

accused him as a traitour and enimie to him. At the first, according as the scripture teacheth he prepared him lesse to flee. But when he perceiued that there were certaine of his kindred or frends apprehended in his freed, returning agayne of his owne accord he offered himselfe to those that thirsted for his bloude, whome when they had gotten as men neither pitying his old age & woyned yeares, nor abashed at his vercinous conuercation, being a man so adorned both with doctrine & manners, first strypt him naked, & pittifully beate him, then within a while after, they cast him into a foule filthy synke, & from thence being brought, they caused boyes to thrust him in with sharped stiches, made for the nonce to prouoke his paine the more. Lastly, they put him into a basket, and being annointed with hony, & broth, they hung him abroad in the heate of the sunne as meate for walpes and flies to feede vpon. And all this extremity they shewed vnto him, for that they woulde enforce him to do one of these things (y is either to build vp agayne y temple, which he had destroyed, or else to giue so much money as should pay for the building of y same: but euen as hee purposed with him selfe to suffer & abide they greuous tormentes, so refused he to doe that they demaunded of him. At the length they taking him to be but a poore man, and not able to pay such a summe of mony, promised to forgiue him the one halfe, so that he would be contented to pay the other halfe. But he hanging in the basket wounded pittifully with the sharped stiches of boyes & children, and all to be bitten with walpes & flies, did not only conceale his paine & griefe, but also derided those wicked ones and called them, base, low, and terrene people, and he himselfe to be exalted and set on high. At length they demaunding of him but a small some of money, he answered thus, it is a great wickednes to confer one halfe penyne in case of impietie, as if a man should bestow the whole. Thus they beyng not able to puenale against him, let hym downe. And leauyng him went their waye, so that euery man might learne at his mouth the example of true pietie and faithfulness.

Although the tractation of these foresayd stozies & persecutions of Iherusalem, aboue premised, do stray somewhat out of the order & course of time and place, as which came neither in the tyme of Constantine, nor be pertinent to the monarchy of Rome: yet because in this present history we are in hand with the holy martirs and Saintes of Christ, for as much as these also gaue such a faithfull testimony of the Lord Iesus with their blood, I thought therefore not to passe them ouer with some testimony in this our Catalogue of holy Martirs. And here an end of these persecutions of the primitive church.

¶ It may peraduenture be maruelled of some, reading the history of these so terrible persecutions aboue specified, why God the almighty Director of all things, would suffer his owne people and faithfull seruants, beleeuing in his owne and onely begotten sonne Iesus, so cruelly to be handled, so wrongfully to be vexed, so extremely to be tormented and put to death, & that the space of so many yeres together, as in these foresayd persecutiōs may appeare. To the which admiration I haue nothing to aunswere, but to say with the words of Hierome: Non debemus super hac rerum iniquitate, perturbare videntes, &c. We ought not to be moued with this iniquitie of things, to see the wicked to puenale against the godly: for so much as in the beginning of the worlde we see Abell the iuste to be killed of wicked Cain. And afterward Iacob being thrust out, Esau to reigne in his fathers house. In like case the Egyptians with hycke and ryle, afflicted the sonnes of Israel. Yea and the Lorde himselfe, was hee not crucified of the Iewes, Barrabas the thief being let go? Time would not suffice me, to recite, & reckon vp how the godly in this world go to wracke, the wicked flourishing and preuailing. Hiero. Briefly, howsoeuer the cause hereof proceedeth, whether for our sins here in this life, or how else, soeuer, yet this is to vs, & may be to all men a sufficient say, that we are sure these afflictions and persecutiōs of God his people in this worlde, not to come by any chaunce, or blinde fortune, but by the proud appointment, and forewarning of God. For so in the old law by the affliction of the children of Israel, he hath prefigured these persecutiōs of his Christyans. So by the words of Chrystes owne mouth in the Gospell, he did forewarne his church of these troubles to come. Again neither did he suffer these so great afflictions to fall vpon his seruants, before that he had premonished them sufficiently by speciall Reuelation in the Apocalips of Iohn his seruant, in the which Apocalips he declared vnto his church before, not onely what troubles were coming at hande toward them, where, and by whome, they shoulde come, but also in playne number, if the wordes of the prophete

