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THE APOLOGY OF TERTULLIAN
AND
THE MEDITATIONS OF THE EMPEROR
MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS.

THE
APOLOGY OF TERTULLIAN

Translated and Annotated by

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SOMETIME VICAR OF CRANFORD, MIDDLESEX

AND THE
MEDITATIONS OF THE EMPEROR
MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

Translated by

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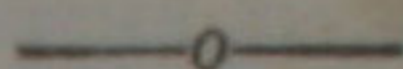
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

WITHIN the present volume we have given two of the most interesting and important works of the days of early Christianity. The one is the great Apology of the most eloquent of the early Fathers of the Church—"the father of Latin Christianity," as Dean Milman calls him; the other is the ethical treatise of the pure-souled Stoic Emperor, the first great general persecutor of the Christian Church. A few prefatory words are needed upon each, but the reader is referred to the previous volume of this series—Bishop Kaye's account of Tertullian—for fuller details about him.

The life of Tertullian is only known to us through his writings. He was born at Carthage about A.D. 160, and died about 240; but the precise dates are uncertain. He was trained as a lawyer, but was converted to Christianity in 192, and became a priest. He was married, but childless. It was probably about ten years after his conversion that he became a Montanist, moved, as Bishop Kaye believes, by the laxity of the clergy that he saw around him, and the longing to find a stricter life. The same learned writer shows that his Montanist writings are among the most valuable, simply because, in his unsparing attacks on what he held to be faulty in the practices and discipline of the Church, he unconsciously preserves for our information what these were.

The work before us is the greatest of Tertullian's writings. The deeply religious heathen Emperor, M. Aurelius, died in 180, and was succeeded by his unworthy son, Commodus. He was followed by Septimius Severus, the first of the "Barrack Emperors," in other words, of those military adventurers who held the Roman Empire down to the days of Dioclesian, following one another rapidly, and, with hardly a single exception, dying violent deaths. The golden age of the Empire was gone, it was the iron age now. But the Christian Church, after a period of silent growth, after worship in

caves and catacombs, was now a recognised power in the Empire. It had a new philosophy to offer men, and a nascent literature; it boldly put forth its claims to obedience, and made converts among the rich and learned. M. Aurelius had done his utmost to crush it; Commodus had not done so, some of his courtiers were Christians, and persuaded him to leave their co-religionists alone. And Sept. Severus pursued in the main the same policy.

But the African Church was an exception to the general immunity. Much depended everywhere on the disposition of the several pro-consuls towards the faith. There had been laws in existence against it ever since the days of Nero, and it depended altogether on the various governors whether these laws should stand in abeyance or be put in vigorous exercise. There were by this time many thousands of believers in Africa; and now heathen fanaticism, which had been long smouldering, broke out. The priestesses of the "Dea Cœlestis" had raised seditious mobs, and allied heathens and Jews had destroyed Christian churches, and rifled and desecrated their burial-places. Caricatures of Christ were paraded through the streets, and the usual ridiculous charges of incest and cannibalism were brought against his disciples. It was all this which produced Tertullian's Apology.

He first addresses himself (chaps. i.-vi.) to this general argument, that the rulers at Carthage are persecuting a body of men, who are undeserving of condemnation. Trajan's counsel to Pliny, that Christians were not to be sought out, but if brought before him were to be punished, as the apologist rightly maintains, was illogical and confused. But the present action of the governing power was yet worse; it was persecuting a religion which confessedly was a strong agent in the reformation of popular morals. He then goes on to state what are the charges brought against Christians, and to assert their falsity (vii.-ix.), then takes them in detail. First, "sacrilege" and "treason." He meets the first by declaring that the gods of the heathen are no gods (x.-xv.), and then by demonstrating that Christians have a devout worship of their own, and profound reverence for Him whom they recognise as their God, and in doing this he refutes certain calumnies which have been brought against this worship (xvi.-xxiii.). These chapters are full of information concerning early Church customs. He goes on to say that it is the heathens and not the Christians who are really the impious, and that it is not true that Christians are enemies of the Commonwealth, seeing that the greatness of Rome owes nothing to

its heathen faith. And he retorts upon them the charge of impiety, by declaring that they hold Cæsar in greater dread than they do their gods, whilst the Christians pray to their God for Cæsar's welfare, though they will not pay that Cæsar lying honour. Then our apologist, dealing with details, argues passionately and grandly on behalf of a body of men who do not take vengeance for the wrongs that they are suffering. It has been many a time within their power to have raised the whirlwind against the government, but they have refrained; but they are strong in the knowledge of their coming victory. And he demands that therefore they should at once be admitted amongst the licensed "sects." Gathering strength as he is carried along on the stream of his majestic eloquence, and with the consciousness that he is gaining the better of his opponents at every turn, he breaks out into a magnificent peroration, partly of the deepest feeling, partly of withering scorn, and ends in a climax of impassioned and confident appeal.

The author of the present translation, as I learn from a letter sent to me by the present Rector, was Rector of Cranford from 1694 to 1726.

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS, who was Emperor of Rome from A.D. 161-180, was the noblest and purest of all who wore the purple. He came of a noble race, his two grandfathers had both been consuls. He was a favourite with the Emperor Hadrian from infancy; and whereas his father's surname was Verus, Hadrian familiarly called the child "Verissimus" from his disposition; and further, when he adopted Antoninus Pius as his heir, he made it a condition that he in turn should adopt the father of the young Aurelius. The boy's father dying early, his education was carried on by his grandfather, who assiduously sought out the best teachers that were to be found; and thus it was that M. Aurelius was trained as a Stoic. As he grew up he justified the expectations that were formed of him, attending strictly to all duties committed to him, and never yielding to the temptation to subordinate them to the studies that he loved. Antoninus Pius, on becoming Emperor, A.D. 138, bestowed his daughter upon him, and on his death was succeeded by him, at the urgent request of the Senate, for Aurelius was unwilling.

It is strange to see how this gentle and thoughtful man became the most systematic persecutor which the Church had ever yet had. He had acquiesced in the toleration exercised by his two predecessors, but now he went to work on system to destroy the Christian faith. Under him were martyred Polycarp, Blandina, Pothinus, and the other martyrs of Lyons, and Justin Martyr. The Stoic philosophy under which he was nurtured, and of the better aspect of which he is the noblest example, had many points of union with Christianity (see Jerome, *Comm. on Isaiah*, cxi.), but there were also strong divergences. Primarily, there was the conviction of the Stoic that man has in himself the power of becoming virtuous, to which the Christian opposed the declaration, Without Christ we can do nothing. And the practical outcome of the two philosophies proved the Christian in the right. The Stoic strove to free himself from the general debasement, and was blessed, as every man is blessed from above who strives honestly. But he saw himself surpassed in morality and fortitude by the Christian, who succeeded where he failed. It is remarkable to notice, in the histories both of Greece and Rome, that no greatness was reached, no signal services to the State were rendered, by any disciple of the Stoic creed. Athens produced many great men, Sparta none. And as the Stoic saw himself distanced in that which he had made a sincere, though futile endeavour to win, he became embittered, and hated the Christians as his rivals. The very tranquillity with which Aurelius trained himself to regard the sorrow and pain of life, was irritated by the Christian eagerness to convert the world to the faith and the promises of the world to come. What he believed only possible to the philosopher, they declared to be offered to all; theirs was a gospel to the poor and unlettered, and it was an offence to him. Then the unworthiness of some of its professors then, as now, caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed, and the very virtue of Aurelius embittered him the more against those who, holding aloft a high standard, were living unholy lives. Moreover, the time was one of great physical calamities. Inundations, earthquakes, famine, pestilence afflicted the empire to a degree never before known. Added to these troubles, there were wars all along the frontier; the Britons were in insurrection, the Parthians invaded the Eastern border, as did the Germans the regions of the Rhine and Danube. The Epicurean atheism, which had passed muster as the fashionable religion, was kindled by these calamities into furious fanaticism; it was the Christian superstition which had roused the wrath of the gods. It is noticeable that the year 166, which was known as the "annus calamitosus," was the year of the

persecution under which Justin suffered. And when the Christians under persecution went fearlessly to death rather than sacrifice to the gods, when they spoke of these gods with contumely, when some in their untempered zeal exulted in the signs of the times as indicating the judgments of God upon heathenism, all this inflamed their persecutors to yet wilder frenzy.

But, setting aside the judicial blindness of Aurelius in this matter, we can recognise fully his patriotism, his singleness of purpose. "Humanly speaking," says our own Jeremy Collier, "nothing less than such a person as he could have preserved the State in this tempestuous and distressed time."

It was in the year 174 that the Emperor and his army were saved as by a miracle from perishing of thirst. He was engaged in warfare against the Quadi, north of the Danube. Under the burning sun, with no water discoverable, the army was ready to die. Suddenly a great storm arose. The rain came down in torrents, and not only were the agonies of the Romans removed, but the lightning flashes terrified their enemies, who turned and fled. To this day it is matter of controversy whether the assertions of Christian writers are borne out by fact, that the deliverance was owing to the Christian prayers. "God," so the Captain of the Guards is said to have told the Emperor in the midst of the extremity, "never denied anything to the Christians, and he had a great number of them in one of his legions." Therefore the Emperor had them summoned before him, and desired them to pray to their God for him. And they did so, and were heard. Tertullian in his Apology speaks of a letter of the Emperor which he has seen which bears out this statement, and there is no reason to question his veracity, though the letter is not forthcoming among the Emperor's writings. There is one which is sometimes printed after Justin Martyr's Apology, but it is now certainly pronounced to be not genuine. We must leave the question unsolved.

The Emperor was not suffered to enjoy the peace and meditation which he desired; for his fate was to make war to the very end. He died at Vienna in the midst of a campaign against the Germans.

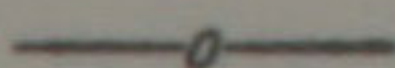
As we have adopted Collier's translation, it seems only fair that we should give his estimate of the Author in his Preface.

The reader may remember that Collier was a conspicuous divine

of the time of the later Stuarts. His first Church preferment was the living of Ampton, Suffolk, which he resigned to hold the Preachership at Gray's Inn. At the Revolution of 1688 he was deprived as a non-juror, and in 1696 was outlawed for giving Church absolution to two of the plotters against King William. He did not, however, trouble himself about it, but resided in London, and supported himself by his literary labours. Of these the greatest is his Church History. The work before us belongs to the same period of his life. He died in 1726.

W. B.

PREFACE TO M. AURELIUS'S MEDITATIONS.



BY THE TRANSLATOR.

A WORD or two of preface concerning the Emperor's principles and person may not be amiss.

1. As to the Stoics, notwithstanding their advantage of other sects, they were not without their mistakes. For instance, they believed a plurality of gods, that the soul was a part of the deity, and that their wise man might dispose of himself, and make his life as short as he pleased. These, with some other less material errors, I have marked in the margin.

It is true, it is objected against the Stoics, that they allowed no degrees in ill practice, but made all faults equal; that they held compassion an infirmity, and would not suffer it in the character of an improved philosopher; that the happiness of a wise man depended purely upon himself, and that there was no necessity of addressing a superior being.

To answer this charge, Monsieur D'Acier observes that Zeno's opinion (the founder of the sect) was fair and defensible in these points: that he was misunderstood by some of his scholars, and unreasonably strained up to the letter. But there is no need to insist any further upon justifying, for I do not remember our author is at all concerned in this matter.

To proceed, therefore, to the Emperor with reference to his book.

His thoughts, then, are noble and uncommon, and his logic very true and exact. He generally flies his game home, seldom leaves his argument till he brings it to a demonstration, and has pursued it to its first principles. Seneca has a different manner, and moves more by start and sally. He flashes a hint in your face and disappears, and leaves you to carry on the reasoning and master

the subject as well as you can. This looks like an apparition of philosophy, and is sometimes more surprising than instructive. (Though this remark has no reference to the excellent English abstract, which is differently managed from the original.) But as for the Emperor, he charges through and through, and no difficulty can stand before him. His reason is no less irresistible than his arms, and he loves to conquer in his closet as well as in the field. There is a peculiar air of greatness and gravity in his discourses. He seems to think up to his station, and writes with that magnificence of notion, as if he believed himself obliged to exceed other authors, as much in the vigour of his mind as in the lustre of his fortune.

He appears to have thought to the bottom of his argument, and to have had a comprehensive view of the world, of the interest and relations of society. Hence it is that his morality is so particularly serviceable and convincing, that his sentences are so weighty, and his reasoning so very just. By thus digging to the foundation, he is in a condition to assign everything its true grounds, and set every duty upon its proper basis. Further, the great probity of this prince, his fortitude, and the nobleness of his mind, gave freedom and spirit to his thoughts, and made him exert for the service of principle and truth. Besides, he seems to have been born with a prerogative of nature, blessed with a superior genius, and made up of richer materials for sense and virtue, than other people. These advantages, together with an improved education, raised him to that pitch of majesty and distinction, and made his pen almost equal to his sceptre.

How does he despise the pursuits of fame and the glittering objects of ambition! And that in no empty rhodomontades and tumour of expression. No, he pulls off the paint, discovers the inward coarseness, and brings such evidence of the insignificancy of these things, that he perfectly commands the reader's assent, and forces him into his own opinion. Now an emperor's argument against a fondness for pleasure or power comes better recommended than from a private philosopher; for in this case a man speaks from experiment, and disputes against the privilege of his condition. Here the usual pretence of envy or ignorance is out of doors, and nothing but dint of reason could drive him upon so unacceptable a conclusion.

The generosity of his principles are no less remarkable. He

shows the iniquity of a selfish temper; that ill-nature is a contradiction to the laws of Providence and the interest of mankind, a punishment no less than a fault to those that have it. All the great offices of humanity, justice, and acquiescence, are enforced with unusual advantage; his turns of reason being often as surprising for their strength as for their novelty. In short, abating for some of the errors above mentioned, he seems to have drawn up an admirable scheme of natural religion; and which is still more commendable, he practised his maxims upon himself, and made his life a transcript of his doctrine. He was so great a lover of truth and clear dealing, that he would rather have lost his empire than strained a principle. Indeed, falsehood and legerdemain sink the character of a prince, and make him look like a royal juggler. Public character and common good, as they call it, are no sufficient defence in such cases. Sixtus the Fifth, who must be allowed a great man, used to say, that it was short thinking which made conscience impracticable, and politics fall foul upon morals; that if statesmen were well qualified and worked their heads, there would be no occasion for latitude and insincerity. Reason without doubt, well managed, would fence against inconvenience much better than craft. In earnest, it would be a very hard case, and a great reflection upon Providence, if men could not be happy without breaking their faith and blemishing their honour. However, to say nothing more, some people are too lazy to be honest. But this custom apart, there is no necessity to make reasons of State incompatible with the laws of justice; our Emperor is a noble instance to the contrary. For never were the functions of peace and war better performed, the subjects more easy, and the empire more flourishing than under this prince; and yet it was none of his way to indulge his politics, and warp in the least from his notions. It was his constant practice as well as his rule—if it is not just, never do it; if it is not truth, never speak it.

As to the Emperor's way of writing, if any one objects against his sometimes coming over again with the same thing, he may please to consider that this prince did not take philosophy for mere diversion and amusement. Instruction was his main design. Upon this view it was not improper to repeat the stroke, to make the impression go deeper. The prejudices the Emperor disputes against are inveterate, and not to be removed without difficulty. And if one dose will not cure the patient, why should not the bill be made up again? If this rule holds in medicine, why not in morality? Are not people's understandings as valuable as their

health? And is not a disease in the passions much worse than one in the constitution? And, after all, when the matter is closely examined, the ground of the objection will in a great measure vanish. For when the Emperor does come over with an old thing, it is his custom to improve upon it. He repeats, but it is for advantage to the argument, and his latter thoughts are generally supplemental to the former. He either extends the notion or reinforces the proof, or gives a new turn of strength and beauty to the expression. And thus the reader is always a gainer by the bargain.

In translating the author, I have made use of the quarto edition published in 1697. In which, besides Gataker's annotations, I had the assistance of Monsieur D'Acier's remarks, turned into Latin by Dr. Stanhope. As for his French translation, I never saw it till some time after my own was finished, and part of it printed off. However, one thing I shall observe, which is the only use I have made of Monsieur D'Acier's translation. It is his remark upon Sect. 6, Book i., where, citing Pollux, he tells us that the Romans, in imitation of the Greeks, used to fight quails for divination as well as diversion, and had a fancy their own fortunes might be prognosticated by the success of the battle. This piece of superstition, I confess, was more than I was aware of, and yet, by the context, the Emperor seems to have had it in his view.

One word more of the Emperor's style, and I have done. Now his way of expressing himself is extraordinarily brief. His words are sometimes over-burdened with thought, and have almost more sense than they can carry. Indeed, it was part of his character to write in this concise manner, for neither the Emperor nor the Stoic would allow of any length of expression. Besides, he wrote chiefly for himself, which makes him still more sparing in his language. He sometimes draws in little, writes his meaning as it were in shorthand, and does not beat out his notions to their full proportion. To which I may add, that sometimes the height of his subject carries him almost out of sight; for there is an obscurity in things as well as in language. For these reasons it is no wonder if we find his sense now and then a little perplexed. And therefore, where I was afraid the reason might possibly be at a loss, I have endeavoured to direct him right by a note in the margin. I have likewise in some few places ventured to throw in a word or two, to make the text more intelligible. But when this liberty was taken, I have been always careful to speak the Emperor's mind, and keep close to the meaning of the original.

TERTULLIAN'S¹ APOLOGY

ON BEHALF OF THE CHRISTIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THAT THE GENTILES' HATRED TO THE CHRISTIANS IS NOTORIOUSLY UNJUST.

IF you, the guardians of the Roman empire,² presiding in the very eye of the city, for the administration of public justice; if you must not examine the Christian cause, and give it a fair hearing in open court; if the Christian cause is the only cause which your lordships either fear or blush to be concerned for in the public; or lastly, if

¹ *Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus*. These several appellations sufficiently distinguish our Tertullian from Tertullus the consul, Tertylianus the civilian, and Tertullinus the martyr, with which our apologist is sometimes confounded. The prænomen Quintus may perhaps be given upon the account of his being the fifth child of his parents. He was called Septimius, because descended from the Gens Septimia, a tribe of quality among the Romans, being first regal, afterwards plebeian, and last of all consular and patrician; Florens, from some particular family of that house, so called; and Tertullianus from Tertullus, perhaps his father, as Octavianus from Octavius, Septiminus from Septimius, etc.

² *Romani Imperii Antistites in ipso fere vertice Civitatis præidentes ad judicandum*. Baronius is of opinion, Bar. 201, that this Apology was written at Rome, and not at Carthage, wherein he is generally followed, but not by Pamelius, as the author of the notes upon Du Pin too hastily charges him, nor by Dalix, Du Pin, Dr. Cave, or Tillemont. Baronius's reason for this opinion is that Tertullian often speaks as being at Rome, and that he addresses in these words, To the Roman Senate. But these words neither prove it to be written at Rome, nor presented to the Senate of Rome, for they are with much better reason applicable to the proconsul and governors of Africa; for he says they preside in *vertice Civitatis*, and our apologist never calls Rome by the name of Civitas but

your odium to this sect has been too much fermented by your late severities¹ at home upon your Christian servants, and you bring this domestic ferment into the courts of judicature;—if these, I say, are the bars in our way to justice, be pleased at least to tolerate thus far, to let truth wait upon you in private, and to read the Apology we are not suffered to speak.

We enter not upon defence in the popular way,² by begging your

Urbs. He speaks likewise of Rome and the Romans as being neither in their city nor amongst them; cap. 9, 21, 24, 35, 45. And speaking of the cruel and sanguinary devotions of the heathen in many places, especially, says he, *in illâ Religiosissimâ Urbe Æneadarum piorum*, etc., by which undoubtedly he means Rome; and the manner of the expression plainly determines him not to be there at the time of his writing; for had he been at Rome at this time he would have said *in hac Urbe*, and not *in illa Urbe*, cap. 9. And in the same chapter, recounting the bloody rites in the Scythian worship, he urges,—But I need not go so far as Scythia, for we have now at this day as barbarous ceremonies at home, that is, at Carthage. Besides, cap. 45, he speaks of the proconsul as the sovereign magistrate, and every one knows the proconsul to have been the premier magistrate of Africa, and to have had his residence at Carthage. Moreover, it is very probable that he addressed to the governors of Africa, and not to the Senate of Rome,—firstly, because there is not one word of the senate in this whole Apology; secondly, because, cap. 45, he lashes those to whom he wrote, for endeavouring to gain the good graces of the proconsul, by signalizing their cruelty against the Christians; and thirdly, because he constantly gives them the title of *præsides*, cap. 2, 9, 30, 50, a title very much affected by every officer under the proconsul of the province. And neither *præsides* nor proconsul were titles that did belong to any magistrate of Rome; for in danger of war in the provinces, the *præfecti Cæsariis* were chosen by the emperor himself, and sent to reside in the metropolis, but the proconsuls were chosen by lot after their consulship, into the several provinces. And therefore Dio expresseth Claudius his restoring Macedonia into the hands of the senate, by *ἀσπίδασι τότε τῷ κλήρῳ*, he put it to the choice of the senate again. Dio, *His. lib. lvii.* So that we are not to understand *Antistites Imperii* to be the same with Pontifices, according to Zephyrus, nor by *vertice Civitatis* the capitol, according to Rigaltius; though it is likely he might mean the Byrsa of Carthage, according to that of Silius Italicus:

*Quæsitque diu qua tandem ponerit arce
Terrarum fortuna caput—*

¹ *Domesticis Judiciis.* By these words I understand with Rigaltius the severities exercised at home by the presidents upon their domestics and children for turning Christians, which private severities contributed very much to prejudice and exasperate them, even in open court, against the Christians in general.

