

The letter of Hadrian the Emperour to Fundanus the Proconsull,

other. All which as I find them in no ancient records, so I leave them to their authors, and compilers of the Legeds.

We read also of Aufstinus and Iobita, citizens of the Citie of Brixia, which suffered Martyrdom with like grievous torments. At the sight whereof, one Calocerius seeing their so great patience, in so great torments, cried out with these wordes: Verè Magnus Deus Christianorum. That is, verily great is the God of the Christians. which wordes being heard, forthwith he was apprehended, and being brought to the place of their execution, was made partaker of their Martyrdom. Ex Ant. Equilin.

The history of Nicephorus maketh mention of Anthia a godly woman, who committed her sonne Eleutherius to Anicetus bishop of Rome, to be brought up in the doctrine of Christian faith, who afterward beyng Bishop in Apulia, was there beheaded with his forsayd mother Anthia, Onomast.

Iustus also and Pastor two brethren, with like Martyrdom ended their lives in a citie of Spaine called Complutum, under the said Hadrian the Emperour.

A likewise Symphoriska the wife of Getulus the Martyr, with her iii. children, is said about the same time to suffer: who first was much, and oft beaten & scourged, afterward was hanged up by the haire of her head. At last having an huge stone fastened vnto her, was throwne headlong into the euer, & after that her seuen childre in like manner, with sundry & diuers kinds of punishment diuersly were martyred by the heathens.

The Roy of M. Hermannus, and Antoninus, and other, report of Sophia, with her three children also, also of Serapia and Sabina, to suffer under the said Emperour, about the yeare of our Lord, 130.

As concerning Alexander bishop of Rome, with his ii. Deacons, also with Hermes, Quirinus, Saphyra, and Sabina. Some writers, as Bede, and Marianus Scorus recorde that they suffered under Traianus. Others againe, as Otto Frisingensis with like no, report that they suffered in the iiii. yeare of this Emperour Hadrian, but of these Martyrs sufficiently hath bene sayd before.

While Hadrian the Emperour was at Athens, he purposed to visite the country of Eleusina, and so did: where he sacrificing to the Gentile Gods, after the manner of the Grecians, had giuen free leaue & libertie, whosoever would to pericrite the Christians. whereupon Quadratus a man of no lesse zeale excellent, as of famous learning, being the Bishop of Athens, and Disciple of the Apostles, or at least succeeding incontinent the age of the Apostles, and following after Publius (who a litle before was martyred, for the testimony of Christ) did offer up and exhibite vnto Hadrian the Emperour, a learned and excellent Apologie in the defence of the Christian Religion. wherein he declared the Christians without all iust cause or desert, to be so cruelly entreated and persecuted, &c. The like also did Aristides another no lesse excellent Philosopher in Athens, who for his singular learning and eloquence being notified to the Emperour, and comming to his presence, there made before him an eloquent Oration. Whereupon, did exhibite vnto the said Emperour a memorable Apologie for the christians, so full of learning and eloquence, that as Hierome sayth, it was a spectacle and admiration to men in his tyme, that loued to see wit and learning.ouer and besides these, there was also an other named Serenus Granius a man of great nobility, who likewise did write very piety & graue letters to Hadrian the Emperour, shewing and declaring therein, to be consonant with no right nor treason, for the blood of innocents so to be giuen to the rage and fury of the people, and so to be condemned for no fault, onely for the name and sect that they followed.

Thus the goodness of God being moued with the prayers and constant labour of these so excellent men, so turned the hart of the Emperour, that he beyng better informed concerning the order & profession of the christians, became more sauozable vnto them. And immediately vpo the same directed his letters to Minutius Fundanus (as is partly before mentioned) Proconsull of Asia, willing him to henceforth to exercise no more such extremities against the Christians, as to condemne any of them hauing no other crime obiect against them but onely their name. The copy of which his letter, because that Iustine in his Apologie doth alleage it, I thought therefore to expresse the same in his owne wordes as followeth.

The letter of Hadrian the Emperour, to Minutius Fundanus.

I Haue received an Epistle written vnto me from Serennius Granianus, our right worthy and welbeloued, whose office you do

now execute. Therefore I thinke it not good to leaue this matter without further aduilement and circumspection to passe, least our subiects be molested, and malicious scyphants boldned and supported in their euill. Wherefore if the subiects of our prouinces, doe bring forth any accusation before the iudge against the Christians, and can prooue the thing they obiect against them, let them doe the same, and no more, and otherwise for the name onely, not to impeach them, nor to cry out against them. For so, more conuenient it is, that if any man will be an accuser, you to take the accusation quietly, and iudge vpon the same. Therefore, if any shall accuse the Christians, and complaine of them as malefactors, doing contrary to the law, then geue you iudgement according to the qualitie of the crime. But notwithstanding who so euer vpo spite and maliciousnes shall commence or caul against them, see you correct and punish that man, for his vnordaine and malicious dealing.

