

more probable before the people, they bound their accusation with a great othe: One willing to be destroyed with fire if he sayd not true. The other to bee consumed with a grievous sicknesse. The third to loose both his eyes if they did lye. Narcissus although having his conscience cleare, yet not able beyng but one man to withstand their accusation bound with such othes gave place, and remoued himselfe from the multitude, into a solitarie desert by himself, where he continued the space of many yeares. In the meane tyme to them which so willingly and wickedly swore themselves, this happened: the first by casuallie of one little final sparkle of fire, was burnt with his goods and all his familie. The second, was taken with a great sicknesse from the top to the toe, and deuoured with the same. The third, hearing and seying the punishment of the other, confessed his fault; but though great repentance poured out such tears, that he lost both his eyes. And thus was their false perurie punished. Narcissus after long abstinence returning home agayne, was by this meane both cleared of the facte, and receiued into his bishoprike agayne. To whom, as is said, for impotencie of his age, Alexander was ioyned with him in execution of the function. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. 6. cap. 10.

¶ In this Alexander is recorde in the sayd Ecclesiasticall history, that after his agonies and constancie of his confessiō shewed in the persecution of Seuerus, he was admonished by a vision in the night season to make his iourney vp to Hierusalem & Iudestina (for that place remained free from this persecution) to see there the congregation, & to pray. Thus he taking his iourney, and drawing nere to the city, a vision with playne wordes was given to certaine chiefe heads of Hierusalem, to go out of the gate of the city, there to receiue the Bishop appointed to them of God. And so was Alexander met and receiued, and ioyned partner with aged Narcissus, as is before expyelled in the Crite of Hierusalem, where he continued bishop about 40. yeares, until the persecution of Decius, and there erected a famous Librarie, where Eusebius had his chiefest helpe in writing his Ecclesiasticall history. He wrote also diuers Epistles to diuers churches, and licensed Origene openly to teach in his Church. At length beyng very aged, was brought frō Hierusalem to Cesaria before the Judge vnder Decius, where after his constant confessiō the second tyme, he was committed to prison, and there died.

A terrible example of periury punished.

Narcissus and Alexander ioyned together in one Bishopricke.

Alexander ordained Bishop of Hierusalem by Gods miracle. Ex Euseb. Lib. 6. cap. 11.

The constancie & death of Alexander Bishop

Andoclus, Martyr.

Asclepiades Bishop of Antioche confessor.

Irenæus Bishop of Lyons, and Martyr.

Besides these that suffred in this persecution of Seuerus recited of Eusebius, Vincentius also, Lib. 1. cap. 6. Ex Martyrol. speaketh of one Andoclus, whom Polycarpus before had sent into France: which Andoclus because he spread there the doctrine of Christ, was apprehended of Seuerus, and first beaten with staves and battes, after was beheaded.

To these also named, may also be added Asclepiades; who although was not put to death in this persecution of Seuerus, yet constantly he did abide the trial of his confessiō & suffred much for the same, as Alexander diu before mentioned. wherefore afterward he was ordained bishop of Antioch, where he continued the space of vij. yeares of whom Alexander writeth to the Church of Antioche, out of prison, much reioysing and giving thanks to God, to heare that he was their Bishop.

About the same tyme during the raigne of Seuerus, died Irenæus, Henr. de Esfordia, Ado, and other Martyr-writers, do hold, that he was martyred with a great multitude of other moe, for the confessiō and doctrine of Christ, about the fourth or fift yeare of Seuerus. This Irenæus as he was a great writer, so was he greatly commended of Tertullian for his learning, whom he calleth omnium doctrinarum curiosissimum exploratorem: a great searcher of all kynde of learning. He was first scholer and hearer of Polycarpus, frō thence either was sent or came to France; and there by Photinus, and the rest of the Martyrs was instituted into the ministry, commended by their letter vnto Eleutherius, as is before premonished. At length after the Martyrdom of Photinus, he was appointed bishop of Lyons, where he continued about the space of 13. yeares. In the tyme of this Irenæus, the state of the Church was much troubled, not only for the outward persecution of the foraine enemy, but also for diuers sectes and errors then stirring; against which he diligently laboured, and wrote much, although but few of his bookes be now remaining. The nature of this man well agreeing with his name, was such, that he euer loved peace, and sought to set agreement when any controuersie rose in the Church. And therefore, when the question of keeping the Easter day was renued to the Church, betwene Victor bishop of Rome, and the churches of Asia; and when Victor would haue excommunicated them as schismatickes, for disagreeing from him therein: Irenæus with other brethren of the French Church, to see such a contention among brethren for such a triue, commended

themselves together in a common Councell, and directing their letter with their common consent subscribed, sent vnto Victor, intreating him to stay his purpose, & not to proceed in excommunicating his brethren for that matter. Although they themselves agreed with him in observing the Sunday Easter as he did: yet with great reasons and arguments exhorted him not to deale so rigorously with his other brethren, following the ancient custome of their society in that behalf. And beside this he wrote diuers other letters abroad concerning the same contentiō, declaring the excommunication of Victor to be of no force.

