

Saule brought vp vnder Gamaliell. Saule a persecutor. Saule converted.

and there brought vp in the knowledge of the law, at the tette of Gamaliel, and was at the death of Stephen a doer. And when he had receiued letters from the high Priest to persecute the Christians, by the way going to Damascus, was stricken downe of the Lordes gloie, and of a persecutor, was made a profelior, an Apostle, a Martyr, a witnesse of the Gospell, and a vessel of election.

Saulus turned to Paulus. Paule sent to the Gentiles.

Among his other manifold labours & trauails in preaching the doctrine of Christ, he was Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul of Cyprus, to the faith of Christ, whereupon he took his name as Iamc suppose, turned from Saulus to Paulus. After he had passed through diuers places and countreys in his laborious peregrinations, he took to him Barnabas, and went up to Hierusalem, to Peter, James, and John, where he was ordained and sent out with Barnabas to preach vnto the Gentiles.

Act. 28.

And because it is in the Actes of the Apostles sufficiently comprehended, concerning the admirable conuersion, & conuersion of this most worthy Apostle; that which remaineth of the rest of his history, I will here adde, how the sayd Apostle Paule, the 25. yere after the passion of the lord, in the second yere of Nero, what tyme Felus ruled in Jewrie, was sent vp in bondes to Rome, where he remaining in his tere hosterie two yeres together, disputed daily against the Jewes, prouing Christ to be come. And here is to be noted, that after his first answer of purgation there made at Rome, the Emperour Nero, not yet fully confirmed in his Empire, & yet not bursting out into thoir mischiefs, which histories report of him, he was at that tyme by Nero discharged, and dismissed to preach the Gospell in the west partes and about the coastes of Italy, as he himselfe writing vnto Timothie, afterward in his second apprehension, in his second Epistle witnesseth, saying: In my first purgation, no man shode with me, but did all forsake me, the Lord lay it not to their charge. But the Lord stood with me, & did comfort me, that the preaching of his word might proceed by me, & that all the Gentiles might heare and be taught, and I was deliuered out of the Lions mouth, &c. In which place by the Lion he plainly meaneth Nero. And afterward likewise saith: I was deliuered from the mouth of the Lion, &c. And againe, the Lord hath deliuered me out from all euill workes, and hath saued me vnto his heauenly kingdom, &c. speaking this, because he perceined the tyme of his Martyrdome to be nere at hand. For in the same Epistle before, he saith: I am now offered vp, and the tyme of my dissolution draweth on.

2. Tim. 4.

Thus then, this worthy preacher and messenger of the Lord, in the 14. yere of Nero, and the same day in which Peter was crucified (although not in the same yere as some write, but in the next yere following) was beheaded at Rome for the testimony of Christ, and was buried in the way of Ostia. The yere after the passion of the Lord 37. He wrote ix. Epistles to seuen Churches: to the Romanians one, to the Corinthians two, to the Galathians one, to the Ephesians one, to the Philippians one, to the Colossians one, to the Thessalonians two. Moreover, he wrote to his Disciples, to Timothie two, to Titus one, to Philemon one.

The Epistles of S. Paul to vii. Churches.

The Epistle which beareth the title to the Hebrewes, is not thought to be his, for the difference of the stile & phrase, but either iudged to be written of Timothie, as Tertullian supposeth, or of S. Luke as other do thinke: or els of Clement afterward Bishop of Rome, who as they say, was adioyned with Paule, and compiling together his sayings and sentences, did phrase them in his stile and manner. Or els, as some do iudge, because S. Paule wrote vnto the Hebrewes, for the odiousness of his name among that people, therefore he dissimuled, and confessed his name in the first entree of his salutation, contrary to his accustomed condition. And as he wrote to the Hebrewes he being an Hebrew, so he wrote in Hebrew, y. is, in his own tongue more eloquently. And that is thought to be the cause why it differeth from his other Epistles, and is after a more eloquent manner translated into the Greeke, then his other Epistles be. Some also read the Epistle written to Laodicea, but that is exploded of all men. Thus much Hierome.

The Epistle to the Hebrewes.

The Epistle to Laodicea

Abdias de Ciris. lib. 2.

As touching the tyme and order of the death and Martyrdome of S. Paule, as Eusebius, Hierome, Maximus and other authours doe but briefly passe ouer: So Abdias (if his booke be of any substantiall authority) speaking more largely of the same doth say: that after the crucifying of Peter, & the tyme of Simon Magus, Paule yet remaining in free custody, was dismissed and deliuered at that tyme from Martyrdome by Gods persuasion, that all the Gentiles might be replenished with preaching of the Gospell by him.

