clear profession of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass.

The extraordinary devotion of this holy doctor towards the holy sacrament appears from the zeal with which he frequently inculcates the glorious effects which it produces in the soul of him who worthily receives it, especially in healing all his spiritual disorders, strengthening him against temptations, subduing the passions, giving life, and making us one with Christ by the most sacred union, not only in spirit, but also with his humanity.(1) Hence this father says that by the holy communion we are made concorporeal with Christ. The eminent dignity and privileges of the ever glorious Virgin Mary were likewise a favourite subject on which he often dwells. In his tenth homily,(2) after having often repeated her title of Mother of God, he thus salutes her: "Hail, O Mary, mother of God, rich treasure of the world,* inextinguishable lamp, crown of virginity, sceptre of the true doctrine, temple which cannot fall, the residence of him whom no place can contain, Mother and Virgin by whom He is who cometh Blessed in the name of the Lord. Hail Mary, who in your virgin womb contained Him who is immense and incomprehensible: You, through whom the whole blessed Trinity is glorified and adored, through whom the precious cross is honoured and venerated over the whole world, through whom heaven exults, the angels and archangels rejoice, the devils are banished, the tempter is disarmed, the creature that was fallen is restored to heaven, and comes to the knowledge of the truth, through whom holy baptism is instituted, through whom is given the oil of exultation, through whom churches are founded over the whole earth, through whom nations are brought to penance. And what need of more words? Through whom the only begotten Son of God has shone the light to those who sat in darkness and in the shade of death, &c. What man can celebrate the most praiseworthy Mary according to her dignity?"

(1) L. 4. contra Nestor. T. 6. parte 1. p. 110. l. 7. de adoratione in spiritu et verit. T. 1. p. 231. l. 10. in Joan. T. 4. c. 13.

(2) T. 5. parte 2. p. 380. Item Conc. T. 3. p. 583.

* *Κειμήλιον τῆς οἰκουμένης.* The rich furniture of the world.