² *Deprecari.* It is a law term, and properly signifies to intercede with the king for pardon, or to plead with a judge in excuse of the criminal, according to that of Tully, *pro Ligario, Ignoscite Judices, erravit, lapsus est, non putavit*, etc. But here the Christian advocate pleads only for rigid justice, as the martyr Justin had done before him. He understood the Christian cause too well, to think it stood in need of oratory, and the arts of excusing. *Vid. A. Gell. lib. vi. cap. 16,* concerning the signification of the word *Deprecor.*

favour, and moving your compassion, because we know the state of our religion too well to wonder at our usage. The truth we profess, we know to be a stranger upon earth, and she expects not friends in a strange land ; but she came from heaven, and her abode is there, and there are all our hopes, all our friends, and all our preferments. One thing indeed this heavenly stranger warmly pleads for in arrest of judgment, and it is only this, that you would vouchsafe to understand her well before you condemn her. And what can the laws suffer in their authority by admitting her to a full hearing? Will not their power rise in glory for the justice of a hearing? But if you condemn her unheard, besides the odium of flaming injustice, you will deservedly incur the suspicion of being conscious of something that makes you so unwilling to hear—what, when heard, you cannot condemn.

First, therefore, we lay before you ignorance as the chief root of your unjustifiable bitterness to the Christian name ; and this very ignorance, which you may flatter yourselves with as a title to excuse, is the very thing that loads your charge, and binds the heavier guilt upon you. For show me a grosser piece of iniquity than for men to hate what they understand not, supposing the thing in itself deserves to be hated ; for then only can a thing deserve from us to be hated when we are apprised of its deserts. If not acquainted with the merits of the cause, what can we possibly urge in the defence of hatred which is not to be justified by the event, or because the passion may happen to be right, but by the principle of conscience upon which it is founded?

When, therefore, men will thus be hating in the dark, why may not the blind passion fall foul upon virtue as well as vice? So that we argue against our adversaries upon two articles, for hating us ignorantly, and, consequently, for hating us unjustly. And that you hate us ignorantly (which still, I say, does but aggravate your crime) I prove from hence, because all who hated us heretofore did it upon the same ground, being no longer able to continue our enemies than they continued ignorant of our religion ; their hatred and their ignorance fell together.

Such are the men you now see Christians manifestly overcome by the piety of our profession, and who now reflect upon their lives past with abhorrence, and profess it to the world ; and the numbers of such professors are not less than they are given in ; for the common cry is, the city is infested, town and country overrun with

Christians. And this universal revolt in all ages, sexes, and qualities is lamented as a public loss; and yet this prodigious progress of Christianity is not enough to surprise men into a suspicion that there must needs be some secret good, some charming advantage at the bottom, thus to drain the world and attract from every quarter. But nothing will dispose some men to juster thoughts, or to make a more intimate experiment of our religion. In this alone human curiosity seems to stagnate, and with as much complacency to stand still in ignorance as it usually runs on in the discoveries of science.

Alas! how would poor Anacharsis¹ have been struck at such proceedings, to see the very judges of religion entirely ignorant of the religion they condemn, who looked upon it so absurd for the rewards of a fiddler to be adjudged by any but the masters of the science. But such are our enemies, that they choose to indulge their ignorance merely for the growth of their hatred; foreboding within themselves that what they hate without knowledge may chance to be a thing of so lovely a nature, that should they come to know it, they would be in danger of losing their hatred; whereas hatred is not to be kept a moment longer than it has justice on its side: if so, spare not, not only give a present loose to your resentments, but also persevere in a passion thus seconded and strengthened by the authority of justice.

But it is objected that the number of Christians is no argument of the goodness of their cause. For how many change from better to worse? How many deserters to the wrong side? And who denies this? But yet, are any of those men, who are pressed away to sin by the violence of appetites, are they hardy enough to appear in the defence of wickedness, or appeal to public justice for the patronage of notorious evil? For every evil is by nature dyed in grain with shame and fear. The guilty hunt for refuge in darkness, and when apprehended, tremble; when accused, deny; and are hardly to be tormented into a confession; when condemned, they sink down in sadness, and turn over their number of sins in confusions of conscience, and charge the guilt upon the stars or destiny;²

¹ Anacharsis. See his life in *Diog. Laertius*.

² *Fato vel Astris imputant*. Guilt is an ugly, frightful, and uneasy thing; and this it was that put men at first upon contriving an expedient how to satisfy their conscience, in spite of their sin; and the expedient was this, to lay the blame upon fate, or the stars, or anything but themselves. Predestination in the rigid sense is not one jot better than fate in the sense of the Stoics. And though it

unwilling to acknowledge that as their own act which they acknowledge to be criminal.

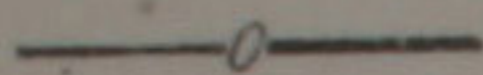
But do you see anything like this in the deportment of Christians? Not one Christian blushes or repents, unless it be for not having been a Christian sooner. If a Christian goes to trial, he goes like a victor, with the air of a triumph; if he is impeached, he glories in it; if indicted, he makes no defence at bar; when interrogated he frankly confesses, and when condemned returns thanks to his judges.

What a monster of wickedness¹ is this, that has not one shape or occasioned at one time so much feud and bitterness all about us, and the controversy ordered by authority to die, yet it is now again revived,¹ as the ramparts and bulwarks of Christianity, and the rarest contrivance in the world, to make us not only almost but altogether one kirk; for which, no doubt, the doctor expects the thanks of the united nations. The generality of the clergy he stigmatizes apostates, for being assertors of free will; and if so, what will become of the Fathers of the first four centuries, I cannot tell. Sure I am, poor Justin Martyr is an apostate with a witness, *Apol. i. sec. 54.* But if the doctor would but follow his own advice, that is, in one word, let us be moderate, and give his brethren hard reasons instead of hard names, it would make much more for union, I dare say, than his doctrine of predestination; which should it take effect, we should not have one criminal that goes to be hanged, but, as Tertullian says, would be cursing his stars, and laying all the fault upon destiny, that is, God.

¹ *Quid hoc mali est, quod naturalia mali non habet? Naturalia* is the same here as *Natura*, for he says, *Quod hoc malum est in quo natura mali cessat? ad Nat. p. 461.* But that which is more remarkable is, that here we have an admirable description, and a most sensible proof, both of the truth and the power of the Christian religion; for did ever any impostor set up a religion so ill calculated to the passions and relish of mankind? Did he ever propose a doctrine to the world, without one worldly motive to recommend it, without one external comfort to hope for, or one arm to defend it? Did Judas discover the secret when he betrayed his Master? or had it been a cheat, would the traitor have hanged himself for his treason? Was there ever such a noble army of martyrs, who died so calmly and deliberately, and expressed so much innocence, so much joy and assurance in their sufferings, as they did? So that either we must suppose Christ to have been the shallowest of impostors (which the wisdom of His precepts will not admit) to set up a religion so ungrateful to flesh and blood, without any visible force or reward to maintain it; and withal, that good part of the world, of all sorts and sizes, happened luckily to be stark staring mad for suffering, and to continue so for above 300 years together; or else we must suppose that Christ came down from heaven, and that the sufferers had all the reason imaginable to believe it, and therefore by help of divine grace, and the

¹ John Edwards, D.D., his sermon upon the Union, May 1, 1707, entitled *One Nation and one King.*

feature of wickedness belonging to it? Nothing of fear, or shame, or artifice, or repentance, or the desponding sighs of criminals attending on it. What a strange-natured evil or reverse of wickedness is this! that makes the guilty rejoice, and ambitious of accusation, and happy in punishment. Nor can you charge these odd appearances as the effects of madness, since you are altogether unacquainted with the powers of the Christian religion.



CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE MALICE AND PERVERSENESS OF THE JUDGES, IN THE WAY OF CONDEMNING OR ABSOLVING THE CHRISTIANS.

BUT if it is resolved we must be guilty, pray what is your reason for treating us differently from other criminals? For it is a rule in law that where the case is the same, there the procedure of court ought to be the same also. But when we and heathens are impeached upon the same articles, the heathen shall be allowed the privilege of the council, and of pleading in person for setting off his innocence,¹ it being against law to proceed to sentence before the defendant has put in his answer; but a Christian is permitted nothing, not to speak what is necessary, either to justify his cause, defend the truth, or prevent the injustice of his judges. On the contrary, nothing is attended to in his trial, but how to inflame the mob, and therefore the question is about his name only, and not

power of conviction, they despised everything here below for the joy that was set before them. This argument is likewise prosecuted by Arnobius, *adv. Gent.* lib. ii. p. 21, as a mighty instance of the divinity of the Christian faith, that in so short a time it should be too hard for the wisdom and pleasures of the world, and work so with men of the greatest parts and learning, and of the greatest fortunes, as to make them part with their notions and estates, and submit to any torments rather than part with the Christian faith; and that the Gentiles did not think it advisable to venture their skin for their doctrine. That Plato, in his Academy introduced a dark and ambiguous way of delivering his opinions, for fear of going the way of Socrates. And Origen tells Celsus that Aristotle quitted Athens, and left his philosophy to shift for itself, as soon as he understood that the Athenians intended to call him to an account. So little could philosophy prevail against self-preservation.

¹ *Quando nec liceat indefensos et inauditos damnari.* He alludes to the law *de Requir. Reis*, made by Severus a little before the publication of this Apology.

the nature of his crime: whereas if you sit in judgment upon another criminal, and he pleads guilty to the indictment, suppose of homicide, sacrilege, incest, or rebellion (to instance the common heads of your libels¹ against us), upon such confession, I say, it is not your method forthwith to proceed to sentence, but you have patience to examine the nature of the fact in all its circumstances, viz.—the place, the time, the manner, and the accomplices of the action: but in the trial of a Christian, all these forms of justice are overruled. But let me tell you, would you acquit yourselves with any appearance of equity, you ought on both sides to be equally severe in the examination of fact, and see to the bottom of those reports, so frequently and so falsely thrust upon us. For instance, to bring in a true list of how many infants every Christian has killed and eaten, what incests committed in the dark, what cooks we had for the dressing these children's flesh, and what pimping dogs for putting out the candles.²

Oh! what immortal glory would a proconsul gain among the people, could he pull out a Christian by the ears that had ate up a hundred children! But we despair of any such glorious discovery, when we reflect upon the edict against searching after us. For Pliny the second,³ in his proconsulship of Asia, having put many Christians to death, and turned others out of their places, and being still astonished at our numbers, sends to the Emperor Trajan for orders about proceeding for the time to come; alleging withal that for his part, after the strictest inquiry, he could find nothing more in our religion, but obstinacy against sacrificing to the gods, and that we assembled before day to sing hymns to God and Christ,

¹ *Ut de vestris Elogiis loquar.* Elogium is a civil law term which frequently occurs in this author, particularly lib. *ad Scap. de cor. Mil.* cap. 5, etc., and is the same among the civilians as *Epistolæ, Notoria, Relationes*, a libel or declaration, setting forth the crimes of the person indicted; it was provided by the law *de custo et exhi. Reorum, ne quisquam puniatur ex Epistolis et Actis Pedanei et minoris Judicis.* And therefore Pudens, who had a mind to favour the Christians, sent back a Christian prisoner because there appeared against him no witness or proof, but the Elogium, or epistle from an inferior judge. *Pudens missum ad se Christianum, in Elogio concussione ejus intellecta dimisit, Scisso eodem Elogio sine accusatore negans se auditurum hominem secundum mandatum. Vid. Gab. Albaspin., not. ad Scap.*

² For a fuller explication of this passage, and the foundation of this horrid slander, see my notes upon Justin Martyr's Apology, *Apol. i. sec. 35.* The dogs which are said to be tied to the candlesticks, and to have crusts thrown them just beyond the reach of their string, in order to make them leap and strain and pull down the candles, are by Tertullian, cap. 7, called *Luminum Eversores et Lenones*, which to follow his own biting way I translate pimping dogs.

³ *Vid. Plin. Epist. lib. x. ep. 97.*

and to confirm one another in that way of worship; prohibiting homicide, adultery, fraud, perfidiousness, and all other sorts of wickedness. Upon which information Trajan writes back, that such kind of men as these were not to be searched after, but yet to be punished if brought before him. Oh perplexity between reasons of state and justice! he declares us to be innocent, by forbidding us to be searched after, and at the same time commands us to be punished as criminals. What a mass of kindness and cruelty, connivance and punishment, is here confounded in one act! unhappy edict, thus to circumvent and hamper yourself in your own ambiguous answer! If you condemn us, why do you give orders against searching after us? And if you think it not well to search after us, why do you not acquit us? Soldiers are set to patrol in every province for the apprehending of robbers, and every private person justifies taking up arms against traitors and enemies to the commonwealth; and moreover is obliged to make inquiry after all the conspirators; but a Christian only is a criminal of that strange kind, that no inquiry must be made to find him, and yet when found may be brought to the tribunal; as if this inquiry was designed for any other purpose but to bring offenders to justice. You condemn him therefore when brought, whom the laws forbid to be searched after; not that in your hearts you can think him guilty, but only to get into the good graces of the people, whose zeal has transported them to search him out against the intention of the edict.

This also is very extraordinary in your proceedings against us, that you rack others to confess, but torment Christians to deny: whereas, was Christianity a wicked thing, we, no doubt, should imitate the wicked in the arts of concealment, and force you to apply your engines of confession. Nor can you conclude it needless to torture a Christian into a confession of particulars, because you resolve that the very name must include all that is evil. For when a murderer has confessed, and you are satisfied as to the fact, yet you constrain him to lay before you the order and circumstances of the whole action. And what makes the thing look worse yet is, that notwithstanding you presume upon our wickedness, merely from our owning the name, yet at the same time you use violence to make us retract that confession, that by retracting the bare name only, we might be acquitted of the crimes fathered upon it. But perhaps I am to imagine your excessive tenderness to be such, that you are willing to acquit the very persons you conclude the greatest villains in the world; and perhaps it may be your custom

to say to a murderer, "deny the murder," and to command the sacrilegious to be put to the rack for persevering in his confession of sacrilege.

But now, if your process against us and other criminals is notoriously different, it is a shrewd sign you believe us innocent; and that this very belief of our innocence is the spring which sets you at work for our deliverance, by forcing us to deny our name, which though in justice you know you cannot, yet for reasons of state you must condemn. A man cries out upon the rack, I am a Christian; you hear him proclaim to the world what really he is, and you would fain have him say what really he is not. That ever judges, who are commissioned to torture for the confession of truth, should abuse it upon Christians only, for the extortion of a lie! You demand what I am, and I say I am a Christian; why do you torture me to unsay it? I confess, and you rack on; if I confess not, what will you do? If other malefactors deny, it is with difficulty you believe them; but if Christians deny, you acquit them at a word. Certainly you must think yourselves in the wrong for such proceedings, and be conscious of a secret bias upon your judgments, that makes you run thus counter to the forms of court, the reasons of justice, and the very intent of the laws themselves. For if I mistake not the laws are very express, that criminals should be discovered, and not concealed; and that upon confession they should be condemned, and not acquitted. The acts of the senate and the edicts of the emperors prescribe this. These are the maxims of that government you are ministers of, and your power is defined by these laws, and not arbitrary and tyrannical.

Tyrants indeed have no respect to the proportions of justice in the distributions of punishment, but apply tortures at pleasure. But you are restrained by law; and to apply them only for the confession of truth, preserve this law in full vigour, and for the end it was made. For if the accused confess, it is absurd to put them to the question; the law of tortures is answered, and you have nothing to do in this case but to consider the nature of the fact, and punish it accordingly. For every malefactor is a debtor to the law, and to be wiped out of the public accounts¹ upon paying his

¹ *Debito pœnæ nocens expungendus est.* This is a very familiar phrase with our author, and the ground of it is this. The executioner had a roll of the names of the condemned, and the punishment they were to suffer; and a criminal being a debtor, when he had paid his punishment was expunged, or crossed out of the roll: and so *dare Pœnas* is to pay the pain an offender owes to the public.

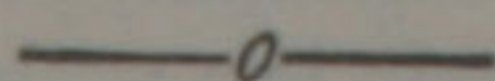
punishment, and not discharged merely upon the confession of his fault. No judge attempts openly to acquit a criminal barely upon his pleading guilty, nor can he justify a thought of so doing; and therefore no one can be justly served with torments to deny, when the law was designed only to make him confess.

You look upon a Christian as the sum total of iniquity, a despiser of the gods, emperors, laws, morality, and, in one word, an enemy of human nature; and yet this is the man you rack, that you may absolve, because without racking him into a denial of his name you cannot absolve him. This, or nothing, is prevaricating with the laws; you would have him plead not guilty, for you to pronounce him innocent, and discharge him from all past crimes, whether he will or no. But how can men be so perverse as to imagine that he who confesses a thing freely is not more to be credited than he who denies it by compulsion? Or cannot a man speak truth, without the help of a rack? And being absolved upon a forced denial of his religion, he must needs conclude such external applications of cruelty, very foolish things for the conversion of the mind, when in spite of all these impressions upon his body he finds himself still a Christian in his conscience.

Since therefore you treat us differently in everything from other criminals, and what you chiefly push at is the destruction of our name (and we ourselves destroy this, by doing what the heathens indulge themselves in)—since this, I say, is the main thing you contend for, you cannot but see that our name is the greatest crime in our indictment; in the persecution of which name, men vie hatred, and are ambitious to excel each other in malice; and this emulation is the chief reason why they are so stedfast in ignorance; therefore they devour all reports of us without chewing, and are so averse to any legal inquiry, for fear these reports should prove to be false, which they would have pass for true, that the hated name of Christian might be condemned upon presumption, without the danger of a proof; and that the confession of this name might serve for a sufficient conviction of the crimes charged against it. Hence it is that we are tortured against law for confessing, and tormented on for persisting in that confession; and against law absolved for denying, because all the dispute is about our name only.

But after all, when you proceed to judgment, and read over the table or catalogue of crimes you pass sentence against, why do you

mention the Christian only? Why do not you mention the murder, the incest, and the rest of that train commonly imputed to us? We alone are the persons you are ashamed to condemn, without signifying the actions you condemn us for; if a Christian is accused of no crime, the name surely must be of a strange nature to be criminal in itself only!



CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE ODISIOUS TITLE OF CHRISTIAN.

WHAT an unaccountable thing is it for so many men to blindfold themselves on purpose to fall foul upon Christianity! And to such a degree that they cannot talk about the noted probity of any Christian without allaying his character with a dash of his religion! Cajus Sejus (says one) is a very good man, but—he is a Christian. I will tell you what (says another), I wonder that Lucius the philosopher is all of a sudden turned Christian. And none has sense enough in his passion to put the question right, and argue in this manner. Is not Caius so good, and Lucius so wise, merely from the influence of their religion? Or was it not the probity of one, and the wisdom of the other, that prepared the way, and brought them over to be Christians?

Thus indeed they praise what they know, but vilify what they know not; they blot the fairest examples of virtue shining in their very eyes, because of a religion they are entirely in the dark about; whereas certainly, by all the rules of reason, we ought to judge of the nature of causes we see not, by the effects we see, and not pre-condemn apparent goodness for principles we understand not. Others, discoursing of some persons, whom they knew to be vagrants, and infamously lewd before they came over to our religion, drop their praises upon them in such a manner, that they stigmatize them with their very compliments; so darkened are they with prejudice that they blunder into the commendation of the thing they would condemn. For (say they) how wanton, and how witty was such a woman! how amorous and frolicsome was such a young gentleman! but now they are Christians: thus undesignedly they fix the amendment of their lives upon the alteration of their religion.

Some others are arrived to that pitch of aversion to the very name of Christian, that they seem to have entered into covenant with hatred, and bargained to gratify this passion at the expense of all the satisfactions of human life, acquiescing in the grossest of injuries rather than the hated thing of Christian should come within their doors. The husband, now cured of all his former jealousy by his wife's conversion to Christianity, turns her and her new modesty out of doors together, choosing to dwell with an adulteress sooner than a Christian; the father, so tender of the undutiful son in his Gentile state, disinherits him now when he becomes obedient by becoming a Christian; the master, heretofore so good to his unfaithful slave, discards him now upon his fidelity and his religion. So that the husband had rather have his wife false, the father his son a rebel, the master his servant a rogue, than Christians and good: so much is the hatred of our name above all the advantages of virtue flowing from it.

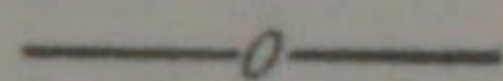
Now, therefore, if all this odium arises purely upon the account of our name, pray tell me how a poor name comes to be thus to blame, or a simple word to be a criminal? Unless it be that the word is barbarous, or sounds ominously, reproachfully, or obscenely. But Christians is a Greek word, and means nothing more than a disciple of Christ, which by interpretation is the Anointed; and when you misname it Chrestian¹ (for so far are you from understanding our religion, that as yet you know not our true name), even then it implies nothing worse than a benignity and sweetness of temper; thus outrageous are you at the sound of a name as inoffensive and harmless as those who bear it. But do men use to let loose their passions at this rate against any sect merely from the name of its founder? Is it a new thing for scholars to be named from their masters? Is it not from hence that philosophers are called Platonists, Epicureans, Pythagoreans, etc.? Do not the Stoics and academics derive their names from the porch or academy,² the places where they meet and discourse together? And do not

¹ *Sed et cum perperam Chrestianus pronunciatur a vobis.* See the notes upon Justin's *First Apol.* sec. 3, concerning the word Chrestus; I only add here that Marcellus Donatus conjectures this Chrestus to have been some seditious Jew called by that name, for which he produces several inscriptions wherein that name occurs, but not one wherein it is given to a Jew, which ought first to have been produced to justify his conjecture; but the Christian apologists prove it a mistake beyond dispute. *Vid.* Donat. *Dilucid.* in Sueton. in Claud. cap.

