

to the number of 150. persons, which were the same time apprehended of the Persians, &c. Briefly to comprehend the whole multitude of them that suffered in that persecution, the manner of their apprehension, the cruelness of their torments, how and where they suffered, & in what places it is not possible for any history to discharge. Neither are the Persians themselves (as Zozomenus recordeth) able to recite them. In summe, the multitude and number of them whom they are able to recite by name, cometh to the summe of xviij. thousand men and women.

The rumor and noise of this so miserable affliction of the Christians in the kingdom of Persia, comming to the eares of Constantinus the Emperour, put him in great heaviness, finding and revolvung with himselfe, howe to helpe the matter, which in deeds was very hard for him to do. It so befell the same time, that certaine Embassadors were then at Rome from Saporus king of Persia, to whom Constantinus did easely graunt, and consent, satisfying all their requestes, and demaundes, thinking thereby to obtaine the more friendship at the kings handes, that at hys request, he would be good to the Christians to whom he writeth his Epistle in their behalfe, and sendeth the same by his messengers beginning thus:

*Diuinam fidem seruans veritatis lucem sortior. Veritatis uice auctus diuinam fidem cognosco. Per ea igitur quibus illa re agedas confirmat, sanctissimam religionem cognitam reddo. Et hunc meculum doctorem cognitionis sancti dei habere confiteor. Etc. Eusebius. de Vita. Constantinus. lib. 4.* The contentes whereof, briefly do tend to this effect. Declaring vnto him how he should stand much beholden to him, if at his request he would shew some quiet and rest to the Christians. In whole religion there was nothing which he could iustly blame. For so much as in their sacrifices they vse to kil nothing, nor to shed no blood, but only to offer vp vnbloudy sacrifices, to make their prayers vnto God, who delighteth not in blood shedding, but only in the soule that loueth vertue, and followeth such doctrine and knowledge, which is agreeing to true pietie. And therefore such men as doe leade him and learne so to beleue, and to worship God, are more to be commended. Moreouer he assureth him to finde God more mercifull to him, if hee would embrace the godly pietie and truth of the Christians. And for example thereof, bringeth in the stories of Galienus and Valerianus, who so long as they were fauorers of the Christians, did prosper and flourish. But as soone as they moued any persecution agaynt them, it happened to them, as it did to all other Emperors before them, that all went backward with them; as especially might appere by Valerianus, who after he had ragged so cruelly agaynt the Christians, was eftsoones ouercome of the Persians, the reuenging hand of God falling vpon him, where hee led euer after a miserable life, in wretched captiuitie. Farther also for the more euidence of the same, inferreth the examples of those Emperors and tyrants in his time, whom he vanquished. & subdued only by his faith in Christ, for the which faith, God was hys helper, and gaue him the victory in many batailles, and triumph ouer great tyrants, whereby he hath also enlarged the dominion of the Romane monarchie from the west Ocean, to the vttermost parts wel neere of all the East. To the doing and working whereof, he neither called to him the helpe of any chamber, or diuination of southsayer, nor vsed the killing of any sacrifice: but only the following of the crosse, and prayer made to almightie God, without any other bloody sacrifice, was the armour wherewith hee ouercame, &c. And in the end of the Epistle addeth these words: What say (saith he) what gladnes would it be to my hart, to heare the state also of the Persians to flourish, as I wish it to do, by embracing this sort of men, the Christians I meane: so that both you wish them, and they with you in long prosperite may enioy much felicity together. As your hearts would desire, & in so doing no doubt ye shall. For so shall you haue God, which is the author and creator of all this vniuersall worlde, to be mercifull and gracious to you. These men therefore I commend vnto you vpon your kindly honour, And vpon your clemency and pietie, wherewith you are endued, I commit them vnto you, desiring you to embrace & receaue them according to your humanitie and benignity, agreeing and conuenient to your estate: who in so doing shall now both procure to your selfe grace through your faith, and also shall declare to me a great pleasure and benefit worthy of thanks.

This Epistle wrot Constantinus to king Saporus. Such care had this godly Prince for them that beleued in Christ not onely in his owne monarchie, but also in all places of the world: neither is it to be doubted but this interest of the Emperour did something mitigate the heare of the Persians persecution. Although these of our reade no certain thing of our histories.

After terrible and persecutions we read of, which happened after wards in the said country of Persia, vnder the heauy hand of the king, but these followed long after about the time of the Emperour Theodosius. At which time suffered Andus their Bishop, and some other noble mens soue,

and of great reputation among the Persians: whom the king vnderstood to be a Christian, and to deny to turne from his religion, condemned him to kepe his Elephants naked. In puerce of time the king looking out, and seeing him all swarted and tanned in the sunne, commanded him to haue a shirt put on, & to be brought before him, whome then the king asked, if he would denye Christ. Hormisdas hearing this, tare of his shirt from his body, and cast it fro him saying: If yee thinke that I will denye my faith to Christ for a shirt, haue heere your gift againe &c. And so was vpon that expelled the country. Theodor. lib. 5.

