

The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place: Herode miserably dyed in banishment. Cayphas deposed.

An. 43.

Ex Goftrido Viterbensis part. 15

Claudius Nero. An. 56. Domitius Nero.

The horrible wickedness and cruelty of Nero.

Peter and Paule suffered for Christ.

An. 69.

Vespasian Emperour and Titus his sonne. The destruction of the Iewes.

A note for all Realmes to marke.

The Romanes in concerning Christ, punished by their owne Emperours.

spoken of in the gospel. His cruel condition, or els displeasure was such toward the Romanes, that he wished that all the people of Rome had but one necke, that hee at hys pleasure might destroy such a multitude. By this sayd Caligula, Herode the murderer of John Baptist, and condemner of Christ, was condemned to perpetuall banishment, where he died miserably. Cayphas also which wickedly sat vpon Christ, was the same tyme removed from the high Priests roome, and Jonathan set in his place. The raging fiercenes of this Caligula incensed agaynst the Romanes, had not thus ceased, had not he bene cut off by the handes of a Tribune, and other gentle men, which slew him in the 4. yeare of hys raigne. After whose death was found in his closet, 2. little libels, one called a sword, the other the dagger. In the whiche libels were contayned the names of those Senatours, and noble men of Rome, whom he had purposed to put to death. Besides this sword and dagger, there was found also a cofter, wherein diuers Kindes of poyson were kept in glasses and vessels, for the purpose to destroy a wonderful number of people. which poysons afterward being thrown into the sea, destroyed a great number of fish. Goftr. Viterb.

But that which this Caligula had onely concealed, the same did the other two, which came after, bring to passe, Claudius Nero, who raygned xii. yeares with no little cruelty. But especially the third of these Neroes, called Domitius Nero. whiche succeeding after Claudius, rayned 14. yeares, with such fury and ryaning, that he slew the most part of the Senats, he destroyed the whole order of knight-hood in Rome. So prodigious a monster of nature was he, more like a beast, yea rather a deuill then a man, that he seemed to be borne to the destruction of man. Such was his monstrous uncleannes, y he abstayned not from hys owne mother, his naturall sister, nor from any degree of kindred. Such was his wretched cruelty, that he caused to be put to death his mother, his brother in law, his sister, hys wyfe great with childe, also his instructor Seneca and Lucane, with diuers Kindes of his owne kindred and consanguinitie. Moreover, he commaunded Rome to be set on fire in xii. places, and so continued it 6. dayes and 7. nights in burning, while that he to see the example how Troy burned, sang the verses of Homere. And to auoide the infamie thereof, he layd the fault vpon the Christian men, & caused them to be persecuted. And so continued this miserable Emperour in his reigne 14. yeares, till at last the Senate proclaiming him a publike enemye of mankind, condemned him to be drawen through the cite, and to be whipped to death. For the feare whereof, he slyng the handes of his enemies, in the night fled to a manor, of his seruants in the countrey, where he was forced to slay himselfe, complaining that he had then neither friend nor enemye left, that would do so much for him. In the latter end of this Domitius Nero, Peter also and Paule were put to death for the testimonye and faith of Christ. an. 69.

Thus yee see, which is worthy to be marked, how the iust scourge and heauie indignation of God from tyme to tyme euer followeth there, and how all things there go to ruine; neither doth any thing well prosper, where Christ Iesus the sonne of god is contemned, and not receiued, as by these examples may appeare, both of Romanes which not only were thus continued and plagued by their owne Emperours, but also by ciuile warres, whereof thye were fought in two yeres at Rome, after the death of Nero, and other casualties (as in Sueton is testified) so y in the dayes of Tiberius aforesaid, 5000. Romanes were hurt and slaine at one time by sal of a Theatre. And also most especially by the destruction of the Jewes, which about this same tyme, an. 73. and 40. yeres after the passion of Christ, and the third yeare after the suffering of S. Peter and Paule, were destroyed by Titus & Vespasian his father, (who succeeded after Nero in the Empire) to the number of xi. hundred thousand, besides them which Vespasian slue in subduing the countrey of Iudilee, ouer and beside them also which were sold and sent into Egypt and other prouinces, to vnde slavery, to the number of 17. thousand, 2000. were brought with Titus in his triumph, of which, part he gaue to be deuoured of the wild beasts, part otherwise most cruelly were slaine. By whose case al nations and realmes may take exaple, what it is to reiect the visitation of Gods veritie being sent, and much more to persecute the which he sent of God for their saluation.