25.

² Stoics from *Στοὰ*, a porch or gallery.

physicians glory in the title of their Erasistratus,¹ and grammarians in that of Aristarchus?² And are not even cooks themselves not a little proud of the name of Apicius?³ Nor in any of these instances are you offended with the name transmitted from the founder of the sect; but if you could prove any sect to be vicious in principle, and consequently the author of it to be so too, there is reason enough to hate the name upon the account of both. In a word, before we give entertainment to hatred against any sect whatever, upon account of its name, we ought in the first place to have competently examined the nature of the institution, and traced out its qualities from the author, or the author from them; but both these ways of inquiry are quite neglected, and our enemies storm and fire at a word only. Our heavenly Master and His heavenly religion are both unknown, and both condemned, without any other consideration but that of the bare name of Christian.



CHAPTER IV.

THAT HUMAN LAWS MAY ERR, AND THEREFORE MAY
BE MENDED.

THUS far I have been something severe, as it were, by way of preface, to make men sensible if I could of the injustice of the

¹ Erasistratus. This physician is mentioned by our Tertullian, lib. *de an.* cap. 15; Pliny fixes his life, *An. urb. cond.* 450, lib. xiv. cap. 7, and mentions his school, lib. xx. cap. 9, and again, lib. xxix. cap. 2, makes him the disciple of Chrysippus, and Aristotle's daughter's son, who for the cure of King Antiochus had of his son Ptolemy a fee of an hundred talents.

² Aristarchus. A noted grammarian of Alexandria, Aristotle's contemporary, tutor to the son of Ptolemy Philometer, celebrated by Tully, *ad Appium Pulchrum*, lib. iii. epist. 11, for distinguishing the genuine verses of Homer, and so likewise by Ovid:—

*Corrigere at res est tanto magis ardua, quanto
Magnus Aristarcho major Homerus erat.* Ov. Pont.

And so again by Horace, *ad Pisones*,

*Arguet ambiguè dictum, mutanda notabit,
Fiet Aristarchus.*

³ Apicius. An epicure of famous memory, styled by Pliny *Nepotum omnium altissimus Gurgis*; and so again by Juvenal:—

*Quid enim majore cachinno
Excipitur vulgi, quam pauper Apicius?*

public odium against us ; and now I shall stay awhile upon the subject of our innocence. And here I shall not only refute the objections against us, but retort those very objections against the objectors themselves, to let the world see that Christians are not the men they take them to be, nor sullied with those crimes they are conscious of in themselves ; and to see also whether I can make our accusers blush, not by charging them in general, as the worst of men accusing the best, but supposing us both upon the level of iniquity. I shall touch upon all the particulars we are taxed with for committing in private, and for which we are publicly branded as immoral, superstitious, damnable, and ridiculous ; these very crimes, I say, which you grant we have not the forehead to do without the protection of darkness, we find our enemies hardy enough to commit in the face of the sun.

But because we meet you with unanswerable truth at all your turnings, your last resort is to the authority of the laws, as more inviolable than truth itself ; and it being so frequently in your mouths, either that nothing ought to be revoked after once condemned by law ; or that your sworn obedience is a necessity upon your actions, weightier than that of justice. I shall first enter upon the obligation due to human laws with you who are the sworn protectors of them.

First then, when you rigidly insist upon this, that Christianity is against law, and prescribe against dispensing one jot with the letter upon any considerations of equity, this, I say, is acting iniquity by law ; and you sit rather like tyrants than judges of a court, willing a thing to be unlawful, because you will, and not because it is so. But if your will is regulated by the measures of good and evil, and you forbid a thing because it ought to be forbidden, then certainly, by this rule of right reason, you cannot license evil, nor forbid the obligations of doing good. If I find a prohibition issued out against the laws of nature, do not I conclude such a prohibition to be invalid ? Whereas, if the matter of it be lawful, I never dispute my obedience,¹ nor think it strange

¹ *Quod si malum esset, jure prohiberet.* Here we have the measures of obedience due to human laws briefly stated by Tertullian : " For," says he, " where nothing is commanded, either against the law of nature, or the positive law of God, I never dispute my obedience." Had the primitive Christians refused obedience to the civil magistrate, in matters indifferent, Christianity, humanly speaking, had never been a national religion, and if our dissenting brethren would be decided by this rule, and, according to Tertullian, comply with the magistrate's commands, in everything not unlawful in itself, or with respect to the plain

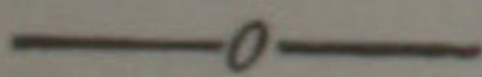
if your laws are sometimes in the wrong, since they are but the composures of men, and not the commands of God. Is it so strange to see mortals out of the way in making laws, and wiser upon experience, and repealing what they once approved? Did not the laws even of Lycurgus suffer amendments? Was not their severity sweetened by the Spartans, and better accommodated to civil use? And did not this alteration go so near the great lawgiver's heart that he quitted his country in a pet, and pined himself to death, being his own judge and his own executioner? Does not your experience light you every day to the mistakes and rubbish of antiquity? And have you not cut down a huge and horrid wood of old laws, and planted the new edicts and rescripts of the emperors in their stead? Did not Severus, of all the emperors least given to change, lately alter the Papiian law,¹ vainly solicitous about the propagation of children before the time allowed for matrimony by the Julian law without any respect to the venerableness of antiquity? And insolvent debtors, by the laws, were to be chopped in pieces by their creditors;² but these sanguinary statutes were by succeeding ages repealed, and the capital punishment commuted into a mark of infamy, together with the sale of their goods, it being

Word of God, they would then, and not till then, fulfil the apostle's injunction of doing all that is possible, and as much as lieth in them to live peaceably with all men. But if the magistrate cannot lawfully command in things where neither the natural nor the positive law of God interpose to the contrary, he can command in nothing, because such things only can be subject to his disposal.

¹ *Vanissimas Papias leges quæ ante liberos suscipi cogunt, quam Jul. Matr. contr.* Concerning these laws, see Rigaltius and Pamelius upon this place. But that which I remark is, that Scaliger would infer from the following words that this Apology was not composed till a little after the death of Severus, because it is said, *heri Severus, etc., exclusit*; but I confess I cannot see why lately repealing may not agree to a living prince as well as a dead one. But I shall show this opinion to be evidently a mistake of Scaliger in the sequel of this Apology.

² *Judicatos retro in partes secari a Creditoribus Leges erant.* Here he evidently alludes to the law of the twelve tables, cap. viii. *de nexis*; for thus it runs, *Tertiis nundinis capite pœnas luito, aut trans Tiberim peregrè ito, est si plures erunt rei, tertiis nundinis. Partis. secanto. si. plus minus. ve. secuerunt. se. fraude. esto.* The meaning of which, as it is explained by A. Gellius, *Noct. Att. lib. xx.*, is this: Debt was a capital crime by law, and the creditor might either have the life of the insolvent, or send him beyond Tibur to be sold for a slave; but if the insolvent was indebted to more than one, the creditors might cut him into pieces in proportion to every one's debt. And this barbarity he justifies only by the end and design of the lawgivers, which was not so much to punish as to prevent men from running into debt by the severity of the punishment, for he tells us he never read of one debtor dissected, *Quoniam sævitia ista Pœnæ contemni non quita est*; but for bonds and imprisonment rogues value them not, and run in debt continually.

looked upon better to put the offender to open shame than to let out his blood for debt. And how many laws think you are still behind which want revising, that are not valuable for their number of years, or the dignity of their founder, but upon the account of justice only? And therefore if they are found not to be according to this standard are deservedly condemned, although we are condemned by them. And if they punish for a mere name, they are not only to be exploded for their iniquity, but to be hissed off the world for their folly. But if the laws are to take cognizance of actions only, why are we punished for the name of our sect, when no others are so punished? I am guilty of incest, or have killed a child, suppose, why don't you make inquiry after my crimes, and extort them from me by confession upon the rack? I have injured the gods or emperors, why am I not to be heard on these points? Surely no law can forbid the discussion of what it is to condemn, because no judge can justly proceed to sentence before he is well apprised of the illegality of the fact; nor can a citizen justify his obedience to a law, while he apprehends not the quality of the action it is to punish; for it is by no means sufficient that a law be good in itself, but that goodness also must be made appear to him who is to put it in execution; and that law is much to be suspected that does not care to be looked into, but is notoriously tyrannical, if after it is looked into would reign a law still in defiance of reason.



CHAPTER V.

THAT THE WISEST OF THE EMPERORS HAVE BEEN PROTECTORS
OF THE CHRISTIANS.

BUT to see the rashness and injustice of the laws against us, let us cast an eye back upon their original, and we shall find an old decree,¹ whereby the emperor himself was disabled from consecrat-

¹ *Vetus erat Decretum ne qui Deus ab Imperatore consecraretur nisi a Senatu probatus.* Rigaltius mentions something like this extant in the fragments of Ulpian, and Pamelius gives the decree itself from Crinitus *de hon. discipl.* lib. x. cap. 3. *Separatim nemo sit habens Deos novos sive Advenas, nisi publice adscitos privatim colunto.* By virtue of this ancient decree it was that the people, notwithstanding any edicts of the emperors to the contrary, persecuted the Christians. *Vid.* Euseb. *Hist.* lib. ii. cap. 2. Where upon the account given by Pontius Pilate, Tiberius applied to the senate to make him a god.

ing a new god, without the approbation of the senate. M. Æmilius learnt this with a witness, in the case of his god Alburnus.¹ And this makes not a little for the honour of Christianity, to see the heathens in consult about making gods; and if the god is not such a deity as they like, he is like to be no God for them. Strange! That the god is first to pray the man to be propitious, before the man will allow of his godship. By virtue of this old decree it was that Tiberius,² in whose reign Christianity came into the world, having received intelligence from Judea about the miracles of Christ, proposed it to the senate, and used his prerogative for getting Him enrolled among the number of their gods. The senate, indeed, refused the proposal, as having not maturely weighed His qualifications for a deity; but Cæsar stood to his resolution, and issued out severe penalties against all who should accuse the worshippers of Christ.

Consult your annals,³ and there you will find Nero⁴ the first emperor who dyed his sword in Christian blood, when our religion was but just arising at Rome; but we glory in being first dedicated to destruction by such a monster: for whoever knows that enemy of all goodness will have the greater value for our religion, as knowing that Nero could hate nothing exceedingly, but what was exceedingly good. A long time after, Domitian, a limb of this bloody Nero, makes some like attempts against the Christians; but being not all Nero, or cruelty in perfection, the remains of struggling humanity stopped the enterprize, and made him recall the Christians he banished. The Christian persecutors have been always men of this complexion, divested of justice, piety, and common shame;

¹ *De Deo suo Alburno.* This Alburnus is mentioned, lib. *adv. Marcion*, cap. 18, and seems to have been consecrated in the consulship of M. Æmilius, *an. urb. cond.* 638. He was called Alburnus from a mountain in Lucania of the same name.

*Est Lucus silari circum, ilicibusq.; virentem
Plurimum Alburnum volitans, etc.* Virg. *Geo.* 3.

² *Tiberius ergo, cujus tempore nomen Christianum in fœculum introivit.* This is to be understood of the resurrection of Christ, when the Christian faith first began to be published to the Gentile world.

³ *Consulite commentarios vestros.* He alludes to the annals of Tacitus, lib. xv., or rather to Suetonius in the Life of Nero.

⁴ *Cæsariano gladio primum ferocisse.* It is agreed upon by all writers, that the first general persecution began under Nero, as likewise that the second did under Domitian; for that in Judea and Samaria, mentioned in the Acts, cap. viii., was but a particular persecution in some parts only, and not set on foot by the Gentiles but the Jews.

upon whose government you yourselves have set a brand, and rescinded their acts,¹ by restoring those whom they condemned.

But of all the emperors down to this present reign, who understood anything of religion or humanity, name me one who persecuted the Christians. On the contrary, we show you the excellent M. Aurelius for our protector and patron; for if you look into his letters,² you will find him there testifying that his army in Germany being just upon perishing with thirst, some Christian soldiers which happened to be in his troops, did by the power of prayer fetch down a prodigious shower to the relief of the whole army; for which the grateful prince, though he could not publicly set aside the penal laws, yet he did as well, he publicly rendered them ineffectual another way, by discouraging our accusers with the last of punishments, viz. burning alive.

Reflect a little now, I pray you, upon the nature of these laws, which only the most consummate villains in impiety, injustice, filthiness, folly, and madness ever put in execution against us; which laws Trajan³ in part evacuated by his edict against searching for Christians; and neither Hadrian⁴ the inquisitive, whose genius

¹ *Quos et ipsi damnare consueverunt.* The edicts of Nero and Domitian both were rescinded by the senate, and Nerva their successor. But the old law was still in force, which forbade the worshipping of any new god, without the approbation of the senate.

² *Si Literæ Marci Aurelii requirantur.* This rescript of Marcus Aurelius you will find annexed to Justin's *First Apology*; and though it is disputable whether that rescript be genuine, yet it is evident beyond dispute, both from Justin and Tertullian, that there was such a rescript in favour of the Christians.

³ *Quas Trajanus ex parte frustratus est.* It is not without good reason that Tertullian says in part evacuated, for the third persecution commenced under Trajan. It is true, indeed, he published no general edict against the Christians, but the manner of his answer to Pliny (*vid. Plin. lib. x. ep. 103, p. 633*, wherein, as Tertullian smartly remarks, the rescript did combat, and contradict itself, in forbidding Christians to be searched after, and yet punished when found) was abundantly sufficient to rekindle magistrate and people, who were ready to take fire upon the least encouragement against the Christians. Besides, he issued out solemn edicts to his officers to suppress all private cabals and associations; and this occasioned fresh searches after Christians, and prevented their ordinary assemblies. *Vid. Plin. ep. 35, 99, 123; ep. 104, p. 632.* In this reign, strict inquisition was made after all the descendants from David, and Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, was therefore taken up and murdered. *Euseb. lib. iii. cap. 32, p. 104.* And though this was a very grievous persecution, yet was it not universal. *Euseb. lib. iii. cap. 33, p. 105, cap. 32, p. 103.*

⁴ *Quas nullus Adrianus.* Sulpicius Severus, and he alone, places the fourth persecution under Adrian. *Vid. Sulp. lib. ii. cap. 45, p. 150.* But whatever this persecution was, it is plain from Tertullian and Melito, bishop of Sardis,

no doubt led him into the curiosities of our religion, nor Vespasian,¹ who must know something of it too by conquering the Jews, nor Pius,² nor Verus³ ever took the advantage of the laws against us; and therefore were we Christians, in truth, the worst of men, you cannot think we should have been thus spared, and protected

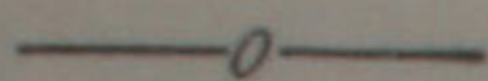
vid. Euseb. lib. iv. cap. 26, p. 148, that it was not occasioned by any imperial edict. Adrian was initiated in all the Græcian rites, and especially in the Eleusinian Mysteries, which St. Jerome remarks as the principal cause of this persecution, *Adr. vit.* p. 11. He was extremely addicted to judicial astrology, and to all sorts of divination, even to magic, Dio, lib. 69, p. 793, insomuch that he is severely censured by the heathens themselves for his extravagant superstition, *Amm.* lib. xxv. p. 294. And if magic raised a persecution under Valerianus, who in the beginning of his reign was so great a friend to Christians, and whose family so abounded with men of piety, that his house seemed to be the church of God, Euseb. lib. vii. cap. 10, we need not wonder that this black art should have the same influence upon Adrian. But this persecution was happily put an end to, by the Apologies of Quadratus and Aristides, Euseb. lib. iii. cap. 37, p. 209. The eloquence and reason of these two apologists was seconded by a letter from Serenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, Euseb. lib. iv. cap. 8, p. 122, and many other governors followed this example, Euseb. lib. iv. cap. 13, p. 127. Adrian, unable to resist these just and pressing solicitations, wrote to Minucius Fundanus, Granianus's successor, not to punish a Christian but upon good proof of some crime against the public; and to punish the false accuser just as the Christian should have been had he been found guilty. This rescript was very famous among the ancients; it is celebrated as very advantageous to the Christian cause, not only by Eusebius in his *Chronic.*, but by S. Severus lib. ii. cap. 45, p. 150, by Orosius, lib. vii. cap. 12, and annexed by Justin to his *Apology*, and translated into Greek by Eusebius, lib. iv. cap. 9, p. 123.

¹ Nullus Vespasianus. *Vid. Joseph. de Bell. Jud.* lib. iii. iv. v. vi. vii.

² Nullus Pius. This was Antoninus, to whom Justin Martyr addresses his *First Apology*, and whose rescript to the commons of Asia he annexes to it, and is translated into Greek by Euseb. lib. cap. 13. And though there was no edict of Pius out against the Christians, yet by the authority of the old decree, they suffered very much in many places, which occasioned Justin's *First Apology*.

³ Nullus Verus. It is a matter of some difficulty to determine who this emperor was, for the cognomen Verus was given to M. Aurelius as well as to Lucius. *Vid. Jul. Capitol. in vit. M. Aurelii.* But it is most probable that M. Aurelius was the emperor, especially if Lucius Verus was dead before the persecution, as some imagine, Nicephor. lib. iii. cap. 14. And it is observable, that Athenagoras dedicates his *Apology* to M. Aurelius and Lu. Commodus, and not to Lucius Verus. However this be, certain it is that this was a most bloody persecution, in which Polycarp and Justin, and the martyrs of Vienna and Lyons were put to death; the reading of the prophets, and the sibyls, and whatever else might serve the Christian cause was forbidden, says Justin, upon pain of death, *Apol.* i. sec. 59. This is counted the fourth persecution by all but S. Severus, who calls it the fifth. But then it is observed by Eusebius, lib. v. cap. 1, that it was set on foot, not by any edict of Aurelius, but by popular tumult. If we read Severus instead of Verus, as Pamelius is most inclined to, then is it evident that when this *Apology* was written, Severus had issued out no edict against the Christians.

against law, by the best of princes, and struck at root and branch only by our brethren in iniquity.



CHAPTER VI.

THAT THE ROMANS ARE MIGHTY PRAISERS OF THE ANTIQUITY OF THEIR RELIGION, AND YET ADMIT OF NOVELTIES INTO IT EVERY DAY.

BUT now I would argue the case a little with these scrupulous gentlemen who are such mighty sticklers for the observation of old laws; I would know whether they themselves have religiously adhered to their forefathers in everything, whether they quitted no law, nor have gone one step out of the ancient way. Nay, whether they have not made ineffectual some of the most necessary and proper rules of government; if not, what is become of those excellent laws for the bridling luxury and ambition? Those laws which allowed not above a noble¹ for an entertainment, and but one hen, and that not a crammed one, for a supper. Those laws which excluded a senator the house, as a man of ambitious designs, for having but ten pound weight of silver plate in his family; which levelled the rising theatres² to the ground immediately, as seminaries only of lewdness and immorality; and which under severe penalties forbade the commons to usurp the badges and distinctions of the nobility. But now I see the enormous entertainments, with

¹ *Centum ara non amplius.* This was the *Lex Licinia vel Fannia* called *Centussis*, according to that of Lucilius, *Fanni Centussique misellos.* Vid. A. Gell. lib. ii. cap. 24. To what Zephrus in his paraphrase, and Pamelius in his notes, have said concerning the sumptuary laws, and against canvassing for places, I add, that C. Orchius the third year before Cato was censor, preferred a law to moderate the number of guests only. Twenty-two years after, C. Fannius being consul, enacted another for moderating the expenses of ordinary feasts, allowing not more *denis assibus.* Licinius Crassus revived the Fannian law. The *Lex Cornelia*, and the *Lex Antia*, were to the same purposes of frugality. Whosoever desires to see more *de Legibus Sumptuariis et de Ambitu*, may read *Stuc. conviv.* lib. i. cap. 3; A. Gell. lib. ii. cap. 24; Macrob. *Saturn.* lib. iii. cap. 17; *Alex. ab Alexan. Genial. Di.* lib. iii. cap. 2, p. 685, tom. i., and likewise cap. 17, p. 755.

