

The first Epistle of Zephyrinus to the Bishops of Sicilia.

all Bishops from the accusation of any lay man... as in the first Epistle of Zephyrinus is to be scene, written to the Bishops of Sicilia. And likewise the second Epistle of his, to the Bishops of the prouince of Egypt, containing no manner of doctrine, nor consolation necessary for that time, but only certain ritual decrees to no purpose, argueth no lesse but the said epistles neither to fauor of that man, nor taste of the tyme.

Patins of glasse borne before the Priest. The ordinances of Zepherinus of small credite.

Of like credite also seemeth the constitution of the Patines of glasse, which Damafus sayth that the same Zephyrinus ordained to be caried before the Bishop, at the celebratiō of the Masse. Againe Platina writeth that he ordained the ministratiō of the Sacramēt to be no more vsed in vessels of wood, or of glasse, or of any other mettall, except only siluer, gold, and iuine, &c. But how these two testimonies of Damafus and Platina tyme together, let the reader iudge: especially seying the same decree is referred to Vribanus, that came after him. Againe, what needeth this decree of golden chalices to be stablished afterward in the Council of Eypbur and Athenes, if it had bene enacted before by Zephyrinus? How long this Zephyrinus late, our writers do varie. Eusebius sayth, he died in the raigne of Caracalla, and late 17. yeares; Platina writeth that he died vnder Seuerus, and late 8. yeares, and so saith also Nauclerus. Damafus affirmeth that he late 16. yeares and two monthes.

Golden chalices. Concilium Tiburtinum Rhemensis.

Mathaeus author of the story intituled, Flores Historiarū, with other latter Chronicles, maketh mention of Perpetua, and Felicitas, and Reuocatus, her brother, also of Saturninus and Satyrus brethren, and Secundulus, which in the persecutiō of this Seuerus, gaue ouer their liues to Martyrdome for Christ, beyng throwen to wild beasts, and deuoured of the same, in Larchage and in Africke, saue that Saturninus brought agayne from the beasts, was beheaded, and Secundulus dyed in prison; about the yeare of our Lord, 202, as writeth Florilegus.

Ex Florilego. Perpetua. Felicitas. Reuocatus. Saturninus. Satyrus. Secundulus. Martyrs.

This Seuerus the persecutor raigned, as the most part of writers accord the terme of 18. yeares, who about 7. later tyme of his raigne, came with his army hether into Britaine, where after many conflicts had with the Britains, in the borders of the North, he cast vp a ditche with a mighty walke made of earth and turues, & strong stakes, to the length of 12. myles from the one side of the sea to the other, beginning at Tyne, and reached to the Scottissh sea; which done, he removed to Yorke, and there by the breaking in of the Northern men and the Scots, was besieged and slain, about the yere of our Lord, 214. leaving behind him two sonnes, Balsianus and Geta. Which Balsianus surnamed Caracalla, after he had slayne his brother Geta here in Britaine, gouerned the Empire alone, the space of five yeares. After whole death, he beyng slayne also of his seruants (as he had slayne his brother before) succeeded Marcinus with his sonne Diadumens, to be Emperour; who after they had raigned one yeare, were both slayne of their owne people.

Seuerus warreth in Brittain. A wall betwene England builded, 232. miles in length. Seuerus the persecutor slayne at Yorke.

After them followed Varius Helioabalus, in the empire, rather to be called a Monster, than a man, so prodigious was his life in all glotonic filthines, and ribaudry. Such was his pompe, that in his lampes he vied bakin, & filled his silphondes with rosewater. To let passe his sumptuous vestures which he would not weare but only of gold, and most costly filkes; his shoes glittering with precious stones finely engraued, he was neuer 11. dayes serued with one kynd of meate, he neuer wore one garment twice. And likewise for his fleshly wickednes; some dayes his company was serued at meale with the byapnes of Ostiges, and a strange soule called Phenocaptetie, an other day with the toyngs of Hopiniapes, and other sweete linging birdes. Beyng nye to the sea, he neuer vied fish; in places farre distant from the sea, all his house was serued with most delicate fishes. At one supper he was serued with 7000. fishes, and 5000. soules. At his remoyning in his progresse, sifter there followed him 600. chariots laden only with bandes, counton harlots, and ribaudes. He sacrificed with young children, and preferred to the best aduancements in the common weale, most light personages, as bandes, Whistrels, Carcers, and such like. In one word he was an enemy to all honesty & god order. And when he was foretold by his Sorcerers and Astronomers, that he should dye a violent death, he provided copes of silke to hang himselfe, swordes of gold to kill himselfe, and strong poyson in Flacincts and Emeraundes to poyson himselfe, if needs be must thereto be forced. Whereouer, he made an high tower, hauing the floore of boardes covered with gold plate, boarded with precious stones; to the which tower he would throw himselfe downe, if he should be purposed of his enemies. But notwithstanding all his prouisiō, he was slayne of the soldidours, drayen through the Lurie, and cast into Tiber

Ex Florilego. An. 215. Balsianus Emperour. Macrinus with his sonne Diadumens Emperour. An. 219. The monstrous life of Helioabalus Emperour.