And as this wrathfull vengeance of God thus hath ben shewed vpon this rebellious people both of the Jewes and of the Romanes, for their contempt of Christ, whome God to punished by their owne Emperours; so neither the Emperours themselues, for persecuting Christ in his members escaped without their iust reward, for amongst so

many Emperours, which put so many christian Martyrs to death, during the space of these first 200. yeares, fewe or none of them escaped either not slaine themselves, or by some miserable end or other, worthily reuenged. First, of poisoning of Tiberius, & of the slaughter of the other three Neroes after him, sufficiently is declared before. After Nero, Domitius Galba, within 7. monthes was slaine by Orcho. And so did Orcho afterward slay himselfe, being ouercome by Vitellus. And was not Vitellus shortly after drawen through the cite of Rome, and after he was tormented, was thrown into Tiber. Tius a good Emperour, is thought to be poysoned of Domitian his brother. The said Domitian after he had bene a persecutor of the christians, was slaine in his chamber, not without the consent of his wife. Like wise Commodus was murdered of Narcissus. The like end was of Pertinax and Iulianus. Moreover, after that Seuerus was slaine here in England, and lieth at Yorke, did not his sonne Balbianus slay his brother Geta, and he after slaine of Martialis Macrimus with his sonne Diadumenus were both slaine, of their owne souldiours. After whom Heliagabellus that monstrous bellypanch, was of his owne people slaine, & drawen through the cite, and cast into Tiber. Alexander Seuerus, that worthy and learned Emperour, which sayd he would not see his seruants doing nothing, with the bowels of the common wealth, although in life and vertues, was much unlike other Emperours, yet proued the like ende; being slaine at Mentz, with his goodly mother Mammea by Maximinus whom the Emperour before of a Quiletoz had aduanced to great dignities. The which Maximinus also after three yeres was slaine himselfe of his souldiours. What should I speake of Maximus, and Balbinus, in like sort both slaine in Rome? Of Gordian slaine by Philip: of Philip the first christened Emperour, slaine or rather married for the same cause: of wicked Decius, by wound, and his sonne slaine the same time in battail: Of Gallus and Volisianne his sonne, Emperours after Decius, both slaine by conspiracie of Emilianus, who rose against them both in warre, and within three monthes after was slaine himselfe. Next to Emilianus succeeded Valerianus and Galianus his sonne, of whom Valerianus (who was a persecuter of the Christians) was taken prisoner of the Persians, and there made a vnyng soole of Saporos their King, who vsed him for a stoule to leape vpon his horse; while his sonne Galienus creeping at Rome, either would not, or could not once preferre to reuenge his fathers ignominie. For after the taking of Valerian, so many Emperours rose vp as were prouinces in the Romaine Monarchie; At length Galienus also was killed by Aureolus, which warred against him. It were too long here to speake of Aurelianus an other persecuter slaine of his Secretarie: Of Tacitus and Florinus his brother, of whom the first raygned 6. monthes, and was slaine at Pontus; the other raygned two monthes, and was murdered at Tarsis. Of Probus, who although a good ciuill Emperour, yet was destroyed by his souldiours. After whom Carus the next Emperour was slaine by lightning. Next to Carus followed the impious and wicked persecuter Dioclesian, with his fellows Maximian, Galerius, Maximinus, Maxentius, and Licinius, vnder whom all at one time (during the life of Dioclesian) the greatest and most grieuous persecution was moued against the Christians x. yeares together. Of which, Dioclesian and Maximian deposed themselves fro the Empire. Galerius the chiefe minister of the persecution, after his terrible persecutions, fell into a wonderfull sickness; hauing such a sore risen in the neather part of his belly, which consumed his priuie members, and so did swarne with womanes, that being not curable, neither by Surgeon nor Physike, he confessed, that it happened for his cruelty toward the Christians, and so called in his proclamations against them. Notwithstanding, he not able to sustain (as some say) the stench of his sore slue himselfe. Maximian in his warre being tormented with payne in his guttes, there died. Maxentius was vanquished by Constantine, and by wound in Tiber. Licinius likewise being ouercome by the said Constantine the great, was deposed from his Empire, and afterward slaine of his souldiours. But on the other side, after the tyme of Constantine, when as the faith of Christ was receiued into Imperiall seat, we read of no Emperour after the like sort destroyed or molested, except it were Iulianus or Basilus which expelled one Zeno, & was afterward expelled himselfe: or Valende, besides these we read of no Emperour to come to ruine, as the other before mentioned. Ex lib. hist. tripart.

And thus haue we in a briefe summe collected out of the Chronicles, the vniuersal and miserable state of the Emperours of Rome, vntill the tyme of Christian Constantine. with the examples no lesse terrible then manifest, of Gods seuerie iustice vpon them, for their contemptuous refusing

Examples of the iust plagis of God vpon the Romaine Emperours persecuting and resisting Christ till the time of Constantine.

- Tiberius. Caligula. Claudius Domitius Nero. Galba. Orcho. Vitellus. Titus. Domitian. Commodus. Pertinax. Iulianus. Seuerus. Geta. Bassianus. Macrimus. Diadumenus. Heliagabellus. alexandre. Seuerus. Maximian. Maximus. Gordian. Gordianus. Philippus. Decius. Gallus & fannus. Aemilianus. Valerianus. Galienus.

- Aurelianus. Tacitus. Florinus.

- Probus. Carus. Dioclesianus. Maximianus. Galerius. Maximinus. Maxentius. Licinius.