

third century tertullian apology CLEANED

Tertullian: Third Century Apology To the Emperor Antoninus Pius, his son Verissimus the Philosopher, Lucius the Philosopher, the Senate, and t Justin, present this address and petition on behalf of Christians from all nations who are unjustly hate abused, among them. ****Justice Demanded**** Reason directs the truly pious and philosophical to honor and love only wh rejecting opinions and trad that are worthless. It is not right to follow those who have done or taught wrong; a tr lover of truth must do an what is right, disregarding even the threat of death. Therefore, as you are called pious philosophers, and as guardians of justice, listen attentively to this addre do not come to flatter you, but to reque judgment after an accurate and thorough investigation, unclouded by prejudice, superstition, or empty rumors. **Against Christians**** Christians have been accused of atheism, immorality, and disloyalty to the Empire. These accusations are mad real understanding or inquiry into what Christians believe and how they actually live. It is to hate or cond people merely for a name or out of ignorance. Those who have come to know Christianity disca previou and become its followers, regretting only that they did not do so sooner. If the charges were true, what could there be to deny Christians a fair hearing or a chance to defend the The law allows other accused person defend themselves, but Christians are condemned merely for bearing by evidence of any actual crime. This de fair hearing is a violation of both justice and law. ****On the Spread of Christianity and Public Rumors**** It is said the state is filled with Christians of various ranks and conditions, yet this is lamented as though it were a calam rather than being carefully investigated. The spread of Christianity is taken as an accusation i itself, yet Chris-t are denied a hearing where they might refute or explain the charges. For example, it is rumored that Christians in horrible secret crimes, such as killing and eating infants o practicing incest. But these charges are sustained by rumors and never by evidence or confession. No on brings forth proof or confessions, and Christians them deny these accusations, even in the face o and death. ****Comparison with Pagan Customs**** Many of the crime Christians actually exist among those who accuse them. Incidents of child sacr consuming blood, licentious fes and incestuous acts are found in the histories, myths, and current practic pagans, and in some public rituals. A Christians, even the eating of blood from animals is forbidden as im If one were to examine Christian conduct, be seen that Christians live peaceful, virtuous lives. They ab murder, adultery, falsehood, and every vice. They each other, care for the needy, help the sick, and ar charitable even to their enemies. Christians pay taxes faith respect earthly authority, and pray for the well-being of the rulers and the state. ****True Object of Christian Wor** Christians do not worship

idols, statues, or invented deities, but the one true God, creator of heaven and earth be seen or fully comprehended. This God is revealed not only by creation itself, but through the souls instinctive knowledge and conscience, which testifies to Him. God provided further revelation through written words and p that seekers might find, believe, obey, rewarded or judged by Him. The Christian faith is thus grounded in ancient trustworthy writings and in divine authority. This faith was not created to oppose the Empire, but calls its follow to patience, love, chastity, and virtue beyond the requirements of pagan philosophy. **On Empire and Sacrifice claimed the greatness of Rome is due to veneration for its gods. Yet Rome's rise and its empire predate its temples. Victories and losses have happened despite the gods, who are often powerless to defend their own temples. Christians are accused of treason because they do not offer sacrifices to the emperor or the traditional gods. Yet Christians honor and pray for the emperor to the true God who alone grants life, kingship, and all blessings. Prayers are for the health, stability, and well-being of the state and its rulers, for without peace they themselves also suffer. Christians do not seek to overthrow the empire, nor do they refuse to serve the public or participate in ordinary life, except insofar as it would involve idolatry or immorality. **On Christian Assemblies and Conduct** Christian assemblies are not secret conspiracies for political ends. The meetings are for prayer, reading of sacred writings, mutual encouragement, and charity. Elders lead by character, not by bribes. Offerings are voluntary and for the needy orphans, widows, prisoners, and the poor. Christians are known for loving one another and are brethren, not from pretense but because of real affection. Private property is shared willingly, but chastity is strictly observed; only marriage between one man and one woman is permitted. **Response to Persecution and Martyrdom** Christians do not seek martyrdom for its own sake, but accept it if necessary, enduring suffering or death rather than their faith or conscience. Their endurance under torture and their constancy only strengthens the faith of others. Christians truly were the criminals they are accused of being, the courts and prisons would be full of Christian thieves, murderers, and traitors, but instead Christians are found guilty of nothing except being Christians. **Conclusion** The accusations against Christians of atheism, immorality, and disloyalty are false, based on ignorant rumor, for Christians live their lives as peaceful, honest, law-abiding citizens, worshipping the true God, praying for their rulers, and caring for others. The Empire suffers nothing from Christians except the loss of business for the profit from vice, idolatry, or superstition. Let those who judge do so on the basis of truth, with justice and reason and not by unjust prejudice or tradition[1][2][3].