² *Theatra stuprandis moribus orientia statim destruebant.* P. Cornius Nasica after the second Punic war demolished the theatre as the school of wickedness and effeminacy. Vid. *Alexand. ab Alex.* tom. i. lib. iv. cap. 25, p. 1193.

new names from their extravagance; a centenarian supper, so called from the hundred sestertias expended on it, that is about seven hundred and eighty-one pounds five shillings for a meal; and I see mines of silver melted into dishes, not for the table of senators only, for that would be tolerable, but for such fellows as are but just made free, and hardly out of the lash of slavery. I see also theatres in abundance,¹ and all indulgently covered over. The hardy Lacedemonians, I suppose, were the first authors of this soft invention, for fear Venus should take cold in the winter without a covering; and that odious heavy cloak of frieze, which in time of war was to screen the Spartans from the injuries of weather, was chiefly designed no doubt to defend the Romans at the enjoyment of their sports. Moreover, I see now no difference in habit between a lady of quality and a common strumpet;² all those wise institutions about women are fallen to the ground, wherein your ancestors made such provisions for modesty and temperance; when a woman was to wear no more gold about her than the wedding-ring upon her finger;³ when women were so strictly prohibited to the use of wine, that a matron was starved to

¹ *Video Theatra nec singula satis esse.* In the time of Augustus there were but three theatres, and one amphitheatre; but as they grew in vices, they increased in theatres; and then we read of the theatre of Marcellus, and one of Scaurus so capacious that Pliny affirms it large enough to hold 80,000 men. Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 15. Concerning the number of theatres, *vid. Just. Lipsii Amphitheatrum, et Tertull. de Spectac. et Vitruv. lib. v. cap. 3.*

² *Inter Matronas atque Prostibulas nullum de habitu discrimen.* The Stola, Flammeum, Vitta, and Reticulum were the distinctions of matrons of repute, from prostitutes who had the Toga, and were not allowed the Flammeum and Vitta. More of this you may see in *Alex. ab Alexand. tom. ii. lib. v. p. 216.*

³ *Cum aurum nulla norat præter unico digito quem sponsus oppignorasset pronubo annulo.* The ring in matrimony has been a very general and ancient ceremony: *Digito pignus fortasse dedisti, Juven. sat. 6.* This nuptial ring was put upon the finger next the least, on the left hand, out of an imagination that there was a particular vein there which went directly to the bottom of the heart. Aul. Gell. lib. x. cap. 10, Macrob. lib. vii. cap. 13. And this, I suppose, may be the *Unicus Digitus* in Tertullian. The primitive Christians made no scruple of complying with this ancient ceremony of the ring in matrimony, for, says Tertullian, *de Idol. de nullius Idoli honore descendit*, it did not arise from any honour given to an idol. And Clemens Alexandrinus sets forth, not only the rite, but the reason of it, *Clem. Alex. Pæd. lib. iii. cap. 2.* St. Ambrose brings in St. Agnes, mentioning the wedding-ring, *Amb. lib. iv. ep. 34.* In the year 611, Isidore Hispalensis, *Etymol. lib. xx. and de devin. Off. lib. ii.*, proves it to be in use, and all the offices of the Western Churches since that time prove the same. As to the Greek Churches, we find by the Eucologicon, that they used two rings, one of gold, which was given to the man, another of silver, which was given to the woman. *Vid. ord. Sponsalior.* And therefore it was not without good authority that our wise reformers did retain this innocent, ancient ceremony, approved of even by Bucer himself. *Buceri Censur. p. 48.*

death by her friends for breaking the seals of a cellar where the wine was kept;¹ and Mecenius in the reign of Romulus was acquitted for killing his wife for the same attempt; and for the same reason parents were by law obliged to kiss their children, in order to discover them by their breath. Where is now the happiness of a conjugal state, maintained of old by rugged virtue, in so long and perfect harmony, that from the foundation of the city for almost six hundred years together,² we read not of a divorce in any family? But now, instead of wedding-rings only, women are so begolded over, that every limb labours under the burthen; and so addicted to wine, that you shall not receive a salute without a smack of the bottle; and divorces are now become the object of your desires, and looked upon as the constant fruit of matrimony. But this is not all, for what your fathers have bravely decreed, even about the worship of the gods, you with all your obedience have rescinded. The consuls with the authority of the senate banished father Bacchus³

¹ *Cum mulieres usque adeo vino abstinerentur, ut matronam ob resignatos cellæ vinariæ loculos sui inedia necarint.* This story, and almost the very words, are taken out of Pliny's *Natural History*, lib. iv. cap. 13, where he says likewise that Egnatius Metellus (here called Mecenius) killed his wife with a club for drinking wine. The drinking of wine was interdicted women under the severest penalty. *Vid.* Dionys. *Halicarn.* lib. ii., Polyb. lib. vi., Cicer. *lib. de nat. Deor.* It was as capital a crime for a woman to be taken in wine as in adultery. It was by the law of Romulus made one of the conditions for a divorce. Cneus Domitius deprived a woman of her dowry for drinking more liberally than her health required. The law mentioned here by Tertullian, which obliged relations to salute women to find whether they did not smell of wine, was overruled by an edict of Tiberius Cæsar. *Vid.* Sueton. *vit. Tiber.* See more to this purpose in *Alexand. ab Alex.* tom. i. lib. iii. cap. 2, pp. 672 and 673.

² *Per annos ferme sexcentos ab urbe conditâ, nulla repudium domus scripsit.* P. Carvilius Ruga, or Spurius Carbilus, as he is called by Valer. Maximus, lib. ii. cap. 1, was the first who divorced his wife upon pretence of barrenness, though divorces afterwards upon the most trifling occasions came to be a common practice. L. Antonius was noted by the censors, and turned out of the senate for putting away his wife upon no reason but his humour. *Vid.* Val. Max. lib. ii. cap. 4. Tiberius Cæsar degraded a censor upon the like occasion, Sueton. *in vit. Tib.* Q. Antistius and C. Sulpitius divorced their wives merely upon a pet. Val. Max. lib. vi. cap. 3. And Mæcenus is severely taxed by Seneca upon the like occasion, *Sen. lib. de Divin. Provid.* So that it is not without reason that Tertullian affirms divorces in his time to be the constant fruit of matrimony. By the laws of Romulus a man could not divorce his wife, but either for adultery, for attempting to poison him, for false keys, or for drinking of wine. The form of divorces between parties only contracted was in these words—*Conditione tuâ non utar.* This was properly *Repudium*; that between a married couple was called *Divortium*, and ran in this form—*Res tuas tibi habeto.*

³ *Liberum Patrem cum mysteriis suis.* The Bacchanalia or Nyctileia grew to that excessive lewdness, that they were forbid in all parts of Italy under a severe penalty. *Vid.* *Alex. ab Alex.* tom. i. lib. vi. cap. 7, p. 650.

and his mysteries, not out of Rome only, but all Italy, and Serapis,¹ and Isis, and Harpocrates, with his dog's head of a god Cynocephalus, were excluded the capitol, the palace of your deities, during the consulship of Piso and Gabinius, who were not Christians, and all their altars levelled to the ground, in order to suppress this rabble of deities, and the abominable filthinesses attending on them; but these gods you have recalled from banishment, and restored them to their original worship. Where now is your old religion, and the great veneration you pretend to have for your ancestors? You have degenerated from them in your habit, in your modes of living, in your furniture,² and in the riches and revenues you allow to the different ranks of men, and in the very delicacy of your language. You are eternal praisers of antiquity, and yet every day in a new fashion; which is a plain proof that it is your peculiar talent to be in the wrong, to forsake your ancestors where you should follow, and to follow where you should forsake them. And although you may take yourselves for zealous defenders of the traditions of your fathers, especially in those things for the neglect of which you principally accuse the Christians, namely, the worship of the gods, in which point your ancestors have been the most unhappily mistaken; although you have rebuilt the altars of Serapis, and made him now a Roman god; although Bacchus now has his frantic sacrifices offered him in Italy;—notwithstanding all this, I say, I will show in its proper place that you have not in truth this warm affection for the gods of your forefathers, but that you have despised, slighted, and destroyed them, in spite of all your loud pretences to the obligations of antiquity. In the meantime, I shall return an answer to those infamous objections against our actions in secret, in order to make way for the vindication of those things we do in the face of the world.

¹ *Serapidem et Isidem, et Harpocratem cum suo Cynocephalo*, etc. Serapis and Isis were celebrated idols of Egypt. Harpocrates is said to be born of Isis and Osiris, and coming unluckily before his time, was born mute, and for that reason made the god of silence, according to that of Ovid—*Quinque premit vocem, digitoq.; silentia suadet*. Cynocephalus was an Egyptian god with a dog's head, under which shape Mercury is said to have been worshipped, according to that of Virgil, *Ænead.* 8, *Omnigenumq.; Deum monstra, et Latrator Anubis*. See more of this and their expulsion out of Italy in *Alex. ab Alex.* tom. i. lib. ii. cap. 19, p. 431.

² *Censu*. I conclude this word should be written with a *c*, and I have translated it accordingly; but if it is to be written with an *s*, as it is both in Rigaltius and Pamelius, I would translate it *opinion*; but Rigaltius in his *Animadversions* has corrected his text, and writes *Censu*. *Vid. Rigal. Animadver. juxta fin.*

CHAPTER VII.

THAT COMMON FAME IS BUT AN ILL EVIDENCE.

IT is the common talk that we are the wickedest of men, that we murder and eat a child in our religious assemblies,¹ and when we rise from supper conclude all in the confusions of incest. It is reported likewise that for this work we have an odd sort of dogs, as officious as bawds in putting out the candles, procurers of darkness for the freer satisfactions of our impious and shameless lust. This is the common talk, and the report is of long standing, and yet not a man attempts to prove the truth of the fact. Either, therefore, if you believe report, examine the grounds, or if you will not examine, give no credit to the report. And this dissembled carelessness of yours against being better informed plainly speaks that you yourselves believe nothing of it; you seem to care not to examine, only in truth because you dare not; for were you of opinion that these reports were true, you would never give such orders as you do about the torturing of Christians; which you prescribe, not to make them confess the actions of their life, but only to deny the religion they profess. But the Christian religion, as I have already intimated, began to spread in the reign of Tiberius; and the truth pulled down a world of hatred in its very cradle; for it had as many enemies as men without the pale of revelation, and even those within, the very Jews, the most implacable of any, out of a blind passion for the law. The soldiers from dragooning our persons, come to hate our religion, and from a baseness of spirit, our very domestics are as much bent upon our destruction as they. Thus are we continually invested on every side, and continually betrayed—nay, very often we are surprised and taken in our public meetings and assemblies; and yet did ever any one come upon us when the infant was crying under the sacrificer's hand?² Who ever caught

¹ *Dicimur sceleratissimi de Sacramento Infanticidii.* That this charge of devouring a child in the sacrament was by the heathens commonly laid upon the Christians is evident, because Justin, Athenagoras, Tatian, Minutius, and the rest of the apologists insist so much upon it. The nature of the institution and the practice of Simon Magus, Menander, Basilides, Carpocrates, and other heretics, who passed under the name of Christians, most probably gave rise to this horrid story, as I have shown at large in my notes upon Justin's Apology.

² *Quis unquam taliter vagienti Infanti supervenit.* The Christian sacrifice of bread and wine was never omitted in the first ages of the Church in their public

us, like a Cyclops or Siren, with mouths besmeared in human blood, and carried us in that cruel pickle before a judge? And as for incest, who ever discovered any relic of immodesty in his wife after she became a Christian? And who can think that a heathen would connive at wickednesses of this monstrous size in any Christian, had he eyes to spy them out? Or that he can be bribed in our favour, who seems never so well pleased as when he is hauling us to punishment? If you say that these abominations are always done in secret, pray when and by whom came you to this knowledge? Not by the guilty themselves, for you know that the persons admitted into the mysteries of all religions are by the very form of admission¹ under the severest obligations to secrecy; the Samothracian and Eleusinian² mysteries you know are covered in profound silence, how much more reasonable is it therefore to think that such as these will be kept in the dark, which not only treasure up divine wrath against the day of judgment, but if once discovered will whet human justice to the highest pitch of vengeance? If, therefore, Christians betray not themselves, it follows that they must be betrayed by those of another religion; but how shall strangers be able to inform against us, when even the most pious mysteries³ are defended from the approaches of the

worship; they looked upon their service as not so perfectly Christian and acceptable without it, that the Holy Spirit did in an especial manner descend upon the consecrated elements, that God was better pleased with their prayers for this commemoration of His Son, and that this was the principle of union between a Christian and the ever Blessed Trinity; and, therefore, whenever the heathens broke into their assemblies, they would be sure to find this sacrifice of a child, was there any such thing.

¹ *Ex Formâ omnibus Mysteriorum silentii Fides debeat.* What silence was thought due to sacred rites we may understand by Horace's *Favete linguis*; by Ovid's *Ore favent Populi nunc cum venit aurea Pompa*; by Virgil's *Fida Silentia Sacris*; by Festus's *Linquam pascito, i.e. coerceto*; by the Egyptians setting up the image of Harpocrates in the entrance of their temples, and by the Romans placing the statue of Angerona on the altar of Volupia. *Vid. Brisson, de Formulâ, lib. i. p. 8.*

² *Eleusinia reticentur.* Horace protests that he would not stay in the house, or sail in the ship, with a person that should divulge the mysteries of Ceres—

*Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgârit arcanae, sub iisdem
Sit trabibus fragilemque mecum
Solvat phaselum.*

Alcibiades and his companions for exposing the rites of Ceres were not only excommunicated all religious and civil intercourse at Athens, but solemnly cursed by the priests, and priestesses—a practice not unlike to the Jewish Anathema. *Vid. Plutar. Alcibiad.*

³ *Cum etiam piæ Initiationes arceant Prophanos.* I know nothing more

stranger and the profane? Unless you conclude the Christian rites to be the wickedest of any, and withal conclude that the wicked are less cautious about the divulging of such rites than those of a better religion. And thus you must be forced to acknowledge you know nothing of our profession, but by common fame; and the nature of fame is too well known by every one to be credited in haste. Your own Virgil tells you, *Fama malum, quo non aliud velocius ullum*: Fame is an ill, the swiftest ill that flies.

Why does he call fame an ill? Because of her swiftness? Or because she is an informer? Or because she is a common liar? For the last reason without question. For she never lets even truth come out of her mouth without being sophisticated, without detracting, adding, or brewing it with one falsehood or another. Moreover, the nature of fame is such that she cannot keep herself upon the wing without the assistance of lies; for she lives by not proving; when she proves, she destroys her being. She hovers no

practised all the heathen world over, than the excommunicating profane persons from all holy mysteries. Hence that of Virgil—

*Procul, ô procul este Prophani
Conclamat Vates.*

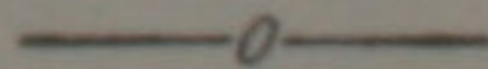
And that of Horace also—

*Odi Prophanum
Vulgus et arceo.*

The Flamens had a *commentaculum*, a kind of rod in their hands to keep off impure persons. *Vid.* Brisson, *de Formulâ*, lib. i.; Selden, *de Syned.* lib. i. cap. 10. Among the Greeks that old form from Orpheus continued, —*ἴκας ἴκας ἴσσι βίβηλοι*. At Athens the herald cried out *τις τῆδε*—Who is here? To which the people answered, *πολλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ*—Many and good men. *Vid.* Suid. in *τις τῆδε*. And we read in Livy, *Decad.* 4, lib. i., of two young men of Arcanania, who for not being initiated and crowded into the Eleusinian mysteries, were slain; for it was a capital crime to be present without due purification; and such purifying rites were men of all ranks and qualities obliged to perform before they could approach the altars and statues. Not Nero himself could prevail with his conscience to let him be present at these rites of Ceres, after the Herald had made the usual proclamation for the wicked to depart. *Vid.* Sueton. *Ner.* cap. 34. But Antoninus the philosopher, to show his innocence, went to the temple of Ceres, and into the very Sacrarium by himself. *Vid.* *Capitolin. in vit. Antonin. Philos.* And was there but a little more of the natural reverence of heathens to holy things among Christian people, and did Christian priests exert the power that God has given them with as much vigour as the idol priests did, men even as wicked as Nero would not dare to approach our altars merely upon the invitation of a place. But as matters stand, it might go hard with the priest to make a notorious offender lose his preferment, by refusing him the sacrament, and the common law might go near to nail the canon.

longer like fame; but being as it were out of her office, certainty succeeds in the place of report. And then it is no longer said, for example, that such a thing is famed to have been acted at Rome, or such a person to have got the government of such a province, but that such things are actually so and so. Fame is a doubtful sound, and lodges only among uncertainties; and would ever any man of common reflection build much upon this uncertain puff? For let a story be never so general and diffusive, and never so confidently asserted, it is always to be remembered that it had a beginning, and from that time has crept into a world of ears, and out of a world of mouths; and so the story very little at its first planting, and naughty perhaps in the very seed, comes at length to be so overgrown and darkened by variety of rumours, that men care not to be at the pains of tracing it up to the original mouth, and to see whether it came not first into the world a very lie; which often happens, either from the disposition and genius of hatred, or the licence men usurp of improving suspicions, or which is no new thing, the very pleasure of lying, which some people seem marvelously turned for, even by nature.

Well is it, therefore, I am sure, for Christians, what is so proverbially in the mouth of heathens, that time brings everything to light, according to that order of nature which will permit nothing to lie long hid; no, not even that which never came within the lips of fame. I shall leave it to you, therefore, to judge whether you have reason to proceed with this severity against Christians merely upon the testimony of fame; for this is the only witness you produce against us, and which looks so much the worse, because of all the stories she has been sowing about the world, and been so long a-watering and nourishing up into credit, she has not to this day been able to prove one.



CHAPTER VIII.

THAT THE CRIMES CHARGED UPON THE CHRISTIANS ARE NEITHER
POSSIBLE NOR PROBABLE.

I SHALL now appeal to the testimony of nature, and argue whether it is credible that she is capable of such inhumanities as common fame charges upon Christians; and for argument sake, I will

suppose a Christian promising you eternal life, and tying caution for the performance, upon consideration of your obedience. I will suppose likewise that you believe this promise, and the question now is, whether upon such a belief you could find in your hearts to be barbarous enough in spite of nature to accept of eternal life at this inhuman price. Imagine, therefore, a Christian addressing you in this manner: Come hither, friend, and plunge your dagger into the heart of this innocent, who can deserve no punishment, who can be no man's foe, and who may be every man's son, considering our indiscriminate embraces. Or if another is to officiate in this bloody service, suppose yourself applied to after this sort: Come hither, and stand by only while I make the sacrifice; behold me despatching an infant off the stage in the very first act of life; see me sending the new soul flying out of the body before it was well in; do you gather up the rude indigent blood, and sop your bread liberally in that wine, and indulge freely upon the flesh; and while you are at supper be sure to cast a wishful eye upon your mother and sister; mark exactly where they sit, that you are guilty of no mistake when the dogs have put out the candles. For it is as much as our immortality is worth if you should miss of incest; if you are thus initiated, and continue firm in the practice of these rules, you shall live for ever. Answer me now to the question proposed, Can you purchase heaven upon these terms? If not, if you feel nature recoil, and your soul shrink at the proposal of such things, you can never think them credible in us. Did you but believe them, I am confident you would not do them; but did you believe them, and had an inclination to do them, I am of opinion that your very humanity would not suffer you to perpetrate such facts; and if you find too many misgivings in yourselves for the performance of such commands, why do you not conclude the same reluctance in others? Or if you cannot be unnatural enough for these things, why should you judge others can?

But Christians, I suppose, are not men. What! do you take us for monsters like the Cynopæ or Sciapodes,¹ with different rows of teeth for devouring, and different instruments for incest, from all other men? Certainly, if you believe such actions possible for others, you may believe them possible for yourselves, you being men,

¹ The Cynopæ, or Cynopes or Cynocephali, are reported to be a sort of wild men in the mountains of India, with heads like a dog, Plin. vii. 2; and the Sciapodes of Æthiopia to be a people of such a monstrous make, that in hot broiling days lie upon their backs, and cover their whole bodies from the sun with the shadow of the bottoms of their feet, Plin. vii. 1.

as we Christians are ; but if you feel this impossible in nature, you ought to give no credit to the report, because Christians and heathens have the same humanity.

But you pretend that the ignorant only are decoyed and tricked into our religion, such as have not met with any of these stories against us, but are caught before they have time to consider and examine with that accuracy which every man is obliged to upon changing his religion. But allowing it possible for a man to be ignorant of common fame, yet if any one is desirous to be initiated, it is the constant custom, as I take it, for such a person to go to the chief priest, to be instructed in what is necessary for such an initiation. And then, if these stories are true, he will instruct him in this manner : Friend, in order to communicate with us you must provide a child tender and good, too young for any sense or notice of death ; such a child as will smile into my face under the fatal knife. You are likewise to provide bread to suck up the blood, and candlesticks and candles, and some dogs with some morsels to throw to those dogs just out of their reach, that by striving to come at them they may pull down the candles and candlesticks to which they are tied. Above all things, you must be sure not to come without your mother and sister. But what if they will not comply, or suppose the convert has no sister or mother, nor any relation of our religion ? Why, he cannot be admitted ; for to have a sister or a mother are necessary qualifications, no doubt, to make a Christian. But if you will suppose all this furniture got ready beforehand, without the knowledge of him who is to communicate, yet certainly after he has communicated he must needs know all ; and yet he still continues firm in our communion without a word of the imposture. But he dares not discover perhaps, for fear of punishment, when such a discovery would be meritorious. Whereas a man of probity, after he had found himself thus abused, and tricked into so horrid a religion, would rather choose to die than live longer with such a conscience. After all, I will grant that such a man dares not discover for fear of punishment ; but pray then give me a reason why the same person should persevere in defiance of torments ; for I think it natural to conclude that you would not continually stick close to a religion under such disadvantages, which you would never have embraced had you but known it before you embraced it.

CHAPTER IX.

THAT THE PAGANS ARE GUILTY BOTH IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC
OF THE SAME CRIMES THEY CHARGE UPON CHRISTIANS.