be well vnderstande assigneth the true tyme, howe longe the layde persecutiōs shoulde continue, and when they shoulde cease. For as there is no doubt, but by the beast with leauen heades, bearing the whoore of Babylon, broken wyth the bloude of Saintes, is signified the Eitic of Rome: So in my iudgement, the power of makinge forty two moneths (in the thirteenth of the Apocalips) is to bee expounded, takinge euery moneth for a Sabbath of yeres, that is, reckonyng for leauen yeres a moneth: so that forty and two such Sabbots of yeres, being gathered together make vnto the yeres iust, betwene the tyme of Chrystes death, to the last yere of the persecutiō of Maxentius, when Constantine fighting vnder the banner of Christ, ouercame him, and made an ende of all persecutiō, wythin the Monarchie of Rome. The number of which yeres, by playne computation come to 294. to the which 294. yeres, if yee adde the other fyve yeres, vnder the persecutiō of Licinius in Asia, then it fylleth vp full the thre hundredeth yeres. And so long continued the persecutiō of Chrystes people, vnder the heathen tyrants and Emperours of the Monarchie of Rome, according to the number of the forty two monethes which the beast had power to make, specified in the thirteenth of the Apocalips. For the better explication wherof, because the matter, being of no small importance greatly appertyneth to the publike vtilitie of the Church, & least any shoulde misdoubt me herein to follow any private interpretation of mine own, I thought good to communicate to the Reader, that, as hath bene imparted to me, in opening these mis-called numbers in the foresayd booke of Reuelation conteyned, by occasion as followeth.

As I was in hand with these histories, and therein considered the exceeding rage of these persecutiōs, the intolerable tormentes of the blessed Saintes, so cruelly racked, rent, toyne, and plucked in peeces, with all kinde of tortures paynes and punishments that could be deuised, more bitter then any death it selfe, I coulde not without great sorrow & passiō of minde, behold their sorrowfull afflictions, or toyne of their bloody passiōs. Wherin much like it happened to me, as did to T. Linius, who writing of the warres of Carthage, was so moued in the writing thereof: *Ac si in parte aliqua laboris ac periculi ipse pariter fuisset.* Further I proceeded in the stozie, & the hoater the persecutiōs grew, the more my griefe with them, & for the encreased, not onely pitying their woofull case, but also almost reasoning with God, thus thinking like a toole with my selfe, why God of hys goodnesse would suffer hys children and seruants, so vehemently to be cruciated and afflicted. If mortal things were gouerned by heauenly prouidence (as must needs be graunted) why did y wicked go rage & flourish, & the godly so to go to wracke? If sinnes deserued punishment, yet neyther were they sinners alone, & why was their death aboue all other so sharpe and bitter? At least why woulde the Lord suffer the vehemency of these so horrible persecutiōs to endure so long tyme agaynst hys poore Church, shewing to the no certayne determined end of their tribulatiōs, wherby they knoweing the appointed determinatiō of almighty God, with more consolatiō might endure out the same. As the Israelites in the captiuitie of Babylon had 70. yeres limited vnto them. And vnder Pharaο they were promised a deliuerance out. Also vnder the Syrian tyrants, 62. weekes were abidged vnto them. Onely in these persecutiōs, I coulde finde no end determined, nor limitation set for their deliuerance. Wherby so much maruelling to my selfe, I searched the booke of Reuelatiō, to see whether any thing there might be found. Where although I well perceived, the beast there described to signifie the Empire of Rome, which had power to ouercome the Saintes: yet concerning the tyme & continuance of these persecutiōs vnder the beast, I found nothing to satisfie my doubt. For albeit I read there of 42. monethes, of a tyme, tynes and halfe a tyme, of 1260. dayes, yet all this by computation coming vnto 3. yeres & a halfe, came nothing neare the lōg continuance of these persecutiōs, which lasted 300. yeres. Thus being vexed and turmoyled in spirite, about the reckening, of these numbers and yeres, it so happened vpon a Sunday in the morning lying in my bed, & musing about these numbers, sodely it was answered to my minde, as with a maicstie, thus inwardly saying within me: thou sole count these monethes by Sabbots, as the weekes of Daniell are counted by Sabbots. The Lorde I take to witnes thus it was. Wherupon thus being admonished, I began to reckon the 42. monethes by Sabbats, first of monethes, that would not serue, the by Sabbots of yeres. Wherin I began to seele some probable vnderstanding, yet not satisfied herewith, to haue the matter more sure, es- sones repaired to certaine Merchants, of my acquaintance,

The true conscience of Marcus Artibusius.

Great cruelty shewed.

Couetousnes the cause of cruelty.

A notable saying.

Hierony in Abas cap. 1.

The wicked in this world doe most flourish and preuayle.

Persecution cometh by no chaunce.

Persecution of Gods people prefigured and forewarned of God.

The Church forewarned of Christ by speciall reuelation in the Apoc.

The beast in the Apoc. expounded.

42. monthes in the Apoc. cap. 13. expounded.

The beast had power to make 42. monthes.

The persecuting tyme of the primitive Church vnder the beast lasted 300. yeres. The Israelites 300. yeres.