And the same Abdias proceeding in his story, declareth moreover, that as Paule was thus occupied at Rome, he

was accused to the Emperour, not onely for teaching new doctrine, but also for stirring vp sedition against the Empire. For this he being called before Nero, and demanded to shew the order and maner of his doctrine, there declared what his doctrine was, to teach all men peace and charite how to loue one another, how to prouent one another in honor, rich men not to be puffed in pride, nor to put their trust in their treasures, but in the living God. He came men to be contented with food and rayment, and with their present state. He came men to reioyce in their pouertie with hope. Fathers to bring vp their children in the feare of God. Children to obey their parents. Husbands to loue their wiues, wiues to be subiect vnto their husbands. Citizens and subiects to giue their tribute vnto Caesar and to be subiect to their magistrats. Masters to be courteous not curiously to their seruants. Seruants to deale faithfully with their masters. And this to be the summe of his teaching, which his doctrine he receiued not of men nor by men, but by Iesus Christ, and the father of gloie, which spake to him from heauen, the Lord Iesus saying to him, that he should goe and preach in his name, and that he would be with him, and would be the spirit of life to all that beleue in him, and that whatsoever he did or said, he would make it, &c. After that Paule had thus declared vnto the Emperour, shortly after sentence of death was pronounced against him, that he should be beheaded. Into whose execution Nero sent two of his Equiers Ferega, and Parthenius to bring him word of his death. They coming to Paule, instructing then the people, desired him to pray for them that they might beleue. Who told them that shortly after they should beleue, and be buried at his Sepulchre (as Abdias writeth.) This done, the soldiours came and led him out of the Citie to the place of execution, where he after his prayers made, gaue his necke to the sword. Abdias reporteth, that as his head was stroked off, in stead of blood issued out white milke, and that at laying downe his head he signed himselfe with the signe of a crose in his forehead; but this being found in no other history, Abdias seemeth either to adde of his own, or els to borrow out of the Legend as he doth many other things beside, whereof more shalbe sayd (Christ willing) hereafter. Although the same miracle of milke flowing out of his necke, is referred also vnto Ananias, who in his sermon 68. (if it be not counterfacted) seemeth to ascribe the same. Of the tyme and yere when these blessed Apostles did suffer, histories doe not all agree. They that follow the common opinion, and the Popes Decrees say, that both Peter and Paule suffered both in one day and in one yere, which opinion seemeth to be taken out of Dionysius bishop of Corinth. Hierome in his booke De viris illust. affirmeth that they suffered both in one day, but he expresseth not the yere. So doth Isidorus and Eusebius. Synphon Metaphrastes bringeth in the opinion of some, which thinke that Paule suffered not with Peter, but after Peter. Prudentius in his Peristephanon, noteth that they both were put to death vpon the same day, but not in the same yere, and saith that Paule followed Peter a yere after.

Paule declareth his doctrine to the Emperour.

The summe of Paulus doctrine.

Paule condemned.

Paule suffered.

A Legend or racle.

The story of Abdias suspected.

Histories doe vary about the tyme of their Martyrdome.

If this be true that Prudentius recordeth of Paule to suffer vnder Nero, and the yere after Peter: either is it false, which Hierome better testifieth to suffice yere 6

The second Persecution.

The first Romanaine persecution beginning vnder Nero, as is aforesaid, ended vnder Vespasianus who gaue some rest to the poore Christians. After whose raigne was made not long after the second persecution, by the Emperour Domitian brother of Titus. Of whom Eusebius and Orosius so write, that he first beginning mildly, afterward did so farr outrage in pride intollerable, that he commaunded himselfe to be worshipped as God, and that images of gold and silver in his honour should be set vp in Capitolio. The chiefest nobles of the Senators, either vpon enuy, or for their goodes, he caused to be put to death, some openly, and some he sent into banishment, there causing them to be staine pyrrilie.

The second persecution.

Annus 69.

Ex Orosio Lib. 7.

And as his tyranny was unmeasurable, so the intemperance of his life was no lesse. He put to death all the nephewes of Iuda, called the Lordes brother, and caused to be sought out, and to be slayne all that could be found of the stocke

The tyrann and intemperance of Domitian.