

Iosephus lib. 20.

his Martyrdom did impute the cause of the besieging of Jerusalem and other calamities which happened unto the to no other cause, but unto the violence and iniurie done to this man. Also Iosephus hath not left this out of his historie, where he speaketh of him after this manner: These things so chanced unto the Jewes for a vengeance because of that iust man James which was the brother of Iesu, who they called Christ, for the Jewes killed him although he was a righteous man.

The same Iosephus declareth his death in the same booke and chapter, saying: Caesar hearing of the death of Festus, sent Albinus the Lieutenant into Iewrie, but Ananus the younger, being bishop, and of the sect of the Sadducees, trusting that he had obtained a convenient tyme, seeing that Festus was dead, and Albinus entered on his journey, he called a Councell, and calling many unto him, among whom was James by name the brother of Iesu which is called Christ, he stoned them, accusing them as breakers of the law.

Whereby it appeareth, that many other besides James also of the same tyme were Martyred and put to death among the Jewes, for the faith of Christ.

Martyrs.

A description of the X. first persecutions in the Primitive Church.

The first x. persecutions in the primitive Church.

These things being thus declared for the Martyrdom of the Apostles, and the persecutio of the Jewes: Now let vs (by the grace of Christ our Lord) comprehend with like brevity, the persecutions raised by the Romaines, against the Christians in the Primitive age of the Church, during the space of 300. yeares, till the coming of godly Constantine, which persecutions are reckoned of Eusebius, and by the most part of writers, to the number of x. most speciall.

Wherein innumerable it is, to see and read the numbers incredible of Christian innocents that were slaine and tormented, some one way, some an other. As Rabanus saith, & saith truly. Alij ferro perempti. Alij flammis exusti. Alij flagris verberati. Alij vecibus perforati. Alij cruciati patibulo. Alij demersi pelagi periculo. Alij viui decoriati. Alij vinculis mancipati. Alij linguis priuati. Alij lapidibus obruti. Alij frigore afflicti. Alij fame cruciati. Alij truncatis manibus, aliisque casibus membris spectaculum contumeliaz, nudi propter nomen Domini portantes, &c. There is. Some slaine with sword. Some burnt with fire. Some with whips scourged. Some stabbed in with strokes of iron. Some fastned to the crosse or gibbet. Some drowned in the sea. Some their skaines pluckt of. Some their tongues cut off. Some stoned to death. Some killed with cold. Some starued with hunger. Some their hands cut off or other wise dismembred, haue bene so left naked to the open shame of the world, &c. Whereof Augustine also in his booke De Ciuit. 22. cap. 6. thus saith: Ligabantur, includebantur, cedebantur, torquebantur, vrebantur, laniabantur, cruciabantur, multiplicabantur, non pugnantes pro salute, sed salutem contemnentis pro seruatore. Whose kindes of punishments although they were diuers, yet the manner of constancie in all these Martyrs was one. And yet notwithstanding the sharpnes of these so many and sundry tormets, and like cruelties of the tormentors: yet such was the number of these constant Saintes that suffered, or rather such was the power of the Lord in his Saintes, that as Hierome in his Epistle to Chromatius, and Heliodorus saith: Nullus esset dies qui non vltra quinq; millium numerum Martyrum reperiri posset ascriptus excepto die Kalendarum Ianuarij. That is, There is no day in the whole yeare, unto which the number of five thousand Martyrs cannot be ascribed, except onely the first day of Ianuary.

The first Persecution.

The first of these x. persecutions, was stirred up by Nero Domitius, the vi. Emperour before mentioned, about the yeare of our Lord. 67. The tyrannous rage of which Emperour, was so fierce against the Christians (as Eusebius recordeth) Vsq; adeo vt videres repletas humanis corporibus ciuitates, iacentes mortuos simul cum paruulis fenestras: foeminarumq; absq; vlla sexus reuerentia nudata in publico, reiectasq; starent cadauera. That is, In so much that a man might there see cities lye full of mens bodies, the old there lying together with the yong, and the dead bodies of women cast out

The first persecution. Anno. 67. Histor. Eccles. Lib. 2. Cap. 24. 25. 26.

naked, without all reuerence of that sere in the open streets, &c. Likewise Orofius writing of the said Nero, saith, that he was the first which in Rome did raise up persecution against the Christians, and not onely in Rome, but also through all the prouinces thereof, thinking to abolish and to destroy the whole name of Christians in all places, &c. Whereunto accordeth moreover the testimonie of Hierome vpon Daniel, saying: that many there were of the Christians in those dayes, which seeing the filthy abominations, and intolerable crueltie of Nero, thought that he should be Antichrist, &c.

