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THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.

FROM NEANDER.

IN the persecution which befel the church of Smyrna, A.D. 167, the aged and venerable Bishop Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, gave up his life. Of this persecution we have a detailed account, in a circular letter addressed by the church of Smyrna to other Christian churches. The proconsul of Asia Minor, at that time, does not appear to have been personally hostile to the Christians; but the heathen populace, with whom the lower class of the Jews had united themselves, were fiercely hot against them. The proconsul yielded to the popular violence and to the demands of the law. He endeavored to move the Christians by threats, by displaying before them the instruments of torture, and the savage animals to which they were to be thrown, to deny their faith; if they remained firm, he condemned them to death. In one respect, he certainly evinced too ready a compliance with the ferocious will of the people. He chose deaths