A prodigious beliged.

Helioabalus slayne of his soldidours. Ex Eutro. 310.

after he had raigned two yeres and viij. monthes, as witnesseth Eutropius, other say four yeares.

This Helioabalus hauing no issue, adopted to his sonne and heyre Aurelius Alexander Seuerus, the sonne of Mammea who entring his raigne the yeare of our Loyde, 224. continued 13. yeares, well commended for vertuous, wife, gentle, liberal, & to no man hurtful. And as he was not vnlearned himselfe, through the diligent education of Mammea his mother; so he was a great fauourer of men, wise and learned. Neither did he any thing in the common weale, without the assistance of learned and sage counsailors. It is reported of him, to beare such stomacke against corrupt iudges, that when he chaunced to meete with any of them, by the commotion of his mind, he would cast vp cholere, being so moued with them that he could not speake, and was rebv with his two fingers to put out their eyes. From his court he dismissed all superfluous and vnnecessary seruants saying, that he was no good pupil, which sed idle seruants with the bowels of his common weale.

Alexander Seuerus Emperour. Anno. 224.

Against corrupt Iudges. The saying of Alexander to be noted and followed. Idle seruantes catev the bowels of the common weale.

Among his other good vertues, it appeareth also that he was friendly and fauourable vnto the Christians, as by this act may be gathered: For when the Christians had occupied a certaine publike place in some good vic, belike for the assembling and conuening together of the congregatiō, the company of the Cookes or tiplers, made challenge of that place to belong vnto the. The matter being brought before the Emperour, he iudged it more honest, the place to serue to the worship of God, he vsenger it were, than to the vilitie fluddering of Cookes and Skullians.

By this it may be vnderstand, that in Rome no Christian churches were erected vnto this tyme, when as yet (notwithstanding this fauour of the Emperour) no publike house could quietly be obtained for the Christians. So that by the reason hercof may appeare the decretall epistle and ordinance of Pope Higynus concerning the dedication of churches aboue mentioned, pag. 53. to be falsified. And likewise the ordinance of Pius his successor, concerning the Altar, or Superaltare, to be also false. For what Superaltare was it like, they had in the tyme of Higynus and Pius; when as at this tyme which was long after, no publike place almost could be graunted them for the Christians to assemble together?

A note worthy to be marked.

Of this Alexander, Platina writeth, that as hee was a great hater of all boasters & flatterers, so he was of such puidence, that no deceit could escape him; and bringeth in a story of one Turinus, who had gotten craftily many great bribes and gifts, in making the people beleue that he was of great authoritie with the Emperour, and that he could helpe them to haue whatsoeuer they sued for: whereof the Emperour being certified, caused him in the open market to be fastned to a stake, and there killed with smoke, where the Crier stood thus crying to the people: Smoke he sold, and with smoke he is punished.

Platina in Vita Fontiana.

Punished with smoke, that sold smoke. Mammea the mother of the Emperour.

Mammea the mother of this Alexander aboue mentioned (whom Hierome calleth a deuout and religious woman) bearing of the same and the excellent learning of Origene, being then at Alexandria, sent for him to Antioche, desirous to heare and see him, vnto whom the foresayd Origene according to her request, resorted; and after that he had there remained a space with the Emperour, and his mother, returned againe to Alexandria.

And thus continued this good Emperour his raigne the space of 13. yeares; at length at a commotion in Germany, with his mother Mammea he was slaine. After whom succeeded Maximinus, contrary to the mynd of the Senate, vnto appointed by the soldidours to be Emperour. During all this tyme betwene Seuerus and this Maximinus, the church of Christ, although it had not perfect peace, yet it had some meane tranquillitie from persecution. Albeit some saye that there were at this tyme that suffered, wher of Nauclerus giueth this reason: For although (saith he) Alexander beyng perswaded through the entreating of his mother Mammea, did fauour the Christians; yet notwithstanding there was no publike vbid of proclamation graunted for their safegard. By reaso wherof, diuers there were to which suffered Martyrdome vnder Almachius & other iudges. In the number of whom after some sort, was Calixtus Bishop of Rome, who succeeded next vnto Zephyrinus; about mentioned. After him Vribanus also, which hath beyng Bishops of Rome, did both suffer, by the opinion of some writers, vnder Alexander Seuerus.

Ex Nauclero.

Calixtus Bishop of Rome and Martyr.

This Calixtus in his two decretall Epistles, written to Benedectus, and to the Bishops of France, geueth these ordinances, that no actions of censures agaynst the prelates or teachers of the church should be receaued, that no secret conspiracies should be made against bishops. Item, no man to communicate with persons excommunicate. And

The decretall Epistles of Calixtus exauited.