An other there was that same time, named Suenes, which had vnder him an hundredth seruants. The king taking displeasure with him, for that he would not alter from hys religion and godly truth, asked who was the worst of all his seruants. And him the king made ruler of all y red, and coupling him with his maisters wife, brought also Suenes vnder his subiection, thinking thereby to subdome also the faith of Suenes, but it was builded vpon a sure foundation.

Of Benjamin the Deacon thus writeth the saide Theodor, in his first booke, that after two yeares of his imprisonment, at the request of the Romane Legate hee was deliuered, who after ward contrary to the kings commaundement hee preached and taught the Gospell of Christ, was most miserable excruciate, hauing xx. sharpe pikes of reeds thrust vnder his nayles, but when hee did laugh at y, then in his priuie yerde had a sharpe reede thrust in with horrible paine. After that a certaine long stak ragged and thorny being thrust into his body by the nether part, was forced into him with the horrible paine of the paine, wherof the valiant and numble soldier of the Lord gaue ouer his life. Theodor. lib. 5. And thus much concerning the martires and persecutions among the Persians, although the persecutions belong not of this time, which came (as it is sayd) long after the daies of Constantinus, about the yeare of our Lords. 425.

Likewise vnder Iulianus the wicked Apostata, certaine there were which constantly suffered Martyrdom by the Heathen Idolaters, as Emilianus, who was burned in Thracia, and Domitius, which was slayne in hys care. Theodor also for singing of a psalme at the removing of the body of Babylas (whereof mention is made of before pag 60.) being apprehended, was so examined with exquisite torments, and so cruelly excruciate from morning almost to none, that hardly he escaped with life, who being asked after ward of his friends, howe he could abide so sharpe torments, said that at the first beginning he felt some paine but after ward there stode by him a yong man, who as he was sweating, wiped of his sweate, and refreshed him with cold water, oft times: wherewith hee was so delighted, that when he was let downe from the engine, it greened hym, more then before. Ruff. lib. 5. cap 36. Theodor. lib. 3. cap. 11. Zozom. lib. 5. cap. 10.

Artemius also the captaine of the Egyptian soldiors the same time lost his head for his religio: although other causes were pretended agaynt him. Theo. Niceph. lib. 10. cap. 11.

As to these mozeouer, Eusebius and Nestabus two brethren, which Nestor also, which for their christianitie were dragged through the streets, and murdered of the idolatrous people of Gaza. Sozo. Lib. eod. cap. 11.

But especially the crueltie of the Aethusians, a people of Syria, exceeded agaynt the Christian virgines, whom they set out naked before the multitude to be scorned, after that being shauered, they couered them with swill and draffe wad to be giuen to their hogs, & so caused they bowels and flesh to be deuoured of the hungry twine. This rage & furee of the wicked Aethusians; Zozomenus supposest to come of this, because that Constantinus before had broken them from their country maner, of setting forth and exposing their virgins, filchely to whom loener listed, and destroyed the temple of Venus in Heliopolis, restraining the people there from their filchines and vile whozedom. Sozo. Lib. 5. cap. 10.

Of the lamentable story or rather Tragedy of Marcus Aethusius, their Bishop, thus writeth the said Sozomenus, and also Theodoretus in his third booke, in these wordes as followe.

This Tragedy (saith hee) of Marcus Aethusius, doth requite the eloquence and worthines of Aeschilus, and Sophocles, which may, as the matter deseruet, set forth, and vntainly his greue afflictions. This man at the commaundement of Constantinus, pulled downe a certayn temple dedicated to Idols, and in the stead thereof builded a church where the Christians might congregate. The Aethusians remembering the little good will that Iulianus bare vnto him

The story of Hormisdas Martyr. Ex Theodor. Lib. 5. cap. 39. The faythfull constancie of Hormisdas. Hormisdas banished the country of Persia. Suenes Martyr.

The constancy of Suenes.

The story of Benjamin Deacon and Martyr.

Benjamin tormented. The martirdome of Benjamin.

The martires vnder Iulianus Apostata. Acutius Domitius Martyrs.

The story of Theodorus Martyr. Ruff. Lib. 5. cap. 36. Theodor. lib. 3. cap. 11. Zozom. lib. 5. cap. 10.

A miracle to be noted. Artemius Martyr.

Eusebius, Nestabus, brethren. Nestor Martyr.

Eusebius, with other men of Cefarea martyrs. Miserable crueltie agaynt the Christian virgins of Aethusia. The people made to be plucked from their olde customes, though it be neuer wicked.

The story of Marcus Aethusius.

Agdelas, Sabores, Isaac, Darius, Bicoo, Maurice. The number of the martirs that suffered in Persia, were 16. thousand. Constantinus the Emperour writeth to the king of Persia in the behalfe of the afflicted Christians. The copy and effect of the Epistle of Constantine Saporus.

Of this Galienus and Valerianus read the pag. 75.

The general care of godly Constantinus for all christians in all places. Other forrayne persecutions in Persia. Andus Byshop martir.