Orofius. Lib. 7. Nero thought to be Antichrist.

In this persecution, among many other Saintes the blessed Apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified as some doe write, at Rome, albeit other some, and not without cause doe doubt thereof, concerning whose life and history, because it is sufficiently described in the text of the Gospell, and in the Actes of S. Luke, chap. 4. 5. 12. I neede not heere to make any great recription thereof. As touching the cause and manner of hys death, diuers there be, which make relation, as Hierome, Egesippus, Eusebius, Abdias, and other: although they doe not all precisely agree in the tyme. The wordes of Hierome be these: Simon Peter the sonne of Iona, of the prouince of Galile, and of the towne of Bethsaida, the brother of Andrew, &c. After hee had bene Bishop of the Church of Antioch, and had preached to the disperision of them that beloued, of the Circassion in Pontus, Galacia, Capadocia, Asia, and Bithynia in the second yeare of Claudius, the Emperour, (whiche was about the yeare of our Lord. 44.) came to Rome, to withstand Simon Magus, and there kept the priestly chaire, the space of 25. yeares, until the last yeare of the fore sayd Nero, which was the 14. yeare of hys raygne, of whom he was crucified, hys head being downe, and his feete vppward, himselfe so requiring, because he was (he sayd) unworthy to be crucified after the same founne and manner, as the Lord was, &c. Egesippus, prosecuting this matter something more at large, and Abdias, also, (if any authoritie is to be geuen to hys booke, who following not onely the sense, but also the very forme of wordes of Egesippus in this history, seemeth to be extracted out of him, and of other authors) sayth, that Simon Magus being then a great man with Nero, and his president and keeper, of hys life, was required vpon a tyme to be present at the rayting vp of a certayne noble young man in Rome, of Neros kinde, lately departed, whereas Peter also was desired to come to the reuiuing of the sayd personage. But when Magus in the presence of Peter could not doe it: Then Peter calling vpon the name of the Lord Iesus, dyd rayse him vp, and restored him to hys mother, whereby the estimation of Simon Magus, began greatly to decay, and to be detested in Rome. Not long after the sayd Magus threatened the Romaynes, that he would leaue the Citie and in their sight flye away from them into heauen. So the day being appoynted Magus taking hys winges in the Mounte Capitolinus, began to flye in the ayre. But Peter by the power of the Lord Iesus brought him downe with his winges headlong to the ground, by the whiche fall hys legges and ioyntes were broken, and he thereupon dyed. Then Nero sorrowing for the death of him, sought matter agaynst Peter to put him to death. Which when the people perceiued, they entreated Peter with much a doe, that he would flye the Citie Peter through their importunitie at length perswaded, prepared himselfe to auoyd. But coming to the gate he sawe the Lord Christ come to meete him, to whom he worshipping sayd: Lord whether doest thou goe? To whome he answered and sayd, I come agayne to be crucified. By this Peter perceauing hys suffering to be vnderstanded, returned backe into the Citie agayne. And so was he crucified, in manner as is before declared. And this out of Egesippus.

S. Peter the Apostle, crucified at Rome.

Hieron. lib. De viris illust. lib. 11.

This report seemeth neyther to come of Ierome nor to be true in Peter, Egesippus. Lib. 3. De excidio Hieros. cap. 2.

Abdias lib. 1. De vita Petri.

Eusebius moreover, writing of the death not onely of Peter, but also of his wife, affirmeth, that Peter seeing his wife going to her Martyrdom (belike as he was yet hanging vpon the crosse) was greatly ioyous and glad thereof, who crying vnto her with a loud voyce, and calling her by her name, bade her remember the Lord Iesus. Such was then (saith Eusebius) the blessed bonde of Marriage among the Saintes of God. And thus much of Peter.

Euseb. lib. 3. hist. eccle. c. 30.

Peters wife put to death for Christ. The wordes of Peter to hys wife, going to death. Paule the Apostle.

Paule the Apostle, which before was called Saule, after his great travail and insupportable labours in promoting the Gospell of Christ, suffered also in this first persecution vnder Nero, and was beheaded. Of whom thus writeth Hierome in his Booke De viris illust. Paule, other wise called Saule, one of the Apostles, yet out of the number of xij. was of the tribe of Benjamin, and of a towne of Iewrie called Giscalis: which towne beyng taken of the Romains, he with his parents fled to Tharsus a towne of Cilicia. Afterward was sent by by his parents to Hierusalem, and

Ex Hieronimo. Lib. de viris illust. and