BUT for a fuller confutation I come now to prove that the heathens are guilty both in the dark, and in the face of the sun, of acting the same abominations they charge upon Christians, and their own guiltiness, perhaps, is the very thing which disposes them to believe the like of others. Infants have been sacrificed to Saturn publicly in Africa,¹ even to the proconsulship of Tiberius, who devoted the very trees about Saturn's temple to be gibbets for his priests, as accomplices in the murder, for contributing the protection of their shadow to such wicked practices. For the truth of this I appeal to the militia of my own country, who served the proconsul in the execution of this order. But these abominations are continued to this day in private. Thus you see that the Christians are not the only men who act in defiance of your laws; nor can all your severity pull up this wickedness by the roots, nor will your immortal alter his abominable worship upon any consideration; for since Saturn could find in his heart to eat up his own children, you may be sure he would continue his stomach for those of other people who are obliged to bring their own babes, and sacrifice them with their own hands, giving them the tenderest of words, when they are just upon cutting their throats, not out of any bowels of compassion, but for fear they should unhollow the mystery, and spoil the sacrifice with tears. And now, in my opinion, this parricide of

¹ *Infantes penes Africam Saturno palam immolabantur*, etc. The heathens had a notion (however they came by it is not to my present purpose to conjecture) that repentance alone was not sufficient to atone the Divine wrath without a bloody sacrifice, and therefore the blood of man and beast was brought in to supply the deficiency. Accordingly among the Phœnicians and Carthaginians it had been an ancient custom to choose by lot some children of the best quality for a sacrifice, and for those upon whom the lot fell there was no redemption. And they were likewise dressed according to their quality in the richest apparel to make the sacrifice more splendid. And having omitted these human sacrifices for some time, and during that omission being overcome by Agathocles, they offered two hundred sons of the nobility upon their altars to atone the deity for the neglect of human sacrifices. *Vid. Plat. dial. entitled Minos Dionys. Halicar. lib. i., Diodor. Sic. lib. xx., Lactan. lib. i. cap. 21, Euseb. Præpar. Evang. lib. iv., and Silius Ital. at the end of the fourth book speaks thus of Carthage:—*

*Mos fuit in populis, quos condidit advena Dido.
(Infandum dictu) Parvos imponere natos.*

yours, or slaughtering your own children, outdoes the simple homicide charged upon us by many degrees of barbarity. But infants are not the only offerings, for the Gauls cut a man to pieces upon the altars of Mercury,¹ in the flower of his strength. I omit the human sacrifices at Diana's Temple² in Taurica Chersonesus, which are the arguments of your tragedies, and which you seem to countenance by being so often at the theatres. But behold! in that most religious city of the pious descendants of pious Æneas, there is a certain Jupiter,³ whom at your religious games you propitiate with human blood in abundance. But these, say you, are bestiarian men, criminals already condemned to die by beasts. Alas-a-day! these are not men, I warrant ye, because they are condemned men; and are not your gods wonderfully beholden to you for offering to them such vile fellows? However that be, this is certain, it is human blood. O brave Christian Jove! your father's only son and heir in cruelty, worshipped with human blood, as the God of the Christians is falsely reported to be. But because, if you kill a child, it is not a farthing difference whether you kill it for a sacrifice, or for your own will (for killing a child will be always a crime, though not always equal, parricide being worse than mere homicide), since this, I say, is so, I shall now apply myself upon this subject unto the people of all ranks and conditions. How many about me might I justly reproach upon this head, not only of the mob continually blooded with Christians, and continually

¹ *Major ætas apud Gallos Mercurio prosecatur.* Cicero in *Orat. pro M. Fonteio*, speaking of the Gauls, has these words:—*Quis enim ignorat eos usque ad hanc diem retinere illam immanem ac barbaram consuetudinem hominum immolandorum?* And in his third book, *de Divinat.*, he mentions five Mercurys and makes Mercury Theutates the fifth who slew Argos, and for that flew into Egypt, and there instructed the Egyptians in laws and letters, from which Theutates the first month of their year, that is September, was called Theuth. This was the Mercury the Gauls sacrifice to, and which Lucan in his first book refers to.

*Ex quibus immitis placatur sanguine diro
Theutates, horrensque feris Altaribus Hesus.*

See more in Lactantius, lib. i. sec. 21, 50, Liv. 3, dec. lib. vi., Cæsar, lib. vi., *de bell. Gall.*

² *Remitto Tauricas Fabulas.* Herodotus in his fourth book says it was a custom among the Tauri to sacrifice every year the hundredth captive to Diana; and Lucan having spoken of Theutates and Hesus, adds:—

Et Taranis Scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ.

See P. Orosius in his preface to his fifth book, and Lactan. lib. i. sec. 21, p. 50, concerning the bloody rite of sacrificing strangers to Diana Taurica.

³ *Jupiter quidam.* Vid. Lactan. lib. i. sec. 21, p. 50. This was Jupiter Latiaris.

gaping for more, but also of you, presidents of cities and provinces, who have been the severest against us upon this very score? How many, I say, of both sorts might I deservedly charge with infant-murder? And not only so, but among the different kinds of death, for choosing some of the cruellest for their own children, such as drowning, or starving with cold or hunger, or exposing to the mercy of dogs, dying by the sword being too sweet a death for children, and such as a man would choose to fall by sooner than by any other ways of violence.

But Christians now are so far from homicide, that with them it is utterly unlawful to make away a child in the womb, when nature is in deliberation about the man; for to kill a child before it is born is to commit murder by way of advance; and there is no difference whether you destroy a child in its formation, or after it is formed and delivered. For we Christians look upon him as a man, who is one in embryo; for he is in being, like the fruit in blossom, and in a little time would have been a perfect man, had nature met with no disturbance.

As for the inhuman customs of banqueting upon blood, and such tragical dishes, you may read (for it is related by Herodotus,¹ I think) how that certain nations having opened a vein in their arm, solemnly drank of each other's blood for the confirmation of treaties; and something like this Catiline² put in practice in his conspiracy.

¹ *Est apud Herodotum opinor, etc.* Herodotus in his first book reports that it was the solemn way among the Medes and Lydians in making of leagues to strike each other on the shoulders with a naked sword, and then for the parties mutually to lick up the blood; and in his fourth book he tells us that the Scythian rite of entering into league was to fill a large cup of blood and wine mixed together (the blood of both the parties confederating), and having dipped their swords and arrows into it, to pledge each other in it, and so by turns drink it off. And Possidonium, and from him Athenæus, lib. ii. cap. 2, relates that the Germans at their banquets opened a vein in their face, and the parties mutually drinking up each other's blood, mixed with wine, was the ratification of the treaty. So much human blood was there spilt, especially in sacrificing to devils, till Christ came and redeemed us from the powers of darkness, and put an end to all bloody sacrifices, by that of Himself once made upon the cross.

² *Nescio quid et sub Catilina degustatum est.* The words of Sallust concerning Catiline are these—*Fuere eâ Tempestate, qui dicerent Catilinam oratione habitâ, cum ad jusjurandum Populares sceleric sui addicerent, Humani Corporis sanguinem vino permistum in pateris circumtulisse; inde cum post execrationem omnes degustassent, sicuti in solemnibus sacris fieri consuevit, dicitur aperuisse consilium, etc.* I have set down this of Sallust at large, because as it stands in the notes of Pamelius it is printed or quoted false in two places, and the last part quite omitted, which shows it to be a customary rite in some countries.

It is likewise reported that in some Scythian families the surviving friends eat up the dead ones.¹ But I need not go so far as Scythia, for we have now at this day as barbarous ceremonies at home; Bellona's priests² lancing their thighs, and taking up their own sacred blood in the palms of their hands, and giving it their communicants to drink. Those epileptic persons also who flock to the amphitheatres for the cure of their disease, intercept the reeking blood as it comes gushing from the gladiators' throats, and swill it off with greediness. What shall we say of those who gorge themselves with the beasts they kill upon the stage, who demand a piece of the boar, or the stag that is covered over with their own blood in the combat? Nay, the very paunches³ of boars stuffed with the crude indigested entrails of men are dishes much in vogue; and so man belches up man by surfeiting upon beasts fed with men. You who eat thus, bless me, how differently do you eat from Christians? But what can we think of men so perfectly brutish as to lick up the very first principles of life and blood, and so diet upon child and parent both at the same time? For shame therefore blush when you meet a Christian, who will not endure a drop of the blood of any animal among his victuals, and therefore for fear any should be lodged among the entrails, we abstain from things strangled, and such as die of themselves.

Lastly, among other experiments for the discovery of Christians this is one, to present them with blood puddings, as very well knowing our opinion about the unlawfulness of eating blood. This, I say, is the stumbling-block and offence you lay in the way of Christians; and what a strange thing is it, that you who are confident that the Christians are so religiously averse to the blood of beasts, should imagine them so sharp set upon the blood of men?

¹ *Apud quosdam gentiles Scytharum. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. tom. i. lib. iii. cap. 2.* And the notes of Tiraquell upon him.

² *Hodie isthic Bellonæ sacratus sanguis de femore proscisso.* In allusion to which Lucan, lib. i.—

*Diraque per populum Cumanæ Carmina vatis
Vulgantur, tum quos sectis Bellona lacertis
Sæva monet, etc.*

See more upon this in Beroaldus, and Lactan. lib. i. sec. 21.

³ *Ursorum alvei appetuntur cruditi antea adhuc de visceribus humanis.* To such a degree of luxury, or rather bestiality, were the Romans grown, that a bear's paunch stuffed with the reeking viscera or guts of gladiators was reckoned a rare dish, and by the sumptuary laws against luxury I find that *Verrina* and *Abdomina* (which I take to be the same with these *alvei*) were forbidden at feasts. *Vid. Plin. lib. viii. cap. 51.*

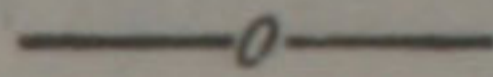
This could never be, unless you had tasted the blood of both, and found that of men to be the sweeter temptation; which therefore you should make like the censer of incense, to be another touchstone of a Christian; and so he might be detected as well by accepting the blood as refusing the sacrifice, and in like manner be put to death for tasting as he is now for sacrificing. And you the judges of life and death, need never fear the want of human blood to make the experiment. As for incest, where can you look to find such human monsters so likely as among the worshippers of an incestuous Jove? We have the authority of Ctesias¹ for the Persians mixing with their mothers. And the Macedonians are suspected, because when they first heard the tragical lamentations of Œdipus for this sin with his mother Jocasta, they cried out in ridicule—*ἔλαυνε εἰς τὴν μητέρα*,—Courage, noble warrior, and go on bravely against your mother.

Recollect now with yourselves, and you will see what a licence there is for incest, from some errors which must necessarily seduce into it, by the help and fuel of lust and luxury. For, first, you expose your sons to be taken up by the next passenger who happens to come by with more bowels than yourselves, or you emancipate them from all relation to you, in order to be adopted into nobler families; and by both these kinds of alienation it cannot well be, but that the knowledge of your children in some time must wear out and vanish; and for want of this knowledge, when the unnatural mixture has once taken root, it spreads continually, and the original stain diffuses itself from generation to generation. And then also you have an inseparable companion of your lust in every place; it sticks to you at home, and travels with you by land, and takes shipping with you at sea; and by this ubiquitarian lust, brothers and sisters may easily come together like the scattered seed in a wide field, and as travellers often do by the help of commerce, and mix in strange confusions, without the parties knowing anything of the relation. But as for Christians, their inviolable chastity is a hedge about them against such unhappy accidents; and by how

¹ *Persas cum Matribus misceri Ctesias refert.* Some fragments of Ctesias were published by Henry Stephens; but for the incest of the Persians it is notorious. See Strabo, lib. v. *ad fin.*, Curtius, lib. vii., and Catullus in *Gellium* sings thus:—

*Nascatur Magus ex Gellî Matrisque nefando
Concubitu, et discat Persicum aruspicium.
Nam Magus ex Matre et Nato gignatur oportet,
Si vera est Persarum impia Religio.*

much the purer they keep themselves from fornication and adultery, by so much the more, no doubt, are they preserved secure from the chance of incest. Nay, some among us, for fear of such disorders, have put themselves beyond the possibility of this sin, by a perpetual virginity, by preserving the innocence of a child to the extremity of age. If now, therefore, you would turn your eyes inward, and see the guilt in yourselves, you would see innocence in us, for contraries are best seen together; but you labour under a twofold blindness, which is, not to see things that are, and to seem to see things which really are not; the truth of this I will show in its proper place by an induction of particulars, but at present I shall pass to matters of more notorious evidence.



CHAPTER X.

THAT THE GODS OF THE GENTILES ARE NO GODS.

You say we are atheists, and will not be at the expense of a sacrifice for the life of the emperors; and if the first be true, the consequence is just, for if we will not offer to the gods for ourselves, it is not likely we should do it for others. It is upon this account, therefore, that we are convened as guilty of sacrilege and treason; this I take to be the main article, and may be looked upon as the sum of the charge against us, and therefore deserves a particular discussion; and we doubt not to acquit ourselves in this point, if prejudice and injustice be not our judges; prejudice, I say, which presumes things that are false to be true, and injustice, which rejects evident truth when heard.

We profess, then, to have laid aside the worship of your gods, from the time we knew them to be no gods; that therefore which you are to expect from us is, that we disprove them to be gods, and consequently not to be worshipped; for if they are gods, devotion no doubt is their due, and the Christians ought to be punished for deserting the gods, out of an opinion that they are not gods, if it can be made appear that they are. But gods they are, say you; for the truth of this we appeal from your words to your conscience, let that be our judge, and let that condemn us, if

you can deny all those you now worship for gods once to have been men. If you can be hearty in this denial, you shall be convinced of the mistake from your own antiquities testifying against them to this day, from the cities where they were born, and the countries where they left impressions of frailty; and alas! where the very tombs of the immortals are shown.

But I will not presume to run over the whole inventory of deities, their numbers are formidable; there are your new and old gods,¹ Greeks and Barbarians, Romans, strangers, captives, adoptives, proper, common, male and female, country, city, sea and camp gods. A man must have wondrous little to do with his time to give out their titles by retail, and so I shall lump them together, and speak of them only in gross; and this not to improve your knowledge, but only to quicken your memories, for you seem much inclined to forget many of your gods.

First, then, Saturn with you is the eldest deity in worship; from him we are to begin our reckoning of all your gods, of the most noted especially, and most in vogue, and he being the original god, we may judge of all his posterity from him. As much therefore as we can learn from history, we find that neither Diodorus the Greek, or Thallus, or Cassius Severus, or Cornelius Nepos, or any other commentator of antiquities speak of Saturn any otherwise than as of a man. And if you would argue from things, I cannot think of a place that can supply you with arguments so well as Italy; for there you may trace Saturn in the most expressive prints of man. After many expeditions from Greece, you will find him landed in your own country, and there by the consent of Janus or Janes (as the Salii call him) taking up his seat, the hill he inhabited called after his own name Saturninus, and the city he founded, Saturnia, to this day; and at length all Italy succeeded to this title, after that of *Ænotria*. The invention of writing,² and coining the

¹ *Novos Veteres, Barbaros, etc.* After the most diligent collection, Varro has mustered up an army of gods to the tune of above thirty thousand. The explanation of the titles, and some instances of each of the sort of gods mentioned, you may see in Pamelius upon this place; but for a fuller and more distinct account I refer to *Alex. ab Alex.* lib. ii. p. 379, and lib. vi. cap. 4, pp. 433 and 436.

² *Ab ipso primum Tabulæ, et Imagine signatus nummus et inde Ærario presidet.* This *Ærarium* or treasure-house, of which Saturn was president, was not only the public exchequer, but in it likewise were kept the Acts of the Senate, the books of records, and the *Libri Elephantini*, so called from their bigness, in which all the names of the citizens were registered, and from these books,

money with the king's image, you ascribe to Saturn; and for that reason you make him patron of the public treasury, which is placed in his temple. But now if Saturn was a man, and consequently the son of a man, he could not properly be the son of heaven and earth. And it was very natural for a person of an unknown race to be fathered upon these two, whose children in some sense we may be all said to be; for, considering how much our lives are all owing to the concurrent influences of heaven and earth, who does not by way of respect honour them with the title of common parents? Or it might come to pass from a custom of saying a person dropped from the skies, when he stepped in, unknown and unexpected by those about him. And so Saturn, from his surprising appearance in Italy, might be said to come from heaven. Besides, a person of an uncertain family had usually the denomination of a son of earth;¹ not to mention the rudeness of those times when the people were struck with the sight of a stranger as at the presence of a god; since the refined spirits of this polished age have made improvements of the folly, and raised them up into gods whom the other day they solemnly attended to the funeral. This is enough in reason to say about Saturn, though it is but little. I shall now do as much for Jove, and show him to be a mere man, as well as

entitled *Tabulæ publicæ*, the treasury was called Tabularium. See Servius upon that of Virgil, lib. ii. Georg.

—Aut Populi Tabularia vidit.

Imagine Signatus. Macrobius, *Saturn.* lib. i. cap. 7, reports that Janus having entertained Saturn, who came to him by ship, and having made him co-partner of his kingdom for the good instructions he received from him, the first money he stamped (which was brass) he impressed on one side the image of himself, and on the other the fore-deck of a ship, in memory of Saturn, according to that of Ovid. i. fast.

*Multa quidem didici; sed cur navalis in ære
Altera signata est, altera Forma biceps?
At bona Posteritas puppem formavit in ære
Hospitis adventum testificata Dei.*

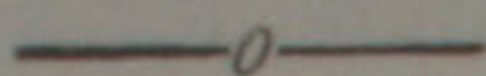
Pliny in lib. xxxiii. cap. 3, says that Servius Tullius was the first who stamped brass money with the image of beasts, and so from *pecude* the word *pecunia*. Afterwards the images of the Cæsars, with inscriptions and titles, were impressed upon the coin; so Nero in the habit of a harper. Sueton. *in vit. Ner.* and Alexander Severus in the habit of Alexander the Great, etc.

¹ *Terræ filios vulgus vocat, quorum genus est incertum.* Thus is Tytius called both by Homer and Virgil, Ἥγον ἱεροψόμενον τιτυὸν γαίης υἱόν. *Odyss.* lib. vii., and so again, lib. xi., Καὶ τιτυὸν εἶδον γαίης ἐρικυδέος υἱόν.

Nec non et Tytium Terræ omnipotentis Alumnum.

Id est, Filium, according to Servius. Virgil, *Æneid*, lib. vi.

the son of a man, and consequently the whole swarm of divinities mortal, and like father like son.



CHAPTER XI.

THAT THE FANCY OF MAKING GODS OF DEAD MEN IS A VERY FOOLISH FANCY.

AND because you have not the hardiness to deny but that your gods were once men, and yet stand up for posthumous divinities, or dead men turned into gods, I shall now consider the reasons for such an imagination. In the first place, then, you will be forced to grant some superior God who auctions¹ out His divinity, and upon good consideration makes gods of men; for men cannot naturalize themselves into gods; nor can any one else bestow the divine nature upon them, but him who is the proprietor of it. But now, if the supreme power itself cannot make gods, you then presume in vain upon made gods without a maker. Certainly if men could deify themselves, they would never have taken up with a human being, when a divine one was in their power. Upon supposition, therefore, that there is one who is able to make gods, I will examine the reasons for making them; and upon consideration I can find none, unless it be that the supreme God has too much business upon His hands to manage as it should be, without some sub-gods to assist Him. But, first, it is the most unbecoming idea of Almighty power, to think it wants the help of a man, much less of a dead one. And it is as unbecoming infinite wisdom, which could not but foresee its wants, not to have made an assistant deity from the beginning, rather than to tarry to the end of a man's life before he can supply his necessities.

But I can see no room for any help-meet for God; for whether you consider this great machine of the world as eternal with Pythagoras, or made in time with Plato, you will find it from its structure framed with all materials and movements necessary for the order and government of this vast body; and He who gave this

¹ *Mancipem quendam Divinitatis.* These *mancipes* were the chief among the publicans, or the principal farmers of the public revenues. *Vid. Cic. de Arusp. respons., et Alex. ab Alex. lib. ii. p. 520.*

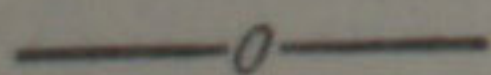
perfection to everything could not want it Himself, or stand in need of an assistant. He did not wait for a Saturn, or any of the Saturnian race, to work under Him in the ordering of His world. For men must be vain to the last degree to think that it did not always rain, and the stars dart their rays, and the sun and moon shine perpetually in their orbs, and the thunder bellow, and poor Jove himself, in whose hands now you put the bolts, tremble at the clap; and likewise that the fruits of the earth were not in being before Bacchus, and Ceres, and Minerva, and even the first man was formed out of it; because the world must be made and provided with all the necessaries of life before man can come to live in it. Lastly, your gods are reputed to be the inventors, and not the creators of these supports of life; but that which is found out must have a being before it can be found, and that which is thus in being cannot properly be said to be his who found it, but his who made it; because it was in existence before it was found out. But if Bacchus was consecrated for the discovery of vines, Lucullus, methinks, had hard usage to miss of a consecration for the plantation of cherry-trees in Italy; for he is celebrated as the author of this new fruit, because he first brought it over with him from Pontus.

