

Peregrinus or Proteus, who seems to have deceived the Christians of that time into a high opinion of his sanctity. The account of their habits thus incidentally given by the satirist, is valuable ; for it is not that of a friend, and therefore cannot be suspected of partiality.

“ About this time it was,” says he, “ that he (Peregrinus) learned the wonderful wisdom of the Christians ; being intimately acquainted with their priests and scribes. In a very short time he convinced them that they were all boys to him ; became their prophet, their leader, their grand president, and in short all in all to them. He explained and interpreted many of their books, and wrote some himself ; insomuch that they looked upon him as their legislator and high priest ; nay, almost worshipped him as a god. Their leader, whom they yet adore, was crucified in Palestine for introducing this new sect. Proteus was on this account cast into prison, and this very circumstance was the foundation of all the consequence and reputation which he afterwards gained, and of that glory which he had always been so ambitious of ; for when he was in bonds, the Christians, considering it as a calamity affecting the common cause, did everything in their power to release him, which, when they found impracticable, they paid him all possible deference and respect ; old women, widows, and orphans, were continually crowding to him, some of the most principal of them even remained with him in the prison, having bribed the keepers for that purpose : there were varied suppers brought in to them ; they read their sacred books together, and the noble Peregrinus, for so he was then called, was dignified by them with the title of the new Socrates. Several of the Christian deputies from the cities of Asia, came to