

THE ARGVMENT OF THE BOOKE OF ESTHER.

*Melito S. Atha.
S. Greg. Naz-
ian. Ori-
gen apud
Euseb. lib. 6.
c. 25. hift.*

Of the authoritie of this booke *only two or three ancient writers, doubted*, before the counsels of Laodicea, and Carthage declared it to be Canonical. *Al the rest did euer esteeme it as diuine Scripture.* For albeit S. Ierom in his time found not certaine partes therof in the Hebrew, and therefore tranfposed the same to the end of the booke, as now we haue them: yet in the Greeke he found al these fixtenne chapters conteyned in tenne. And it is not vnprobable, that these parcels were sometimes in the Hebrew, as were diuers whole bookes which are now loft. But whether they were at anie time in the Hebrew or no, the Church of Chrifft accounteth the whole Booke of infallible authoritie, reading as wel these partes, as the rest in her publique office. And the council of Trent (*sess. 4.*) for more expresse declaration defineth *that al the bookes recited in the fame Decree* (amongst which is Esther) *with al the partes therof, as they are accustomed to be read in the Catholique Church, and be conteyned in the old vulgate latin Edition, are sacred and Canonical Scripture.*

This whole booke is canonical.

It conteyneth a particular great danger of the people of Israell, hapening (as is probable) shortly after their general relaxation, & returne of some from the captiuitie of Babylon; and their deliuerie from it, through the godlie zele and other vertues of Quene Esther, directed herein by Mardocheus, who being also in imminent danger was deliuered & aduanced, and finally writ the historie. Which may be diuided into foure partes, not by order of the chapters: as they are here tranfposed: but in order of time, first the author reporteth some thinges going before the peoples danger, in the 11. 1. 2. 12. chapters, and part of the 3. Secondly their danger and distresse, in the rest of the 3. and part of 13. chapters. Thirdly their deliuerie: from the 4. chapter to the middes of the 9. and rest of the 13, and in the 14. 15.

The contentes.

Written by Mardocheas. Diuided into foure partes.

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and 16. Fourthly, the thinges that enfued hereupon, in the other half of the ninth chapter, the 10. chapter, and first verfe of the eleuenth.

VVho foeuer vvil pleafe to read this historie, in order of the time as the thinges happened, adioyning the latter chapters, vvwhich are in the Greke, and not in the Hebrevy, may folovve the letters of the Alphabet, as here vve haue placed them in the margent, beginning at the fecond verfe of the 11. chapter, vvhere he findeth the letter A and vvhen he cometh to B returne vvhere the fame letter is noted. ch. 1. And fo in the reft folovv the fame direction.