Wherefore, if the universe was well appointed with all its furniture from the beginning, and everything was posted in its proper station, and adjusted with proper powers for the execution of its office, without any foreign assistance, this reason of yours for making of gods falls to the ground; because the places and functions you assign to them are supplied by nature, and all things would have always been just as they are, whether you had created any gods or no. But you turn over to another reason, and say that this conferring of godships was intended for the rewarding of virtue. From hence, I suppose, you will grant the god-making God Himself to be virtuous in perfection, and consequently not to dispense these divine honours at sixes and sevens, without having any respect to the merits of the persons. I desire you therefore to sum up the merits of those you worship for gods, and judge whether they are likely to lift men up into heaven, or not rather press them down to the very bottom of hell, which when the fit is upon you, you call the prison of the damned. This is the dungeon where you thrust the undutiful and incestuous, the adulterers, and ravishers of virgins, and abusers of themselves with mankind, the savage and the murderer, thieves and cheats, and whoever resembles some one god or other of yours; for you cannot name one without a fault, unless you disown him to have been a man. But they have left too

many prints of human frailty to deny them to be men, and such as not only prove them men, but such also as prove it incredible they should be made gods in another world.

If you sit upon the bench to punish such miscreants, and men of honour spit at such nasty acquaintance, and the supreme God takes up such fellows to associate with His Majesty, why then do you condemn them whose colleagues in wickedness you adore? This justice of yours is mere lampoon and satire upon heaven. If you would get into the good graces of your deities, I would advise you to consecrate the greatest rakes you can find, for certainly a consecration of such rakes is doing honour to those they are like.

But not to dwell longer upon things so unbecoming the divine nature, I will suppose your gods to have been good honest men, yet how many better and more noted have you left in hell? For there have you not left the wise Socrates, the just Aristides, the excellent General Themistocles, and Alexander the Great, Poly-crates the fortunate, Cræsus the rich, and Demosthenes the eloquent? Which of your gods had more gravity and wisdom than Cato, more justice and conduct, with courage, than Scipio, more magnanimity than Pompey, more success than Sylla, more wealth than Crassus, and more eloquence than Tully? How much more becoming had it been for him who had a foresight of these worthier personages to have stayed till their death before his creation of gods? But he was in haste, I suppose, for company, and having taken up those you worship, he made fast the door, and so heaven lies blushing now to see braver souls repining in hell.



CHAPTER XII.

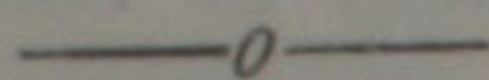
CONCERNING THE VANITY OF IMAGE-WORSHIP.

BUT I shall push these things no further, and take another course to set you right in the notions of your gods; for by demonstrating what they are not, I shall show what they are. And as much as I can learn of your gods, they have nothing of the venerable but merely their names, imposed by some old people dead and gone. I meet with no account of their lives but what is blended with

fables, and I find the whole fabric of your religion built upon a pack of human inventions. As for your images, I shall only observe that they are material, and often of the same matter with your common utensils; and it is ten to one but the holy image has some sister-vessel about the house, the pots and kettles being frequently of the same metal and piece with the gods. Nay, oftentimes the vessels themselves have the good luck to change their fate, and be turned into gods, by the help of consecration, which alters the property, and by the help of art, which alters the form, though not without great sacrilege and contumely to any of the gods in their very making. So that it is, indeed, a mighty consolation to us who are punished for these gods, to find them suffer the like with us, before they come to be worshipful; for Christians are fastened to crosses and stumps of trees; and have you ever an image that has not been so applied in its formation? It is upon a frame of wood in the form of a gibbet where the body first takes its degree of divinity. Our Christian sides are torn with nails; but how is every member of your poor gods mauled with hatchets, saws, and files? We lose our heads, and your gods have none, before the lead, and the glue, and the nails set them on. We are drawn about by wild beasts, and so Bacchus is drawn by tigers, Cybele by lions, and Ceres by serpents. We are cast into the fire, and your gods are cast and founded there also. We are condemned to the mines, and are not your gods dug out from thence? We are banished into islands, and there is not an island but is famous for the birth or burial of some god or other. If these are the ways of deifying, then while you are plaguing Christians you are only hammering them into gods, and your punishing ought properly to be called a consecration. But in truth your gods have not the sense to feel the hardships they undergo in making, nor the honours you pay them when made. And here I expect you should cry out, O blasphemy! O sacrilege! but you may gnash and foam as you please; yet remember that you yourselves are the admirers of that Seneca, who in his book of superstition has been much severer against you upon this head than I. If, therefore,¹ we will not adore your statues and

¹ *Igitur si Statuas et Imagines frigidas mortuorum suorum simillimas non adoramus.* This passage the Magdeburgenses, says Pamelius, have wrested against the use of images in the Church, and takes it ill of Zephyrus for concluding that the Christians in Tertullian's time had only the sign of the cross above the altar, and is so unfortunate in his zeal as to take occasion even from hence to justify, not only the use of images, but the worship of them too, in a very long note upon this place. But I shall not pretend to answer a person of such hardiness, only leave it to any impartial reader, whether he can think it possible that Tertullian would have been so merrily severe for this whole chapter together

images as cold as death, and in this so very like the bodies they represent, do not we deserve panegyric rather than punishment for leaving an acknowledged error? and which the very kites and mice and spiders know to be dead as well as we.¹ Is it possible we can hurt those we are certain are not? For that which is not, is not capable of suffering, because it is not.



CHAPTER XIII

CONCERNING THE IRREVERENCE OF THE HEATHEN TO THEIR GODS.

BUT gods they are in your opinion, say you; and it so, how comes it to pass that you use them so scurvily, with such profaneness, sacrilege, and irreverence? How dare you despise what you presume to be divine, and pull down the altars of them you fear, and ridicule the deities you defend? Examine the charge, and show where I falsify; for if you worship, some one god, and some another, how can it be but you must offend the god you overlook? For you cannot give the preference to one, without postponing another; for in the election and reprobation of gods, as well as men, honour and dishonour are inseparable relations. It is now, therefore, evident that you must put a slight upon the deities you reprobate, and that you cannot be afraid of offending those whom you have the boldness to reprobate. For as I sharply observed before, the fate of every god depends upon the vote of the senate, he must pass the house before he comes to be a god, and the house ungod him at pleasure. As for your domestic deities called Lares,² you

upon the heathens for the worship of images, had the Christians of his time done the like, by virtue of the Romish distinction between *Dulia* and *Latria*, without saying one word of such a distinction.

¹ *Quas Milvi et Mures et Araneæ intelligunt.* Horace himself takes the liberty of jesting in the like manner.

*Mentior at si quid, merdis caput inquiner albis
Corvorum.*

² *Domesticos Deos quos Lares dicitis.* These Lares were painted in the form of a dog, as having charge of the house committed to their custody, according to that of Ovid. *Fast.* 5.

Pervigilantque Lares, pervigilantque Canes.

The custom in sacrificing to these domestic deities was to eat up all that was offered. Hence that phrase, *Lari Sacrificat*, when a fellow eats up all before him, he sacrifices to his household god.

treat them I am sure but very homely ; for these household gods are pawned and sold and trucked like other household goods. Saturn is forced sometimes to serve in the kitchen, and Minerva in the laundry ; for when these images are worn out, or much battered by long worshipping, they make a great many good implements ; or if the master is in want, he strips his Lares ; for necessity is the most sacred and soonest served of any god about the house.

The gods of the public, by public order, are profaned just like these gods of the house, for they are bought and sold at market auctions, and entered into your books of account, and pay duties for their deityships ; for if the capitol and the herb-market are to be leased out to farm, they are both proclaimed by the same crier, and the prices of both adjudged under the same standard, and the farm of the god registered by the treasurer, like any other public rent. But the lands which are clogged with the greatest duties are the least valuable, and the heads which pay capitation are most ignoble, because these are marks of servitude. But among the gods I find it otherwise, for they who pay most tribute are looked upon as the most holy ; or rather they have the most devotion paid them who return the most custom. Your divine majesties are your merchandize, and their worships are carried about to taverns and ale-houses a-begging.¹ You demand money for entrance, and money for a place in your temple ; it is not possible to serve your gods gratis ; you turn the penny with them all. Besides, what honours do you confer upon your gods that you confer not upon dead men ? You give to both, chapels, and altars, and images, habited and adorned alike. The human image is dressed out to give an idea of the age, the art, and profession of the person deceased, and the divine one is apparelled with the same design, and in the same manner to exhibit the god. How does a funeral banquet² differ from a feast

¹ *Circuit cauponas Religio mendicans.* Here Tertullian no doubt alludes to the practice of the Corybantes, who with the picture of their goddess Cybele in their hands went dancing about the streets with pipes and cymbals playing before them, and keeping time to the thumps upon their breasts, and in this posture they begged all they met ; and from hence were called *Cybeles circuitatores*, the beggars or jugglers of Cybele, and in Greek—μητραγύρται, from μήτηρ, which in this place signifies Cybele, the great mother of the gods, and ἀγύρτης, an alms-gatherer or beggar.

² *Quo differt ab epulo Jovis silicernium ?* Silicernium was a funeral banquet to which the oldest sort were invited, and it being the custom to celebrate this feast upon a stone, the supper was termed *Silicernium quasi Silicænum*, that is, *cæna super silicem* ; and hence this word came to signify an old man ready for the grave, or a funeral banquet, or rather, as our own proverb has it, To give the crow a pudding.

to Jove, or the vessels you make use of to pour out wine to the gods above, from those you use for the shades below? What difference between a soothsayer and an embalmer, for they are both employed about the entrails of the dead? Nevertheless, I must own you act consistently with yourselves in performing divine honours to the dead emperors, because you did it to them living; and no doubt but the gods will acknowledge the favour, and thank you for putting them and their masters, the emperors, upon the level.

But when I see you adore Larentina,¹ a public strumpet, with the same honours as you do Juno, Ceres, and Diana, methinks I could wish you had taken into your roll the more noted Laïs and Phryne;² when you inaugurate Simon Magus³ with a statue and inscription, To the most Holy God; when you canonize a certain Ganymede⁴ (I know not who), nursed up in apartments at court, although, indeed, your old gods are not of a better family, yet they cannot but take it very ill that you should offer to make gods at this rate, now-a-days, as much as your forefathers did of old.

¹ *Larentinam publicam Scortum*, etc. This Larentina I take to be the same with Larentia in Lactantius, the wife of Faustulus, the nurse of Romulus, a noted prostitute among the shepherds, afterwards worshipped by the Romans with divine honours, as Faula, the mistress of Hercules, likewise was. *Vid.* Lactant. lib. i. sec. 20.

² *Laidem*. This same Laïs was a celebrated strumpet of Corinth, of whom A. Gellius tells this story: That Demosthenes went privily to her to know her price, she asked him a thousand drachmæ, or a talent, at which Demosthenes, being astonished, replied, οὐκ ἀνοῦμαι μυρίων δραχμῶν μεταμέλειαν, I will not buy repentance at so dear a rate. *Vid.* A. Gell. lib. i. cap. 8. And hence that of Horace—

Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.

³ *Simonem Magum Statuâ et Inscriptione Sancti Dei inauguratis*. Concerning this statue and inscription to Simon Magus, for which the Fathers have suffered so unjustly from some critics, I have spoken at large in my notes upon Justin's *Apology*.

⁴ *Nescio quem*, etc. This nameless person struck at by Tertullian, Justin Martyr speaks out: it was Antinous, Hadrian's Ganymede and by his order consecrated for this service.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT THE HEATHENS DO BUT MOCK THEIR GODS IN OFFERING
THE REFUSE AND THE VILEST PARTS OF THE SACRIFICE.

I SHALL now take a review of the rites of your religion, but will not insist upon the quality of your sacrifices, which you know to be the oldest and scabidest beasts you can find; if they happen to be fat and good, you chop off the hoofs and some outside bits, and such pieces only you vouchsafe your gods, which you bestow upon your dogs and slaves. Instead of offering Hercules the tenth of your goods,¹ you hardly lay one third of it upon his altar; not that I blame you for this, for believe me, I take it for a great instance of your wisdom, to save some of that which otherwise would be all lost.

But I shall turn to your writings; and, bless me! what strange stuff about your gods do I find, even in your institutions of prudence, and such books as are designed to polish a gentleman, and form him to all the offices of a civil life! Here I find your gods engaged by pairs like gladiators, one against another, helter skelter, some for Greeks, and some for Trojans. Venus wounded with a human

¹ *De Decima Herculis.* Pliny in his *Natural History*, lib. xii. cap. 14, mentions a law in Arabia which obliged every merchant to offer the tenth of his frankincense, the product of that country, to the god Sabis. We find also in Justin, lib. xviii. cap. 7, that the Carthaginians sent the tenth of their spoils, taken in the Sicilian war, to Hercules of Tyre. The Ethiopians paid the tenth to their god Assabinus. *Vid.* Plin. lib. xii. cap. 19. The Roman general Sylla dedicated the tenth of all his estate to Hercules, and so likewise did M. Crassus. *Vid.* Plutarch in *Sylla et Crasso.* Instances in abundance of this kind are to be seen in Selden's *Hist. of Tithes*, cap. 3, Mountag. *diatrib.* p. 1, cap. 3, and in Spencer *de leg. Hebr.* lib. iii. cap. 10. Now from hence will arise a question, how it is possible that nations so remote, and who never seem to have had the least commerce or acquaintance with each other, should come to hit upon the same notion as to dedicate an exact tenth, no more nor no less. This proportion is certainly in itself a thing indifferent, and consequently not discoverable by the light of nature, and the practice was too constant, regular, and universal to be ascribed to humour or fancy; nor can it with any probability be thought to have spread over the world from the Jewish nation, a nation debarred from corresponding with the Gentile world, and morally hated for the singularities of their religion, and besides the custom of dedicating a tenth, was a custom long before the Jews were an established people; it seems therefore most reasonable to believe that this custom-like sacrifice, priesthood and marriage, was derived from Adam to Noah; and from him continued by his posterity to the confusion at Babel, and by means of that universal dispersion spread over all the world.

shaft in rescuing her son Æneas¹ from Diomedes, just upon the point of killing him. The god of war in chains for thirteen months, and in a very lamentable pickle; and Jove by the help of a monster narrowly escaping the like treatment from the rest of the celestial gang. One while he is represented crying for his Sarpedon, another while in the arms of his grunting sister, recounting his amours, and protesting that of all his mistresses she is the darling. Besides, which of your poets takes not the liberty to disgrace a god for a compliment to his prince? One makes Apollo King Admetus's shepherd; another makes Neptune bricklayer to Laomedon; and the man of lyrics, Pindar, I mean, sings of Æsculapius's being thunderstruck for abusing his skill in physic out of covetousness. But I must needs say that Jove did ill, if Jove was the thunderer, in being so unnatural to his nephew, and so envious to so fine an artist. However, these things, if true, ought not to be divulged; nor invented, if false, by any who pretend so much zeal for the gods and their religion. But neither tragedians nor comedians are one bit more tender of the reputation of your deities; for you shall not meet a prologue that is not stuffed with the disasters and excesses of the family of some god or other. I shall say nothing of the philosophers—let the instance of Socrates serve for all—who in derision of your gods swore by an oak, a goat, and a dog. But Socrates, you say, was put to death for thus denying the gods; it must be confessed, indeed, that truth has always been on the suffering side, but yet since the Athenians repented of the sentence, and revenged his death with that of his accusers, and erected to him a statue of gold in their very temple; this, I say, is argument enough that upon second thoughts they came over to Socrates, and approved his testimony against the gods. But Diogenes also rallies very merrily upon Hercules, and the Roman cynic Varro² as waggishly introduces three hundred Joves or Jupiters without heads.

¹ *Quod filium suum Æneam pene interfectum*, etc. These words are not in Rigaltius's edition, but being in that of Pamelius, and an illustration of the story, I have translated them; and the following fables, which the poets have told to the eternal disgrace of the heathen gods, are so common, and so frequently occur in all the Apologists, that I will not presume the reader ignorant.

² *Romanus Cynicus Varro*. He reckons up forty-three Hercules, as well as three hundred headless Joves. *Vid. Tiraquell upon Alex. ab Alex. lib. ii. p. 379.*

CHAPTER XV.

CONCERNING THE SHAMEFUL REPRESENTATION OF THE GODS
UPON THE STAGE AND AMPHITHEATRE.

THE profane wits are continually at work to raise you pleasure at the disgrace of the gods; when you see the farces of Lentulus or Hostilius acted, tell me whether it be the mimics or the gods you laugh at. You can sit out Anubis the adulterer,¹ and see Luna-masculus played, or Diana whipped, or the last will and testament of dying Jove, or the three hunger-starved Hercules. But besides these pieces of buffoonery, all your comedies and tragedies² are chiefly freighted with the uncleanness of your gods. It is a public pleasure to behold Sol in sadness for the fall of his son Phaëton. You can see without a blush the mother of the gods, old Cybele, sighing after a coy shepherd. You can bear to hear all the titles of Jove's adventures sung upon the theatre; and see with patience Paris sit in judgment upon Juno, Venus, and Minerva. What a lewd and infamous head is that which is masked over to personate a god! What a prostitute body, formed for the stage by a long

¹ *Mœchum Anubim, Lunam Masculum*, etc. We may easily conjecture from the several arguments of these farces, that they were a lampoon and public mockery of the gods then in worship; but none of those mentioned are extant as I know of. The titles of all, but that of Luna Masculus, do in some measure explain them; and if it may be forgiven in a matter of no moment, and where the commentators are silent, to put in my opinion, it is this,—There was in Assyria among the Carræ a temple dedicated to Luna, in which whoever offered his supplications to Luna was sure to be under petticoat government; but he who sacrificed to Lunus should continue master of his wife. *Vid.* Al. Spartian. in *Antonin. Caracalla*. This no doubt was a subject comical enough for the wits of the time to make merry with the goddess Luna, and the god Lunus, which I take to be the Luna Masculus; though there may be another meaning not fit to be mentioned.

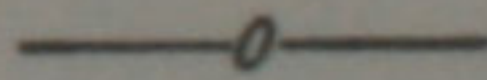
² *Sed et Histrionum literæ omnem fœditatem eorum designant.* *An. Urb. Cond.* 400, there happened a great sickness, and the Romans superstitiously conceiving that the wrath of the gods could no otherwise be propitiated than by the institution of some new games, sent for certain stage-players from Hetruria, which they called Histriones, from the Hetrurian word *hister*, which signifies such a player. *Vid.* Polydor. *de Invent.* lib. iii. cap. 13. These plays in time, especially the Mimicæ, grew to that excessive lewdness, that the pantomimi were put down by Domitian. *Vid.* Sueton. in *vita ejus*, cap. 7. Afterwards expelled by Trajan; and the Histriones by Tiberius. *Vid.* Tacit. lib. iv., and even by Nero, Tacit. lib. xiii., and Sueton. in *vita ejus*, cap. 13. And had Tertullian lived in our day, and seen the heathenish freedoms of the stage in a Christian commonwealth, he would have passed a severer censure upon the authors, players, and spectators, who countenance them without a blush, than he did upon those in the age in which he lived.

course of effeminacy, is that which plays Minerva or Hercules! What profanation and violence is this to divine majesty! While you applaud the actors, do you not hiss your gods out of the world? But may be I am to think you more religious in the amphitheatre, where the gods are brought in dancing upon human blood, and upon the dead bodies of criminals; the gods, I say, which supply the fable, unless it be when the poor actors are forced to suffer to the life, and be the very gods themselves. For we have seen an actor truly suffer castration in personating the god Atys of Pessinus; and another playing Hercules in real flames; and among the ludicrous barbarities¹ which are exhibited at noonday, for the entertainment of those who are more greedy of them than dinner. I could not forbear smiling to see Mercury going about with a rod of iron red hot, probing the bodies to fetch out the souls, and Jove's brother Pluto, in like manner, with his mallet in his hand to finish those that were not quite dead, and make them ready for the ferry-boat. But now if every one of these things, and many more of the same complexion I could produce, notoriously tend to the disquiet of your gods in possession, and to lay their divine honours in the dust,

¹ *Inter Ludicras meridianorum crudelitates.* To understand this, we must remember that in the morning men were brought forth upon the theatre to fight with wild beasts, and these morning combatants were allowed arms offensive and defensive. Another sort were brought forth about noon (called therefore Meridiani) naked, with swords only in one hand cutting, and with the other hand empty, grasping and tearing each other's flesh. *Vid. Sueton. Claud. 34;* so that Seneca, *Ep. 7*, comparing these two sorts of combats, sayeth, *Quicquid antea pugnatum est, misericordia fuit.* But that which I think more material to remark (especially since Pamelius and Rigaltius have not) is, the peculiar light that this custom of Meridian cruelties lets into the 9th verse of the 4th chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. The words are these, "I think God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed unto death; for we are a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." This verse runs all in terms agonistical, *ἰσχάτους*, hath set forth us last, or as the Meridian gladiators, the word *ἀπιδείξειν* is properly *Ostendit*, which signifies the author or exhibitor of these inhuman sights; and Lipsius makes *Ostendere Munus* in Tully to be the same with *Proponere Munus* in Suetonius, both signifying the setter forth or donor of these combats, *Vid. Lips. in sat. lib. ii. cap. 18.* God hath set forth us the apostles last, *ἰπιθανατίους*, as men appointed unto death, just as the last gladiators were; and *θίατρον ἰγενήθημεν*, we are made a spectacle. All which evidently relate to the *Meridianorum crudelitates*; and Tertullian, lib. *de pud.* p. 566, cites the aforementioned verse thus, *Puto nos Deus Apostolos novissimos elegit, velut Bestiarios*; "I think God has chosen out us apostles last, as the bestiarii, or men condemned to be torn in pieces by wild beasts." These being the last and bloodiest spectacles, which for that day appeared upon the theatre, and for which many were so fond that they would stay out noon and lose their dinner; for this likewise Rigaltius would have included in this expression, though I think without much reason. However, I have translated it with this intimation.

why then they cannot be looked upon as acted upon a public stage, but merely in ridicule of religion, both by the actors and spectators also, who delight in such plays. But these you will say are ludicrous and pastimes only; but now if I give you an appendix of some serious debaucheries, which your consciences will testify to be as true as what I have just now spoken of with relation to the theatre, how that adulteries are become a merchandise in the very temple, and women picked up at the altars, and the lust fulfilled in the apartments of the sacristans, and under the same pontific vestments, the very incense still smoking before their eyes. If these, I say, are abominations in vogue among the heathen, I do not see but the heathen gods have more reason to put in their complaints against them than against Christians.

