

Christen religion makeith common weales to flourish.

fortunate: and from that time more and more the state of the Romane Empire increased in honor, whereof you most happily were made successor, and so shall your soune tog. Honor: therefore this Philosophie, which with your Empire sprang vp and came in with Augustus, whiche your progenitors aboue al other honored & most esteemed. And verily this is no small argumēt of a good beginning, that since our doctrine flourished in the Empire, no misfortune or losse happened fro Augustus time: but contrary alwaies victory, good and honorable yeres, as euer any mā would wish. Onely among all, and of all Nero and Domitian being kindled by diuers naughty and iustfull persons cauilingly objected against our doctrine, of whom this Sycophantical flauding of vs by naughty custome first came and sprang vp. But your goodly fathers espying the ignorance of these, oftentimes by their writing corrected their temerous attempts in that behalfe. Among whom your grandfather Adrian to many other is read of, to haue written of Fundayne the Proconsul and Lieutenat of Asia. And your father, your own father I say, with whom you ruled in al things, wrote to the Cities vnder his signet, as the Laerians, Thelalonicenses, Atheniensis and Grecians rashly to inuolate or alter nothing of your highnes: therefore, who in this case is of that sect as your predecessours were, yea & of a more benigne & philosophical minde, we are in good hope to obtaine our petition and request.

The bookes of the olde Testament autentike and receaued.

Thus much out of the Apologie of Melito, who writing to Onesimus, geneth to vs this benefite to knowe the true Catalogue, & the names of al the autentike bookes of the olde Testament, receaued in the auncient time of the primitiue Church. Concerning the number & names wherof the said Melito in his letter to Onesimus declareth, howe that he returning into the parts where these things were done and preached, there hee diligently inquired out the bookes appoynded of the old Testament, the names wherof in order he subscritheth & sendeth vnto him as followeth: The fise bookes of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leuiticus, Numeri, Deuteronomi, Iesus Naue, The Iudges, Ruth, Foure bookes of Kings: Two bookes Paralipomenon. The Psalmes, Prouerbes of Salomon The booke of Wisedome: The Preacher. The song of songs. Iob. The Prophets, Esay, Hieromie, twelue Prophetes in one booke, Daniel, Ezechiel, Eldras. And thus much of thys matter, which I thought here to record, for that it is not impossible for these latter times to vnderstande what in the first times was receaued, and admitted as autentike, and what other wise.

But from this little digression to returne to our matter omitted, that is, to the Apologies of Apolinarius and Melito, in the story to it followeth, that whether it was by the occasiō of these two Apologies, or whether it was through the writing of Athenagoras a Philosopher, and a Legate of the Christians, it is vncertaine: but this is certaine that the persecution the same time was staied. Some do thinke, which most probably seeme to touch the truth, that the cause of stayng this persecution, did rise vpon a wonderful myracle of God, shewed in the Emperours campe by the Christians, the story wherof is this: At what time the two brethren Marcus Antonius, and Marcus Aurelius Commodus Emperours, ioyning together, warred against the Quades, Vandales, Sarmates, and Germanes, in the expedition against them their army by reason of the imminent assault of their enemies, was cooped & shut in within the straights and hoate by places, where their souldiours besides other difficulties of battaile, being destitute of water, fyue dayes, were like to haue perished; which dread not a little discomfited them, & did abate their courage. wherein this their so great distresse and icopardy, sodainly withdrew from the army a legian of the christian souldiours for their succour: who falling prostrate vpon the earth, by ardent praier, & by obtained of God double reliefe: by meanes of whom God gaue certaine pleasaunt showers from the element, whereby as their souldiours quenched their thirst, so were a great number of their enemies discomfited & put to flight by the continual lightning which shoted out of the airc. This miracle so pleased & won the Emperour, that euer after he wared gentler & gentler to the Christians & by effected his letters to diuers of his rulers, as Tertullian in his Apologie witnesseth; commaunding the therein to giue thanks to the Christians, no lesse for his victory, than for the preservation of him and all his men. The copy of which letter hereafter enlueth.

Ex Eusebio ibidem. A miraculous rayne obtained by the Christians.

Marcus Aurelius Antonius Emperour, to the Senate and people of Rome.

