

A faythfull seruant of Christ his Lord.

Policarpus ready to giue a reason of hys doctrine.

Policarpus obedient to higher powers.

Policarpus threatened with wilde beasts.

An example of brotherly loue.

The willing minde of Policarpus to suffer.

His prayer before hys death.

ly in hand with him, sayd, take thine othe, and I will discharge thee, deſire Chriſt. Policarpus answered: ſouereign and thyre years haue I bene his ſeruant, yet in all this ſpace hath he not ſo much as once hurt me: how then may I ſpeake euill of my king & ſouereigne Lord, which hath thus preferred me? Then the Proconſull againe enforced him and ſayd: Swear thou I aduife thee by Caſars profperty, Policarpus replych, if thou require of me this ſonde word of vaine boaiſting, ſeyning not to know (as I ſaich) who I am, I doe thee to wit, that I am a Chriſtian: And if thou deſire to know the doctrine of Chriſtianity, appoint a day, & thou ſhalt heare. Perſwade the people to this ſaid the Proconſull: Truly ſayth Policarpus, I haue thought it my part, thus to ſay vnto you, ſo far much as we are commaunded to giue vnto the gouernours & powers of dayned of God, the honoz meete & due to them, and not hurtfull vnto vs; but as for thoſe I doe iudge them vnworthy, to purge my ſelf vnto them. Hereupon the proconſull ſtoode vp, I haue, ſaith he, wilde beaſts, to whom I will throwe thee, vnles thou take a better way: whereunto Policarpus answered let thee come: we haue determined with our ſelues that we will not by repentance turne vs from the better way, to the worſe, but rather conuenient it is, that a man turne from the things that be euill, to that which is good and iuſt. Agayne ſayth the Proconſull, I will tame thee with fire, if that thou ſer not by the wilde beaſtes, nor yet repent. Then ſaid Policarpus you threaten me with fire which ſhal burne for the ſpace of an houre, & ſhal be within a litle while after put out & extinguished, but I knoweſt not the fire of the iudgement that is to come and of euerlaſting puniſhment, which is reſerued for the wicked & vngodly. But why make you all theſe delays, giue me what death ſo euer ye liſt. Theſe & many other ſuch like things being by him ſpoken, he was ſo replenished with ioy, and boldnes, and his countenance appeared ſo full of grace & fauour, that not onely he was not troubled with thoſe things which the Proconſull ſpoke vnto him, but contraryly the Proconſull himſelfe began to be amazed and ſent for a ſcrier, which in the middle of the ſtage was commaunded to cry 3. times, Policarpus, hath confeſſed himſelfe to be a Chriſtian, which wordes of the cryer, were no ſooner ſpoken, but that all the whole multitude both of the Gentiles and Jewes inhabiting at Smyrna, with a vehement rage and loud voice cried. This is that Doctour or teacher of Aſia, the father of the Chriſtians, and the deſtroyer of our gods, which hath inſtructed a great nuber that our Gods are not to be worſhipped; & after this they cryd vnto Philip the gouernour of Aſia, and required him that he would let looſe the Lion to Policarpus. To whom he made aunſwere that he might not ſo doe, becauſe he had already his praye. Then they cried againe altogether with one voice that he would burne Policarpus a liue. For it was requiſite that the viſion which he ſaw as concerning his pillow or bolſter ſhould be fulfilled: which when he had ſcene burnt, as he was in his prayer, he turned himſelfe vnto the faithful ſort which were with him, ſaying by the way of prophecie, it will ſo come, that I ſhall be burned a liue. And the Proconſull had no ſooner ſpoken, but it was out of hande perſormed. For why the multitude by and by brought out of their ſhops, workehouſes, and baynes, woode and other dry matter for that purpoſe and eſpecially the Jewes were moſt ſeruicable for that matter, after their woted maner. And thus the pile being layd, and that now hee had put of his garments & vndone his girdel, and was about to pul off his ſhoes, which he had not done before, for that all the ſchollers amongſt themſelues ſtriued (as it were) who ſhould firſt touch his body at their ſarewell, becauſe for the good conuerſation of his life, yea, from his yonger age, he was had in great eſtimation of al men. Therefore ſtraight way thoſe instruments which are requiſite to ſuch a bonfire, were brought vnto him, & when the woode had nayed him to the ſtake with yron hookes, he ſaid, let me alone as I am, for hee hath giuen me ſtrength to ſuffer and abide the fire, ſhal alſo giue power, that without this your prouition of nayles, I ſhall abide, & ſtirre not in the middeſt of this fire or pile of woode. Which thing when they heard, they did not naye him, but bounde him. Therefore when his handes were bounde behinde him, euen as the chiefſt Ramme taken out of the ſlocke, he was ſacrificed as an acceptable burnt offering to God ſaying: O father of thy welbeloued and bleſſed ſonne Ieſus Chriſt, by whom we haue attained the knowledge of thee, the God of angels and powers, and of euery creature, and of al iuſt men which liue before thee, I giue thee thanks, that thou haſt purchaſed to grait me this day that I may haue my part amongſt the number of the Martyrs in the cup of Chriſt vnto the reſurrection of eternall life both of body & ſoule,

through the operation of the holy Spirit, among whom I ſhal be this day receaued into thy light for an acceptable ſacrifice: & as thou haſt prepared, and recued the ſame beſore this time, to thou haſt accompliſhed the ſame. Which canſt not lye, O thou moſt true God, wherefore I in lyke caſe for all things praye thee, bleſſe thee, and gloriſie thee by our euerlaſting Biſhop Ieſus Chriſt to whom be glory euermore, Amen.