The sacrilegious profaners of temples are only among yourselves; for Christians never enter your temples while you are serving your idols; if they worshipped your gods, they might serve them perhaps as you do. But if Christians do not worship the things you worship, pray what is it, say you, that they do worship? This then is the subject now under examination, that we Christians are the worshippers of the true God, who do not worship your false ones, nor go any longer astray after them, when our eyes have been opened to see our error. Here then I shall present you with the whole series of our religion, having first returned an answer to some groundless objections against it



CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING THE ASS'S HEAD, AND OTHER SUCH LIKE VANITIES CHARGED UPON THE CHRISTIANS.

FOR some of you have dreamed yourselves into a belief that an ass's head is the Christian's God. This was insinuated first by Cornelius Tacitus,¹ who in his fifth book, entering upon the Jewish

¹ *Cornelius Tacitus hanc suspicionem inseruit.* This story concerning the ass's head, and the ground of worshipping it, is not only reported confidently by Tacitus, but also by Plutarch. *Vid. Plut. Sympos. lib. iv. Quest. 5, p. 670,* and so likewise by Appio the Alexandrian many years before, in his books against the Jews. And this fable has been as confidently taken up, and as

war under Vespasian, begins with the history of that nation, their original, name, and religion, and giving a loose to his invention, reports that the Jews being delivered, or as he will have it, banished from Egypt, and being in great want of water in the deserts of Arabia, put themselves under the conduct of some wild asses they met by chance, concluding that they were going to drink after pasture, and being in the very article of necessity thus luckily revived, out of gratitude to their benefactors, consecrated a head resembling that of the beasts who had befriended them in extremity. This account I take to have bred the opinion about the ass's head; because we, deriving our religion from the Jews, might well be thought to be initiated in the worship of the same idol.

But yet this same author Cornelius Tacitus, in truth a great broacher of lies, in the very same history relates that Cn. Pompey having sacked Jerusalem, to gratify his curiosity in discovering the mysteries of the Jewish religion, went into the temple, and found not one statue or image therein; whereas, had they worshipped any graven image, he had certainly found it in the most holy place; and so much the rather because there the vanity had been in no danger of a discovery from strangers, that being a place which the high priests alone were permitted to enter, and which was covered with a veil that kept it from every other eye. As for the objection of the ass's head, I cannot but admire you should insist upon it against Christians, you who cannot deny but that you pay divine honours to all the beasts of burthen, to asses' heads and bodies both, together with their goddess Epona.¹ But here, perhaps, lies the crime, that among the worshippers of every animal we should

ridiculously improved by some modern atheists, to discredit the miracle of Moses in making the waters flow out of the rock, who content themselves to solve this mighty work only by saying with an air of assurance that Moses did all he did in this by the help of a wild ass, which he made to follow him, by the sagacity of which thirsty ass he discovered a secret spring in the rock.

¹ *Cum sua Epona.* This Epona was the goddess of stables, and is likewise taken notice of, and read by Minutius Felix just as Rigaltius reads it. Though there is a terrible dispute among the critics, a great cry, and very little wool, about the spelling and quantity of this goddess's name; some spelling it Hippona, and making the middle syllable long; others spelling it as Rigaltius does, and making the middle syllable short, and thus Prudentius in his *Apotheosi* makes it,

Nemo Cloacinæ aut Eponæ super astra Deabus.

Whoever thinks it worth while may see this point fully cleared by Dr. Holyday in his note upon that passage in the 8th Sat. of Juvenal.

Jurat solam Eponam.

be the ass-worshippers only. I come now to another calumny, which blackens us with the adoration of a cross;¹ and here I shall prove the calumniator himself to be a fellow-worshipper or sharer in the scandal; for he that worships any piece of timber is guilty of the thing charged upon us; for what signifies the difference of dress and figure, while the matter and substance is the same—they are wooden gods at best? Yet where is the difference between a plain cross and your Athenian Pallas, and Pharian Ceres, which

¹ *Sed et qui Crucis Religiosos nos putat.* The primitive Christians (as I have already observed upon Justin Martyr), from signing themselves in baptism with the sign of the cross, and the constant use of it almost in the most common actions of life in honour of their crucified Master, were defamed by the heathens as worshippers of a cross. Tertullian therefore in this place sets himself to wipe off this scandal from the Christians, and does it as effectually, I think, as words can do it. And yet Pamelius is so very sanguine as to affirm that this passage, however understood, most certainly makes for the worship of the cross. That is, let Tertullian speak what he will against the worship of the cross, yet he most certainly speaks for it; but let us consider the case. Our author is here not only answering but retorting the objection of worshipping a cross upon the objectors themselves, and to this purpose makes use of the argument *ad hominem*; and says that they of all men had the least reason to charge the worship of a cross upon Christians, because there was not an image they erected but what resembled a cross in part; and then with his usual smartness concludes that we who worship an entire cross, if we do worship it, methinks have much the better on it of you, who worship it only by halves. “If we do worship it,” says this commentator, is only a wise and wary expression, frequent with the primitive Fathers; for fear, had he confessed the worship of the cross freely, it might have confirmed the heathen in their old idolatry. And this is so true, says Pamelius, that in the 21 cap. Tertullian durst not speak out that the Christians worshipped Christ, but God only through Christ. But wise reserves and wary expressions, and such pious frauds, were strange things to primitive Christians. Idolatry was the reigning sin of these times, and what all the Christian apologists you will find labour most of all to expose and ridicule out of the world. Justin Martyr spends great part of his *First Apology* in doing so, plainly and publicly affirming that the Christians worshipped one God only in the Trinity of Persons, and argues at the same rate against worshipping of crosses as Tertullian here does. Minutius Felix does the very same likewise, and says in the person of Octavius, *Cruces etiam nec colimus, nec optamus*; “as for crosses, we neither desire nor worship them,” p. 89. And our Tertullian is so bold a writer, so free and open in his confessions, and so liberal of his satire upon all occasions, that he would be the last man I should charge with reserve and caution. The useful distinction between Latria and Dulia never entered into his head; nor did any of the first Fathers ever imagine that there was anything in the Christian religion which if discovered might confirm the heathens in their idolatry. And in the very chapter referred to by Pamelius, our author makes it his business to vindicate the Christians from the charge of idolatry, by proving Christ to be the Logos, the Son of God, and truly and properly God, and that this hypostatic union of the divine with the human nature was the foundation of that divine worship which Christians paid to Christ; to which excellent chapter I recommend the reader.

are but rude, unpolished posts exposed without a stroke or impression of the artist upon them? There is not an image you erect but resembles a cross in part; so that we who worship an entire cross, if we do worship it, methinks have much the better on it of you who worship but half a cross.

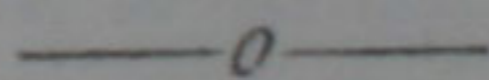
I have already mentioned how all your earthen gods derive their divinity from a cross, the image-maker putting the clay upon crosslike engines before he forms it; but you likewise adore your goddess Victoria in this form, for crosses are the inward part of this deity, your trophies being only poles laid across, and covered over with the spoils of the enemy. For indeed the Roman religion is entirely martial; they worship their standards, and swear by their standards, and pay diviner respects to their standards more than to any other god whatever. All the rich embossments and embroidery of images upon your colours are but necklaces to a cross, and the flags and streamers are but the robes of crosses; and really I cannot but commend your care and tenderness in not letting your crosses go naked, and not consecrating them till they are in the best apparel. Others with a greater show of reason take us for worshippers of the sun.¹ These send us to the religion of Persia, though we are far from adoring a painted sun, like them who carry about his image everywhere upon their bucklers. This suspicion took its rise from hence, because it was observed that Christians prayed with their faces towards the east. But some of you likewise out of an affectation of adoring some of the celestial bodies wag your lips towards the rising sun; but if we, like them,

¹ *Alii plane humanius et verisimilius solem credant Deum nostrum.* Here again it is very observable (though Pamelius thought it his best way not to observe it) that those who objected the worship of the sun to Christians, did it with greater appearance of truth than those who objected the worshipping a cross. The ground of this slander you have in the text; but that which I think worthy our notice is this, that Tertullian in this place expressly says that the Christians in his time worshipped towards the east; he says the same likewise in his book *ad Nat.* lib. i. cap. 13, and so does Clemens Alexandrinus, *Strom.* 7. And also Origen, *Hom.* 5, in *Numer.* cap. 4, p. 210. Their altars were usually placed to the east, and when they worshipped they always turned to the altar. And therefore when Socrates mentions the church of Antioch, in which he says the altar stood towards the west, he withal adds that the situation of the altar was inverted. *Vid. Socrat. Hist.* lib. v. cap. 22. As the Jews therefore bowed themselves down towards the mercy-seat, so did the Christians in like manner bow their faces towards the holy table, praying with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" as is evident from the liturgies of St. Chrysostom and St. Basil. So little knowledge of antiquity, or so much wilful disrespect to the best Christians in the purest ages, do some men show in condemning the most primitive and reverential ceremony of bowing towards the table of the Lord.

celebrate Sunday as a festival and day of rejoicing, it is for a reason vastly distant from that of worshipping the sun; for we solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath, and devote it to ease and eating, deviating from the old Jewish customs, which they are now very ignorant of.

But there is a strange edition of our God now exposed about the city; the picture was published first by a rascally gladiator, very notable for his dodging tricks in combating with beasts, and published, I say, with this inscription—Onochoetes the God of the Christians.¹ He had the ears of an ass, with a hoof on one foot, and holding a book in another, and clothed in a gown. We could not forbear smiling both at the name and the extravagance of the figure. But they certainly ought to fall down before this bifarious deity, upon his first appearance, who are used to worship such monstrous compounds, branching out into the heads of a dog and a lion, and with horns like a buck and a ram, and with haunches like a goat, and shanks like a serpent, with wings upon their feet and backs.

But this is over and above, because the world should see that I have not omitted anything industriously, and not only answered all the objections, but turned them upon our adversaries; and now having wiped ourselves clean of their aspersions, I shall proceed to the demonstration of the Christian religion.



CHAPTER XVII.

CONCERNING THE GOD OF CHRISTIANS.

THE God we worship is one God, that Almighty Being who fetched this whole mass of matter, with all the elements, bodies and spirits which compose the universe, purely out of nothing, by the word of His power which spoke them into being, and by that wisdom which ranged them into this admirable order, for a becoming image and glorious expression of His divine majesty,

Deus Christianorum Onochoetes. Concerning the various lections of this word, see Rigaltius upon this place, and Voss. *de Idol.* lib. iii. cap. 5, p. 563.

which world the Greeks call by a word implying beauty. This same God is invisible, though we discern His infinite majesty in all His works, and whom we cannot touch, though represented to us by divine revelation, and united to us by His Spirit; and incomprehensible, though we come to some imperfect ideas of Him by the help of our senses.

These are the characters of the true God, but that God which is sensibly visible, palpable, and comprehensible is of less value than the very eyes that see Him, and the hands that handle Him, and the understanding that grasps Him; for that which is immense is measurable by nothing but itself, the things that are, force the knowledge of Him indeed in some measure upon us, but our capacities can never hold Him. And thus by the evidence of His works, and the immensity of His being, God becomes intelligible, and at the same time passes all understanding. And this it is that renders men without excuse, because they care not to retain that God in their knowledge, whom they cannot avoid knowing. For shall I show you Him in the vast variety of wonders which encompass our beings, and preserve them, and which serve not only to fill us with delight, but awe and wonder? Shall I show you Him from the inward testimony of your very soul; which, notwithstanding its pressure in this prison of the body; notwithstanding it has been scribbled over by vicious institutions, or inclosed by bad examples; notwithstanding it has been emasculated by lust and concupiscence, and in bondage to the worship of false gods. Yet nevertheless, I say, when the soul comes to herself, as from a debauch, or after sleep, or a fit of sickness, and recovers her health and reflection, she has recourse to the name of the God, and invokes Him by the single name of the God. This being the proper title, and emphatically expressive of the true God; the great God, the good God, the God which is the giver of all good things, are forms of speech in every one's mouth upon special occasions. This God is appealed to as the Judge of the world, by saying, God sees everything, and I recommend myself to God, and God will recompense me. Oh! what are all these sayings but the writings of God upon the heart, but the testimonies of the soul thus far by nature Christian? And when she has these words in her mouth, she turns not her eyes to the capitol, but up to heaven, as well knowing that to be the residence of the living God, and that He is the author of her being, and heaven the place of her original.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCERNING THE SEPTUAGINT, OR THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS
TRANSLATED INTO GREEK BY THE ENDEAVOURS OF PTOLEMY
PHILADELPHUS.

BUT in order to bring men to a more perfect and powerful knowledge of the divine nature, and also of the methods of His wisdom, and the laws of His will, God has added to the light of nature an instrument in writing of these things, for the instruction of those who are willing to be at the pains of inquiring after Him,¹ and desirous to find Him in their inquiries, and to believe Him when found, and serve Him when believed. For this end, the most just and innocent persons, such who have lived up most faithfully to the instructions of nature, and consequently the most becoming or the best prepared subjects for larger communications of divine knowledge, such, I say, were sent out from the beginning with mighty effusions of the Holy Spirit to preach to the world that there is but one only God, that it is He who created all things and formed man out of the earth (for He indeed is the true Prometheus), who methodized the world into this variety of seasons, and in succeeding ages published His divine majesty and vengeance by a deluge of water, and fire, and brimstone from heaven, who has positively determined the laws He will be served by, if we will serve Him with acceptance; which laws you know not and will not learn; but to the observers of them has destined rewards, who, when He comes to judgment at the last day, having raised all the dead² that have been dead from the beginning of the world, and restored to every man his body, and summoned the whole world before Him to examine and render to all according to their works, He will recompense His true worshippers with life eternal, but will sentence the wicked into perpetual running streams of fire everlasting.

¹ *Si qui velit de Deo inquirere*, etc. Revelation was added for the assistance of corrupted nature, but then it was so wisely tempered with light and darkness, that those only who search the Scriptures with an honest heart, in order to believe and obey what they find, will be the better for them. Whoever reads them with such a disposition will find himself necessitated to believe them; according to that of our Saviour, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

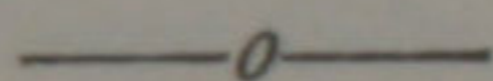
² *Suscitatis omnibus ab initio defunctis*. Here again we find Tertullian, as well as Justin Martyr, expressly against Mr. Dodwell's notion of a limited resurrection founded upon the natural mortality of the soul.

These things were once the subject of our wit and drollery,¹ as they are now of yours; we have been heathens, as you are, for men are not born, but made Christians. As to those excellent personages I mentioned, so extraordinarily assisted to preach the world into the notion of one only God, they were called prophets from their office of foretelling things to come. The oracles they delivered, and the miracles they wrought for the confirmation of divine truth, were consigned to writing, and the books treasured up, and are preserved to this day; for the most learned of the Ptolemys, surnamed Philadelphus, and the most curious man living in all sorts of literature, and rivalling Pisistratus,² I suppose, in the glories of a library, among other choice pieces which he hunted after, famed either for their antiquity or the rarities they contained, by the advice of his library-keeper, Demetrius Phalereus, the most approved grammarian and

¹ *Hæc et nos risimus aliquando, de vestris fuimus.* From these words we find that Tertullian had been a heathen, and such a one too as had made very merry with the Christian religion. He had as quick and pointed a wit, and as good a knack at rallying and ridicule as the best of them, and his talent this way, and his course of life (which by his own confession was none of the chastest), no doubt provoked all his satire against a doctrine so new, and so cross to his inclinations. However, upon serious consideration, and weighing matters well together, he was overpowered by the goodness and evidence of divine truth, in spite of his passions. And the libertines and unbelievers of our own age (who are by no means beforehand with our Tertullian either in point of wit or reason), would they but as impartially examine the proofs of Christianity, they would find themselves as unable to withstand them as our author confesses himself to be.

² *Pisistratum opinor, etc.* The libraries of Ptolemy and Pisistratus the tyrant are both mentioned by A. Gellius, lib. vi. cap. 17, but Tertullian speaks doubtfully whether Ptolemy Philadelphus erected his library in imitation of Pisistratus or no, and not without reason, because it is probable that the king of Pergamus, in imitation of whom Ptolemy set up his library, was Eumenes. All the ancient Fathers have believed after Josephus and Philo, that the version not only of the Pentateuch but of the whole Bible commonly called the Septuagint, was composed by seventy-two Jews sent to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who desired to have the Jewish books in Greek to adorn his magnificent library at Alexandria, under the care and supervisal of Demetrius Phalereus, an Athenian. What the critics have since urged against this opinion of the Fathers, and against the authority of Aristæus and Aristobulus, upon whom (say they) the Fathers took this story in trust, would be too tedious to insert here, and therefore I refer the reader to the learned Du Pin's preliminary Dissertation about the authors of the Bible, vol. i. sec. 3, p. 35. However, I cannot but say that I do verily believe that there was a Greek version of the Bible made in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus; for to me it does not seem credible that the authors of the books which pass under the titles of Aristæus and Aristobulus entirely forged the whole story; much more reasonable is it to believe that these authors only dressed up a certain matter of fact with some additions of their own. F. Simon conjectures that this version was called the Septuagint, because it was approved by the Sanhedrim; but this, like most of his conjectures, is wild, and without any foundation. See likewise B. Stillingfleet's *Orig. Sac.* lib. i. cap. 3.

critic of his time, sent to the Jews for their sacred writings in their own mother tongue, and which were in their hands alone; for the prophets were raised up out of this nation, and the prophecies addressed to them, as a peculiar people, chosen of God out of respect to their forefathers. Those who are now called Jews went heretofore by the name of Hebrews, and from hence is the title of the Hebrew tongue. The Jews gratified the king in the request, and not only sent him their Bible, but also for fear their language should not be understood, sent seventy-two interpreters to translate it into Greek. This is attested by Menedemus, the famous assertor of a providence, who joined with the Jews in this notion, and was a great admirer of their writings. We have likewise the testimony of Aristæus for the truth of this, who composed a book in Greek upon the same subject. And in Ptolemy's library near the temple of Serapis, among other curiosities are these sacred writings shown to this day. And besides all this, the Jews frequently and publicly on every Sabbath read the same; they are tolerated to do it, and pay a tax for the toleration. Whoever hears them will find the worship of one God, and whoever will be at the pains to understand them will find himself necessitated to believe them.



CHAPTER XIX.

CONCERNING THE ANTIQUITY OF THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS.

ONE great argument for the authority of these sacred writings is the greatness of their antiquity;¹ an argument you yourselves are pleased to make use of for the defence of your own religion. I say, therefore, that before any of your public monuments and inscrip-

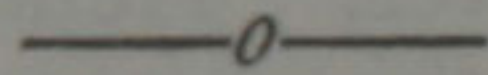
¹ *Primam Instrumentis istis auctoritatem summa Antiquitas vindicat.* The strongest and shrewdest adversary Christianity ever met with was the philosopher Porphyrius. He was a man too well versed in antiquity to depend upon the vain pretences of the Græcians, and therefore made it his business to search after the most ancient records, to find something to match the antiquity of Holy Scripture. And after all his search, he could find no author to vie with Moses but Sanchoniathon; and yet when he had made the most of him, he was forced to allow him younger than Moses, though he made him older than the Trojan wars. Nay, he goes about to prove the truth of Sanchoniathon's history by the agreement of it with that of Moses, concerning the Jews both as to their names and places, and so this Goliath fell by his own sword, and defended the cause he designed to destroy. *Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. x. cap. 8, p. 285.*

tions, before any of your forms of government, before the oldest of your books, and the original of many nations, and foundation of many famous cities, and the very greyest of historians ; and lastly, before the invention of letters¹ (the interpreters of things, and the most faithful repositories of action), and hitherto, methinks, I have said but little, I say therefore before the very being of your gods, your temples, oracles, and sacrifices, were the writings of one of our prophets extant, which are the treasury of the Jewish religion, and by consequence of the Christian. If you have heard of Moses the prophet, I will tell you his age ; he was contemporary with Inachus, the first king of the Argives, older by three hundred and ninety-three years than Danaus, the oldest in your histories. About a thousand years before the destruction of Troy, or as others reckon, about five hundred years before Homer ;² the rest of the prophets, though later than Moses, yet the latest of them fall in with some of the first of your sages, lawgivers, and historians. The proof of these things is not a matter of much difficulty, but only it would swell this

¹ *Ipsas denique effigies literarum*, etc. Before the very use or knowledge of letters. It is generally acknowledged by Herodotus, Philostratus, and the most learned of the Greeks, that the Græcians received their very letters from the Phœnicians by Cadmus ; and Parius, the author of the Greek Chronicle in the Marmora Arundeliana, makes Cadmus's coming into Greece to be in the time of Hellen, the son of Deucalion, which according to Cappellus was Anno Mun. 2995, though Mr. Selden sets it something lower, in the eleventh generation after Moses, about the time of Samuel ; and that the Greek alphabet came from the Phœnician or Hebrew, is evident from the very sound of the names of the letters, as well as their form and order. Thus the Greek *ἄλφα* answers to the Hebrew *aleph*, *βῆτα* to *beth*, *γάμμα* to *gimel*, *δέλτα* to *daloth*, etc., all which, both as to form, order, and name, you may see in a diagram exhibited by the great Bochart. *Geogr.* lib. i. cap. 20. And for anything of history in Greece, we meet with nothing before the beginning of the Olympiads, when the world was above three thousand years' standing.