Thus by the mercifull prouidence of God, some more quiet and rest was giuen to the Church, although Hermannus thinketh these Alicone dayes did not very long continue, but that the Emperour changing his Edict, began to renew agayne persecution against gods people, albeit this sounderly not to be by the wordes of Melito in his Apologie to Antoninus hereafter ensuing. In the meane tyme this is certain, that in the dayes of this Hadrian, the Jewes rebelled agayne & spoiled the country of Palestine. Against whom the Emperour sent Iulius Senerus, who ouerthrow in Iudie, 50. castles, and burnt and destroyed 980. villages and Townes, and due of the Jewes 50. thousand, so that with famine, sickness, sword, and fire, Iudaa was almost desolate. But at length Hadrian the Emperour, which otherwise was named Aelius, repaired and enlarged the Citie again of Ierusalem, which was called after his name Aeliopolis, or Aelia Capitolina, the inhabitance whereof, he graunted only to the Gentiles, and to the Christians, forbidding the Jewes utterly not to enter into the Citie.

After the death of Hadrian, who died by bleeding at the nose, succeeded Antoninus Pius, about the yeare of our Lord, 140. and reigned 23. yeeres. who for his clemency and modest behauiour, had the name of Pius, and is for the same in histories commended. His saying was, that he had rather saue one Citizen, then destroy a thousand of his aduersaries. At the beginning of his reigne, such was the state of the Church, as Hadrian his predecessor had left it, as in which, although there was no Edict set forth to persecute the Christians: yet the tumultuous rage of the heathen multitude for the causes aboue specified, did not cease to disquiete and afflict the quiet people of God, imputing and ascribing to the Christians whatsoever misfortune happened contrary to their desires. Whereupon, inuenting agaynst them all false crimes and contrumelies wherein to accuse them. By reason whereof, diuers there were in sundry places much molested, and some put to death: albeit, as it is to be supposed, not by the consent of the Emperour, who of nature was so mylde and gentle, that either he rayshed vp no persecution against the Christians, or els he some stayed the same beyng moued. As well may appear by his letter sent downe to the countreys of Asia, the tenor whereof here insueth,

The Epistle of Antoninus Pius, to the Commons of Asia.

Emperour and Cæsar, Aurelius, Antoninus, Augustus, Armenicus, Pontifex Maximus, Tribune eleuen tymes, Consull thrife, vnto the commons of Asia greeting. I am very certayne, that the Gods haue a care of this, that they which be such, shall be knowen, and not lye hid. For they doe punish them, that will not worship them more then you: which so vexe and trouble them, confirming thereby the opinion which they haue conceaued, and doe conceaue of you, that is, to be wicked men. For this is their ioy and desire, that when they are accused, rather they couet to dye for their God, then to lye. Whereby they are Victors, and doe ouercome you, geuing rather their luyes, then to be obedient to you, in doying that which you require of them. And here it shall not be inconuenient to aduertise you of the Earthquakes, which haue, and doe happen among vs, that when at the sight of them you tremble and are afraid, then conferre your care with them. For they vpon a sure confidence of their God, are bolde and fearelesse, much more then you: who in all the tyme of this your ignorance, both doe worship other Gods, and neglect the Religion of immortalitie, and such Christians as worship him, them you doe drieue out, and persecute them vnto death. Of these and such like matters, many Presidents of our Prouinces, did write to our father of famous memorie heretofore. To whome he directed his answer agayne, willing them in no case to molest the Christians, except they were found in some trespasse prejudiciall against the Empire of Rome.

Respite from persecution.

The second distribution of the Iewes. Hierusalem recified & enlarged. Some write that the place where Christ was crucified, was taken into the walles. Hierusalem called by a new name.

Aeliopolis. Antoninus Pius Emperour.

Anno. 140.

The letter of Antoninus Pius to the commons of Asia.

A notable argument of the Emperour to proue the good conscience of Christians, and the false conscience of the Heathen.

Faufstinus and Iobita. Calocerius. Martyrs.

Elutherius with hys mother Anthia Martyrs. Ex Nicephoro & ex Onam. Iustus and Pastor brethren and Martyrs. Symphorisk with her 7. Children martyred.

Sophia with her 3. children Martyred.

Quadratus Bishop of Athens, offereth an Apology of Christian doctrine.

Aristides a Philosopher of Athens, death before the Emperour the religion of Christ. Serenus Granius a defender of Christian Religion. Euseb. lib. 4. Cap. 8.

The Emperour writeth for the Christians.