

assist, to plead for, and to comfort him ; it is incredible with what alacrity these people support and defend the public cause ; they spare nothing, in short, to promote it : Peregrinus being made a prisoner on their account, they collected money for him, and he made a very pretty revenue of it. These poor men, it seems, had persuaded themselves that they should be immortal, and live for ever. They despised death, therefore, and offered up their lives a voluntary sacrifice, being taught by their lawgiver, that they were all brethren, and that, quitting our Grecian gods, they must worship their own sophist, who was crucified, and live in obedience to his laws. In compliance with them they looked with contempt on all worldly treasures, and held every thing in common, a maxim which they had adopted without any reason or foundation. If any cunning impostor, therefore, who knew how to manage matters, came amongst them, he soon grew rich by imposing on the credulity of these weak and ignorant men."

To this may be added the well known testimony of Plinius, the friend of the emperor Trajanus ; so well known indeed, that were this work written for the use of the learned, the quotation might have been spared. In writing to his imperial master for instructions as to his proceedings with regard to the Christians who were become numerous in the province, he says, that even those who had now totally renounced the profession of that faith, nevertheless, asserted constantly "that the sum of their crime or their error amounted only to this :—that they met together before it was light, and sung hymns alternately among themselves to Christ as God ; that they bound themselves by an oath not to be guilty of any