¶ Not long after Irenæus followed also Tertullian about the tyme of this Seuerus, and Antoninus Caracalla his sonne, a man both in Greece and Latin wel expert, having great gifts in disputing, and in writing eloquent, as his bookes declare, & as the commendation of all learned men doth testify no lesse. To whom Vincentius Lirinensis geueth such praye, that he calleth him the floure of all Latine writers; and of the eloquence of his stile lo he writeth, that with the force of his reasons, he saith, whom he could not persuade, them he compelled to consent vnto him. How many wordes, so many sentences, and how many sentences, so many victories he had, &c.

Tertullian Ecclesiasticall writer.

Such men of doing and writing, God rather by from tyme to tyme, as pillars and stayes for his poore Church, as he did this Tertullian in these dangerous dayes of persecution. For when the Christians were vexed with wrongs, & falsely accused of the Gentiles, Tertullian taking their cause in hand, defendeth them against the persecutors, & against their shameles accusations: first, that they neuer minded any styre or rebellion, either against the Empire or Emperours of Rome: so much as the use of Christians was to pray for the state of their Emperours and gouernours. And where as they were accused falsely to bee enemies to all mankind, how could that be (saith Tertullian to Scapula) seying the proper office of the Christians is by their profession to pray for all men, to loue their enemies, neuer requiting euil for euil; when as all other do loue but onely their friends, and leaue them? As touching the horrible slaughter of murdering infants, how can that be true in the Christians (saith he) whose order is to abstayne from all blood, & strangled: in so much, that it is not lawfull for the to touch the blood of any beast or their tables when they feede? From filthy copulation no sou more free than they: which are and euer hath ben the greatest obseruers of chastite; of whom, such as may, liue in perpetuall Chastitie all their life; such as cannot, contract matrimony, for auoyding all whoredom and fornication. Neither can it be proued of the Christians to worship the sunne, which false surmise, Tertullia declareth to rise herof, for that the manner of the Christians was to pray toward the East. Which lesse was there any of them so mad as to worship an Asse head whereof the occasion beyng taken onely of the Jewes, the slaughter the rest herof he proueth to be falsly and wōgfully laid to the charge of the Christians.

The Apology of Tertullian defending the Christians.

Tertullianus ad Scapulam.

And likewise against all other lies and slanders, objected of the Heathen against the Christians, the sayd Tertullian purgeth the Christians; declaring them falsly to be belied, & wrongfully persecuted, not for any defect of theirs but only for the hatred of their name. And yet notwithstanding by the same persecutions, he proueth in the same Apologie, the religion of the Christians nothing to be empaiied, but rather encreased. The more (saith he) we are mowen downe of you, the more rise vp. The blood of Christians is seede. For what man sayth he, in beholding the painfull toiments, and the perfect patience of them, will not search and inquire what is in the cause: And when he hath found it out, who will not agree vnto it? And when hee agreeeth to it, who will not desire to suffer for it? Thus (saith he) his sect will neuer die, which the more it is cut downe, the more it groweth. For euery man seeing and wondering at the patience of the Saints, is moued the more they to search the cause in searching, he findeth it; and in finding, he followeth it. Tertul. in eodem Apolog.

The occasion hereof, beinge came of the Iewe; worshipping the lawe of an Asse in the story of Samsoun.

Thus Tertullian in this dangerous tyme of persecution, being stirred vp of God, defended the innocencie of the Christians, against the blasphemy of the aduersaries; and moreover for the instruction of the church compiled many fruitfull workes, whereof some are extant, some are not to be found. Notwithstanding the great learning & famous vertues of this worthy mā, certaine errors and blenches are noted in his doctrine, as were before both of Origene, & Irenæus, and like wile of them were they neuer so excellent, that followed them, which errors all here in order to note and comprehend, were too long a matter for this story to prosecute. This by the way shall be sufficient to admonish the Reader, neuer to looke for any such perfection of any

Tertul. in Apologético.

The errors and imperfections in learned men noted.

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