I Giue you hereby to vnderstande, what I intend to doe, as also, what successe I haue had in my warres in Germany, and with

how much difficultie I haue vited my campe, being compassed about with 74. fierce Dragons, whome my Scottes desiered to be within ix. miles of vs, and Pompeianus our Lieutenant hath viewed as he signified vnto vs by hys letters: Wherefore I thought no lesse but to be ouerunne and all my bandes of so great multitude, as well my vaward mayne warde as reere warde, with all my souldiours of Ephrata. In whose host there were numberd of fighting men ix. hundreth seuentie and five thousand. But when I saw my selfe not able to encounter with the enemy, I craued ayde of our countrey Gods, at whose hands I finding no comfort, and being driuen of the enemy vnto an exegent, I caused to be sent for those men which we call Christians who being mustred were found a good indifferent number, with whom I was in farther rage, than I had good cause, as afterwarde I had experience by their merueilous power, who forthwith did their indeuour, but without either weapon, munition, armour or trumpets, as men abhorring such preparation and furniture but onely satisfied in trust of their God, whome they cary about with them in their consciences. It is therefore to be credited, although we call them wicked men, that they worship God in their hartes. For they falling prostrate vpon the ground, prayed not onely for me, but for the host also, which was with me, beseeching their God for helpe in that our extremitie of vittels and fresh water. For we had bene now v. dayes without water, and were in our enemies land, euen in the middelt of Germany. who thus falling vpon their faces, made their prayer to a GOD vnkowne of me: and there fell amongst vs from heauen a most pleasaunt and cold shower, but amongst our enemies a great storme of hayle mixt with lightning, so that immediately we perceiued the inuincible ayde of the most mighty God to be with vs. Therefore we geue those men leaue to profess Christianitie, least perchay by their prayer, we be punished with the lyke, and thereby make my selfe the author of such hurt as shalbe received by the Christian profession. And if any shall apprehend one that is a Christian, onely for that cause: I will that he being apprended without punishment, may haue leaue to confess the same, so that there be none other cause objected agaynt hym, more than that he is a Christian: But let his accuser be burned aliuē. Neither will I that he confessing and being founde a Christian, shalbe enforced to alter the same his opinion by the gouernour of any of our prouinces, but left to hys owne choyse. And this decree of myne I will be ratified in the Senate house, and commaunded the same publicly to be proclaimed and read in the Court of Traianus and that farther from thence it may be sent into all our Prouinces by the diligence of Veratius gouernour of our Citie Polione. And further we geue leaue to all men to vie and write out this our decree, taking the same out of our copie publicly in the common Hall set forth.

Thus the tempestuous rage of persecution against the Christians began to a tyme to assuage partly by the occasiō hereof, partly also vpon other causes incident, compeling the enemies to surcease their persecutiō, as great plagues & pestilence lying vpon the countrie of Italy: lyke wyse great warres, as well in East partes, as also in Italy and Fraunce, terrible earthquakes, great floods, noisome swartines of flies and vermine deuouring their cornfields, &c. And thus much of things done vnder Antonius Verus which Antoninus in the beginning of his raygne ioyned with him in the gouernement of the Empire, vnto his brother Marcus Aurelius Commodus, who also was with hym at the miraculous victory gotten by the Christians, as Eusebius cap. 5. Lib. 5. recordeth, contrary Platina in vita Soteris, and the book intituled Flores historiariū, referre the same to the time of Antonius Verus, and his soune Lucius Antonius Commodus, and not of Marcus Aurelius Commodus his brother. But how soeuer the truth of yeares doe stand, certayne it is, that after the death of Antonius Verus, and of Aurelius Commodus, succeeded Lucius Antoninus, Commodus, the soune of Verus who raigned 13. yeares.

Antonius Verus. M. Aurelius Commodus Emperours. The difference betweene Eusebius and Platina.

Anno. 175.

In the time of this Commodus, although he was an incōmodious Prince to the Senatours of Rome, yet notwithstanding there was some quietnes vniuersally through the whole Church of Christ from persecution by what occasion it is not certaine. Some thinke of whom is Xiphilius that it came through Marcia the Emperours concubine, which fauoured the Christians: but how soeuer it came saith Eusebius, the irype of the raging enemies was then somewhat mitigated, & peace was giuen by the grace of Christ, vnto the Church throughout the whole worlde. At what time the wholesome doctrine of the Gospel aillured and reduced the hartes of all sortes of people, vnto the true Religion of God; in so much that many both rich and noble personages of Rome, with their whole families and householdes to they saluation, adioyned the to the Church of Christ.

Quietnes given to the Church.

Among whom there was one Apollonius, a noble man and a Senatour of Rome, mentioned in Eusebius. Lib. 5. ca. 21. who being maliciously accused vnto the Senate by one

Apollonius Martyr.

Et. ii. whom