And ſoone as he had ended this word Amen, and finiſhed his prayer, the tormentors began to kinde the fire, & as the flame ſhalhed out vehemently: we to whom it was giue to diſcerne the ſame, ſaw a marueilous matter, which were alſo to this purpoſe preferred, that we might ſhewe the ſame to other, for the ſier being made like to arome or vaute of a houſe, and after the maner of a ſhipmans ſayle, filled with wind, compaſſed about the body of the Martyr as with a certaine wall, and he in the middle of the ſame, not as fleſh, that burned, but as gold and ſiluer when it is tried in the fier. And ſurely we ſmelt a ſauour ſo ſweete as if ſome other precious balme had giuen a ſcent. At the laſt when thoſe wicked perſons ſawe that theſe bodies could not be conſumed by fire, they commaunded one of the tormentors to come vnto him, & thruſt him thruogh with his ſwoorde. Which being done, to great a quantitie of blonde ran out of his body that the fire was quenched therewith, & the whole multitude marueyled that there was ſo much diuerſitie betwene the infidels and the elect, of whom this Policarpus was one, being a Diſciple of the Apoſtles, and a propheticall inſtructour of our times, and Biſhop of the Catholique Church of Smyrna, for what woerde ſo euer he ſpake both it was and ſhal be accompliſhed. But the ſubtil and eniuous aduerſary, when he ſaw the worthines of his martirdome, & that his conuerſation euen from his yonger yeares could not be reported, and that he was adorned with the crowne of martirdome, and had now obtained that incomparable benefite, gaue in charge, that we ſhould not take & deuide his body, for ſeare leaſt the remaines of the dead corpes ſhould be taken away, & ſo worſhipped of the people. Whereupon diuers whiſpered Niceta the father of Herode, and his brother Dalces in the eare, to admoniſh the Proconſull, that in no caſe he ſhould deuice his body, leaſt (ſaith he) they leaue Chriſt & begin to worſhip him. And this ſpake they becauſe the Jewes had giuen them ſecret warning & prouoked them therunto, who alſo watched vs that we ſhould not take him out of the fire, not being ignorant how that we ment, at no time to forſake Chriſt, which gaue his life for the ſaluation of the whole world, (as many I meane as are elected to ſaluation by him) neither yet that we could worſhip any other. For why? him we worſhip as the ſonne of God, but the Martyrs do we loue as diſciples of the Lord (& that worthely) for their abondaunt loue towards their king and maſter, of whom we alſo deſire and wiſh to be companions, & to be made his diſciples. wherfore the Centurion ſaw & perceaued the labour of the Jewes, the corpes being layd abroad, they burnt the ſame, as was their maner to doe.

Thus good Policarpus with 21. other that came from Philadelphia, ſuffered Martyrdome at Smyrna, which Policarpus ſpecially about the reſt is had in memory, ſo that hee in all places among the Gentiles is moſt famous. And this was the ende of this worthy diſciple of the Apoſtles, whoſe hiſtory the heathen of the congregation at Smyrna, haue wyrtten in this their Epistle as is aboue recited.

Irenus in his 3. booke againſt heretics, the 3. chap. and Eufebius in his 4. booke, and 14. chap. of his Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory reporteth this worthy ſaying of Policarpus: This Policarpus (ſayth hee) meeting at a certaine time Martion, the heretic, who ſaid vnto him, doeſt thou not know me? made anſwere, I know that thou art the fiſt begotten of Satan. So great feare what euil might enſue therof, had the Diſciples of the Apoſtles, that they would not ſpeake to them whom they knew to be the deſeruers of the vepitic, euen as Paule ſaith: The heretic, that they would not ſecond admonition, ſhonne, and annoy. Knowing that he which is ſuch one, is peruerie or toward, and damneth himſelfe. This moſt holy conſour and Martyr of Chriſt Policarpus, ſuffered death in the fourth perſecution after Nero, when Marcus Antonius, and Lucius Aurelius Commodus raigned, an. Dom. 167. as Vſperg affirmeth, an. 170. as Eufebius witneſſeth in his Ethonics the 7. before the Calendes of February.

Of Germanicus mention is made aboue in the ſtope of Policarpus of whom writeth Eufebius Lib. 4. cap. 15. not vng him to be a yonger man, and moſt conſtantly to perſeuer in the profeſſion of Chriſtians doctrine, whom when the Proconſull went about to perſwade, to remember his age, and

The thankſaying of Policarpus

A miracle ſhewed.

An example of much cruelty.

The Jewes enemics alwayes to the Chriſtians.

Marke that he ſayth we loue them, and worſhippe them not.

Twelue Martyrs put to death in Smyrna.

Ex Irenao. lib. 3. cap. 3. Eufeb. Lib. 4. cap. 14.

Anno 167.

Germanicus, Ex. Eufeb. lib. 4. cap. 15. Hiſtor. ecclij.