² *Quingentis amplius et Homerum*. Five hundred years before Hom. Josephus in his first book against Apion says that the Græcians of all nations, though they boasted so much of antiquity, had the least reasons to do it ; for they were but of yesterday in respect of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Phœnicians, and that notwithstanding they boasted of the invention of letters from Cadmus, yet could they not produce any inscription or sign of letters in his time, and that Homer was the most ancient book extant among them ; nor was this left in writing, but learnt only by heart like other songs, and therefore we find so many fragments and incongruities in his works when they came to be committed to writing from bare memory. But herein Josephus is thought to have strained the point too far, because of the inscription of Amphitrio at Thebes, in the temple of Apollo Ismenius in the old Ionic letters, and two others of the same age to be seen in Herodotus, and for some other reasons. *Vid.* Bochart. *Geog.* lib. i. cap. 20. But however this be, certain it is that we find no records of history in Greece till the world was full three thousand years of age and more.

discourse beyond the bounds of an Apology, it is more tedious than hard; for abundance of volumes are to be carefully searched into, to make the computation by a different gesture of the fingers.¹ We must unlock the archives of the most ancient people, of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Phœnicians. We must appeal to the writers of those countries who obliged posterity with the knowledge of these things, namely, Manethon the Egyptian, Berosus the Chaldean, Iromus the Phœnician, King of Tyre, and their followers, Ptolemy of Mendes, and Menander the Ephesian, and Demetrius Phalereus, and King Juba, and Apion, and Thallus, and Josephus, a Jewish writer of Jewish antiquities, who either approved these authors or discovered their errors.² We must also compare the registers of Greece to see what things were done, and when, in order to adjust the successive periods and links of time, which is necessary to clear up history, and set actions in their proper light. And yet, methinks, I have done this already in some measure, and proved, in part, what I proposed, by giving you here a sprinkling of those authors, where you may see the proofs at large. But I conclude it better not to pursue this point further, for fear that by being in haste, either I should not say enough to set the matter beyond dispute, or else by pursuing it particularly I should deviate too far from the main design of this Apology.



CHAPTER XX.

THAT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PROPHECIES IN HOLY SCRIPTURES PROVE THEM TO BE OF AUTHORITY DIVINE.

IF for the reasons aforesaid I have been shorter than you might expect in my proofs of the antiquity of Holy Scripture, I shall

¹ *Multis instrumentis cum digitorum suppatariis gesticulis adsidendum est.* Abundance of volumes are to be searched into to make the computation by a different gesture of the fingers. The multiplication table performed by a different gesture of the fingers is now almost known to everybody; but whether it was in use in Tertullian's time, and referred to here by him, I will not say; but surely he has exactly expressed it. And the reason for calling the figures from 1 to 9 digits, I believe, was from this computation by the fingers.

² *Manethon Ægyptius, et Berosus Chaldæus, et Iromus Phœnix, Sectatores quoque eorum Mendesium Ptolemæus, et Mænander Ephesius et Demetrius Phalerus.* Concerning this passage, and the antiquity and credibility of these historians, I desire the reader to consult Bochartus, *de Linguâ Phœnic et Pun.* lib. ii. cap. 17, and likewise B. Stillingfleet's *Orig. Sac.* lib. i. cap. 2, 3, etc.

make you amends now with proofs of much greater importance ; I will show you the Majesty, the God that speaks in these writings ; I will demonstrate the divineness of their authority, if you are still in doubt about their antiquity. Nor need I be long upon this article, or send you a great way for instruction ; the world before you, this present age, and the events therein, shall be your instructors. For there is nothing of moment now done but what has been foretold ; and what we ourselves see, our forefathers have heard from the prophets. They have heard that cities should be swallowed up of earthquakes, and islands invaded by seas, and nations torn in pieces by foreign and intestine wars, and kingdom split against kingdom, and famine and pestilence take their marches through the world, and every country swarm with proper evils ; that the beasts of the mountains should lay waste the plains, that the weak and mighty should rise and fall by turns, that justice should grow scarce and iniquity abound, that arts and sciences should lie uncultivated, and the seasons of the year be unkindly, and the elements take an exorbitant course, and the order of nature be disturbed with monsters and prodigies ;—all these things were written beforehand for our admonition. For while we suffer, we read our sufferings ; while we reflect upon the prophecies, we find them a-fulfilling ; and this I take to be a proper and most sensible proof of the divine authority of these writings, to feel their predictions verifying upon ourselves. Hence it is that we come to be so infallibly certain of many things not yet come to pass, from the experience we have of those that are ; because those were presignified by the same Spirit with these which we see fulfilling every day. The very words and characters of both were indited by the impulse of the very same spirit ; and this prophetic spirit sees everything always and at once, though men see only by pieces and successions of time, and are forced to distinguish between the beginning of a prophecy, and the fulfilling it, to separate present from future and past from present.

Wherein therefore I beseech you now, are Christians to blame for believing things to come, who have two such motives to believe, or two such mighty pillars to lean upon, as the past and present accomplishment of the predictions contained in Holy Scripture ?

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCERNING THE BIRTH AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST.

BUT because I have already declared the Christian religion to have its foundation in the most ancient of monuments, the sacred writings of the Jews; and yet many among you well know us to be a novel sect risen up in the reign of Tiberius, and we ourselves confess the charge; and because you should not take umbrage that we shelter ourselves only under the venerable pretext of this old religion, which is tolerated among you, and because we differ from them, not only in point of age, but also in the observation of meats, festivals, circumcision, etc., nor communicate with them so much as in name, all which seems to look very odd if we are servants of the same God as the Jews;—therefore I think it necessary to explain myself a little particularly upon this head, and especially because it is in every one's mouth that Christ was a man, and a man, too, condemned to death by the very Jews, which may naturally lead any one at first hearing into a mistake, that we are worshippers of a man, and not of the God of the Jews. However, this their wickedly ungrateful treatment of Christ makes us not ashamed of our Master; so far from it, that it is the joy and triumph of our souls to be called by our Lord's name and condemned for it; and yet for all this we think no otherwise of God than the Jews did. To make out this, I am obliged to say something of Christ as God.

The Jews once were a people in such favour with God, upon the account of their forefathers' faith and piety, which was the root of all their greatness, both with respect to the increase of their families, and the advance of a kingdom, and their happiness was so unparalleled, that God Himself did them the honour even with His own mouth to prescribe them laws, whereby they might secure His omnipotence on their side, and never turn it against them. But how the degenerate children upon the stock of Abraham's faith, and in confidence of their forefathers' virtue, how egregiously they provoked God by deviating from His own positive institutions into profaneness and idolatry; although the Jews themselves will not confess this, yet the present calamities of that people are a sad and standing testimony against them. For they are now a dispersed,¹

¹ *Dispersi, palabundi, et soli ac cæli sui Extorres*, etc. Justin Martyr in his *First Apology*, sec. 62, takes notice that it was a capital crime for a Jew so much

vagabond people, banished country and climate, strolling about the world without any show of government, either divine or human, and so completely miserable that they have not the poor privilege to visit the Holy Land like strangers, or set a foot upon their native soil ; and while the sacred writings did forethreaten these calamities, they did likewise continually inculcate that the time would come about the last days when out of every nation and country God would choose Himself a people that should serve Him more faithfully, upon whom He would shed a greater measure of grace in proportion to the merits of the founder of this new worship. The proprietor therefore of this grace, and the master of this institution, this Son of Righteousness and tutor of mankind, was declared the Son of God ; but not so that this begotten of God might blush at the name of Son, or the mode of His generation ; for it was not from any incestuous mixture of brother and sister, not from any violation of a god with his own daughter, or another man's wife, in the disguise of a serpent, or a bull, or a shower of gold. These are the modes of generation with your Jove, and the offspring of deities you worship ; but the Son of God we adore had a mother indeed, but a mother without uncleanness, without even that which the name of mother seems to imply, for she was a pure virgin. But I shall first set forth the nature of His substance in order to make you apprehend the manner of His nativity.

I have already said that God reared this fabric of the world out of nothing, by His word, wisdom, or power ; and it is evident that your sages of old were of the same opinion, that the *λόγος*, that is, the Word, or the Wisdom, was the Maker of the universe, for

as to set a foot upon the Holy Land. And Eusebius from Aristo Pellæus urges likewise that by the law and constitutions of Adrian the Jews were prohibited to cast even their eyes towards Jerusalem. Eus. lib. iv., *Hist. Eccles.* cap. 6. Tertullian observes the same here ; and so likewise in his book against the Jews, cap. 13, upon which you will see some remarks by Dr. Grabe in his *Spicileg. Pat.* sec. 2, p. 131, and certainly the distinguishing misery of this vagabond people even to this day is a strange living monument of the divine wrath ; a mark set upon them by God for the murder of His Christ, and their obdurate infidelity. But then it ought also to be observed, that as God in judgment hath scattered them through all nations, and not suffered them to have a foot of free land in all the world, yet He hath preserved their name and nation in all places, as distinct from all other people, as if they had continued in the Holy Land ; in which His providence and goodness are conspicuous, that according to the prophecies at His appointed time the veil may be taken away from their faces, that they may look upon Him whom they have pierced, and be converted to that Jesus whom they have crucified and ever since blasphemed.

Zeno¹ determines the Logos to be the creator and adjuster of everything in nature. The same Logos he affirms to be called by the name of Fate, God, Mind of Jove, and Necessity of all Things. Cleanthes² will have the author of the world to be a spirit which pervades every part of it. And we Christians also do affirm a spirit to be the proper substance of the Logos, by whom all things were made, in which He subsisted before He was spoken out,³ and was the wisdom that assisted at the creation, and the power that presided over the whole work. The Logos or Word issuing forth from that spiritual substance at the creation of the world, and generated by that issuing or progression, is for this reason called the Son of God, and the God, from His unity of substance with God the Father, for God is a Spirit. An imperfect image of this you have in the derivation of a ray from the body of the sun; for this ray is a part without any diminution of the whole, but the sun is always in the ray, because the ray is always from the sun; nor is the substance separated, but only extended. Thus is it in some measure in the eternal generation of the Logos; He is a spirit of a spirit, a God of God,⁴ as one

¹ *Hunc enim Zeno determinat Factitorem.* Lactantius, lib. iv. sec. 9, p. 186, justly says that the term *λόγος* is much more expressive of the Maker of the world, than the Latin *Verbum* or *Sermo*, as signifying both the Word and Wisdom of God. And had we still continued the Logos instead of the Word in our English translation, it had, methinks, been a term more majestic and more expressive of the personality of Christ than the Word. This Logos was preached up by Zeno as the disposer of nature and the framer of the world, and was called sometimes Fate, God, Mind of Jove, etc., says Lactantius in the place above cited, just as our author speaks here. Concerning this Zeno, the præceptor of Antigonus and founder of the Stoics, see *Diog. Laer.* lib. vii.

² *Hæc Cleanthes in Spiritum congerit.* Concerning the doctrine of Cleanthes, Zeno's disciple, *vid.* Lactant. lib. i. sec. 5, p. 12.

³ *Cui et Sermo insit Pronuncianti,* etc. There is a threefold generation of the Son of God frequently mentioned by the primitive writers. The first is the true and proper generation of the Son, which was from the Father before all worlds. The second is the progression of the Logos from His Father at the creation, which they call *πρόσλευσις*, *ἔρευξις*, etc. The third was at His incarnation in the womb of the Blessed Virgin overshadowed by the power of the Most High. The second kind of generation is that which Tertullian hints at in the words cited. For the fuller satisfaction in this point I advise the reader to consult Bishop Bull's incomparable *Defence of the Nicene Faith*, cap. v., concerning the co-eternity of the Son. And so likewise, cap. 7, sec. 5, where he will find several things in this place cleared, and our author vindicated beyond exception as to the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Son.

⁴ *De Deo Deus, ut Lumen de Lumine.* This similitude of a ray from the sun, or a light from a light, is not to be looked upon as a full and adequate illustration of the mode how the Son of God was generated by the Father, nor will anything in nature give us a perfect representation of it. It is what Justin Martyr and others have chosen to represent it by; nor do I know a better to make this incomprehensible mystery apprehended, which is all they drive at; and it serves

light is generated by another; the original parent light remaining entire and undiminished, notwithstanding the communication of itself to many other lights. Thus it is that the Logos which came forth from God is both God and the Son of God, and those two are one. Hence it is that a spirit of a spirit, or a God of God, makes another in mode of subsistence, but not in number; in order of nature, but not in numericalness or identity of essence; and so the Son is subordinate to the Father as He comes from Him as the principle, but is never separated. This ray of God then descended, as it was foretold, upon a certain Virgin, and in her womb was incarnated, and being there fully formed the God-man, was born into the world; the divine and human nature making up this person, as soul and body does one man. The flesh being wrought and perfected by a divine Spirit, was nursed and grew up to the stature of a man, and then addressed the Jews, and preached and worked miracles among them; and this is the Christ, the God of Christians. If you please now you may receive this great truth in the nature of a fable like one of yours, till I have given you my proofs; though it is a truth that could not be unknown to those among you who maliciously dressed up their own inventions on purpose to destroy it. The Jews likewise full well knew from their prophets that Christ was to come, and they are now in expectation of Him; and the great clashing between us and them is chiefly upon this very account, that they do not believe Him already come. For there being two advents of Christ described in the prophets, the first which is discharged and over, namely His state of humiliation and suffering in human flesh. The second, which is at hand, too, in the conclusion of the world, in which He will exert His majesty, and come in a full explication of divine glory. By not understanding the first, they fixed only upon the second advent, which is described in the most pompous and glaring metaphors, and which struck the carnal fancy with the most agreeable impressions. And it was the just judgment of God upon them for their sins that withheld their understandings from seeing this first coming, which had they understood, they had believed, and by believing had obtained salvation. And this judicial blindness they

sufficiently to declare their sense and notion of it, namely, that Christ from all eternity did co-exist with the Father, as light does with the sun, that He was God of God, without any diminution of the divine substance, as one light is kindled from another, etc. It is evident likewise from this expression of God of God, as Light of Light, what the notion of the Fathers was about the divinity of Christ before the establishment of the Nicene Fathers, who make use of this expression in their creed.

read of in their prophets,¹ that their understandings should be darkened, and their eyes and ears of no advantage for their conversion.

Him therefore they could not see to be a God in the humble disguise of a man ; yet seeing the miracles He did, they cried Him down for a conjurer, for dealing with the devil, when He was turning the devils out of all their possessions at a word speaking ; and with the same word bid sight return to the blind, and it returned, and cleansed the lepers, and new braced the paralytic joints, and spoke the dead to life, and made the elements obey, stilling the storms, and walking upon the seas, and demonstrating Himself to be the Logos of God, that is, the ancient first-begotten Word, invested with power and wisdom, and supported by the Spirit, at whose doctrine the very doctors of the law stood aghast, and the chief among the Jews were so exasperated against Him, especially at seeing such numbers of people thronging after Him, that at length, by mere violence and importunity of remonstrating, they extorted sentence against Him to be crucified from Pontius Pilate, then governor of Syria under Tiberius. And all this Christ Himself foretold they would do, which I will grant you to be an argument not so considerable for the authority of His mission, had not all the prophets long before concurred in every particular. At length being fastened to the cross, and having cried out and commended His spirit into the hands of His Father, He gave up the ghost of His own accord, and so prevented the executioner's breaking His bones, by dying in His own time, and fulfilled a prophecy by so doing. Moreover, in the same moment He dismissed life, the light departed from the sun,² and the world was benighted at noonday, and those men who acknowledged this eclipse, but were unacquainted with the prophecies that foretold it upon Christ's death, and finding it impossible to be solved by the laws of nature, at last roundly denied the fact ; and yet this wonder of the world you have related, and the relation preserved in your archives to this day.

¹ " Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Isa. vi. 10.

² *Deliquium utique putaverunt.* An eclipse of the sun at a full moon (as this was) is by the known laws of nature demonstratively impossible, and this it was made it so much taken notice of by the ancient astronomers ; by Dionysius the Areopagite, Apollophanes the Sophist, by Phlegon in his *Olympiads*, etc. *Vid.* paraphrase of Zephyrus, and the notes of Pamelius, and especially the annotations of Grotius upon Matt. xxvii. 45, where this passage of Tertullian is taken notice of.

Christ then being taken down from the cross, and laid in a sepulchre, the Jews beset it round with a strong guard of soldiers, forearming them with the strictest caution that His disciples should not come and steal away the body unawares, because He had foretold that He would rise again from the dead on the third day. But lo! on the third day, a sudden earthquake arose, and the huge stone was rolled from the mouth of the sepulchre, and the guard struck with fear and confusion; not one disciple appearing at the action, and nothing found in the sepulchre, but the spoils of death, the linen clothes He was buried in. Nevertheless, the chief priests, whose interest it was to set such a wicked lie on foot, in order to reclaim the people from a faith which must end in the utter ruin of their incomes and authority among them, gave out that His disciples came privily and stole Him away. For after the resurrection Christ thought not fit to make a public entry among the people,¹ because He would not violently redeem such obstinate wretches from error, and that a faith which proposes infinite rewards should labour under some difficulties, that believing might be a virtue, and not a necessity. But with some of His disciples He did eat and drink forty days in Galilee, a province of Judea, instructing them in all they should teach,² and then having ordained them to the office of preaching those instructions all over the world, He was parted from them by a cloud, and so received up before them into heaven, much more truly than what your Proculus's report of Romulus, and some others of your deified kings. Pilate, who in his conscience

¹ *Nec ille se in vulgus eduxit, etc.* These and the following words give the true reason why Christ after His resurrection would not show Himself publicly to all His crucifiers. Because He would not bestow upon such obstinate offenders, who had abused all His former miracles, such an evidence as must in a manner have forced them to believe, whether they would or no; and therefore it is said in the Acts of the Apostles, x. 40, "Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He arose from the dead."

² *Docens eos quæ docerent, dehinc Ordinatis eis ad Officium Prædicandi, etc.* It is very evident in this place that our author makes a notorious distinction between Christ teaching His apostles in what they should instruct the world, and His ordaining them to the office and authority of preaching those instructions; and as Christ was sent by His Father, so by the same authority did He commission His apostles to ordain others, and promises to be with them to the end of the world. And therefore to say that the people have a natural right to ordain their own ministers, is in effect to say they have a natural right to do a thing when Christ has determined to the contrary. And because the apostles gave the people a liberty to choose whom they would have for deacons, therefore they had a right to ordain them to that office by prayer and imposition of their own hands.

was a Christian, sent Tiberius Cæsar an account of all these proceedings relating to Christ ; and the Cæsars had been Christians too, could the ages have borne it, if either such Cæsars had not been necessary and unavoidable in such times, or could Christians have come to be Cæsars. The apostles, in obedience to their Master's command, went about preaching through the world, persecuted by the Jews to the last degree, but suffering victoriously, in full assurance of the truth ; but at length the infidels taking the advantage of the barbarous Nero's reign, they were forced to sow the Christian religion in their own Christian blood. But I shall take an occasion, by and by, to produce such witnesses as you yourselves must think authentic for the truth of the Christian religion ; for I shall produce the gods you worship vouching for the God of Christians. This must needs be surprising, you will say, that I should bring in those to convert you to the faith, for whose sake it is that you are infidels. In the meantime you are to look upon this as the series and economy of the Christian religion. I have laid before you an account of the original of our sect, of our name, and of the author of it ; let no man therefore now throw such dirt and infamy upon Christians, nor harbour an opinion that this account is not according to truth ; for it is not reasonable to believe that any one should think it allowable to lie for his religion ;¹ for every man by saying he adores one, while in his mind he adores another, denies the very deity he adores, and translates divine honour from his own god to that other, and by such a translation unworships the god he worships. But we say we are Christians, and say it to the whole world, under the hands of the executioner,² and in the

¹ *Quia nec fas est ulli de sua Religione mentiri.* Pamelius brings forth this passage in great state, as if it made notably for the papists against certain heretics of his time, who justified lying for their religion. I do not know what heretics he means, and if there be any that do so, they certainly do very ill, and against the apostle's rule of not doing evil that good may come of it ; but had he considered some certain casuists of their own, he might have spared this reflection.

² *Dicimus et palam dicimus, et vobis torquentibus lacerati et cruenti vociferamur, Deum colimus per Christum.* The primitive Christians were not ashamed or afraid to proclaim, to proclaim it to the whole world, and under the hands of the executioner, and weltering in their own blood, that they worshipped God through Christ. Do we ever read of any generation of men so greedy of martyrdom before, who thought it long till they were upon the rack, and so cheerful and stedfast under the most intolerable torments ? What a restless posture of mind does Socrates betray, the wisest and best of heathens ! With what misgivings and fits of hope and fear does he deliver himself in that most famous discourse, supposed to be made by him a little before his death, about a future state ! *Vid. Plat. Phæd.* Do we find that Phædo, Cebes, Crito, and Simmias, or any of his greatest friends, who were present at his death, condemning his murder in the Areopagus, and asserting the worship of one god as the Christians did ? Did