

A notable example of Gods iust plague vpon a persecutor.

Erfordiens. Lib 6.

Calepodius, Martyr.

Pammachius with his wife and children Martyrs.

42. Martyrs. Simplicius, Martyr.

Quiritius, Julia, hys mother Martyrs.

Tyberius, Valerianus, brethren and martirs.

Martina a Virgine & Martyr.

with beards. with all which torments, when he could not be hurt, finally with sword was beheaded. The executor of these punishments (as by Henricus Erford, may be gathered) was one Antiochus, who in the executing of the foresayd torments, suddenly fell downe from his iudiciall seat, crying out, that al his inward bowels burned with him, and lo gaue vp the breath, Henr. de Erfordia, Lib. 6. cap. 29.

Allo with the same Agapitus is numbred Calepodius a minister of Rome, whose body first was drawn through the cite of Rome, & after cast into Tiber. Bergo. ibidem.

Then followeth Pammachius a Senator of Rome, w his wife and children, and other boch men and women, to the number of xliij.

Item an other noble Senator of Rome named Simplicius all which together in one day had their heads smitten off, and their heads after hanged vp in diuers gates of the Citie, for a terrour of other, that none should professe the name of Christ.

Beside these suffred also Quiritius a noble man of Rome, who with his mother Julia, and a great number moe, were put like wife to death.

Allo Tiberius and Valerianus, Citizens of Rome, and brethren, suffered (as Bergomenis sayth) the same tyme; who first being bruised and broken with bats, after were beheaded.

Allo Vincentius, Bergomenis, and Erfordiensis, make mention of Martina a Christian virgine, which after diuers bitter punishments, beyng constant in her sayth, suffered in like manner by the sword.

Albeit as touching the tyme of these forenamed Martyrs, as I find them not in elder writers: so do I suppose them to suffer vnder Maximinus, or Decius, rather then vnder Alexander.

* The sixth Persecution.

Maximinus Emperour and persecutor. The vi. persecution.

An. } 237. }

Origenes de Martyrio.

Gordianus Emperour.

An. } 240. }

Pontianus Bishop of Rome. Diferity betweene Damasus and Euseb. Pontianus banished.

This doctrine seemeth derogatory to Christ and blasphemous.

Ammonius a Christian writer.

After the death of Alexander the Emperour, who with his mother Mammaea (as is said) was murdered in Germany solowed Maximinus, chosen by the will of the souldiours, rather then by the authorizy of the Senate, about the yeare of our Lord, 237. who for the barred hee had to the house of Alexander (as Eusebius recordeth) rayed vp the vi. persecution against the Christians: especially against the teachers and leaders of the Church, thinking thereby the sooner to vanquish the rest, if the captiues of them were removed out of the way, whereby I suppose rather the Martyrdome of Vrbannus the bishop, and of the rest aboue specified, to haue happened vnder the tyranny of this Maximinus then vnder Alexander. In the tyme of this persecution, Origenes wrote his booke De Martyrio: which booke if it were extant would geue vs some knowledge, I doubt not, of such as in this persecution did suffer, which now lye in silence vnknowne. And no doubt but a great number they were, & moe should haue bene, had not the prouident mercy of God shortned his dayes, & badeled his tyranny, for he rayged but thre yeares. After whom succeeded Gordianus an 240. a man no lesse studious for the vtilitie of the common wealth, as mild and gentle to the christians. This Gordian after he had governed with much peace and tranquillitie the Monarchie of Rome the space of vi. yeares was slayne of Phillip Emperour after him.

In the dayes of these Emperours aboue recited, was Pontianus bishop of Rome, who succeeded next after Vrbannus aboue reheried, about the yeare of our Lord, 236. in the xii. yeare of Alexander, as Eusebius, Lib. 6. cap. 28. noteth: declaring him to liue vi. yeares. Contrary Damasus and Platina write, that he was bishop ix. yeares and a halfe. And that in the tyme of Alexander, he with Philippus his deuell was banished into Sardinia, and there died. But it semeth more credible that he was banished rather vnder Maximinus, and died in the beginning of the raigne of Gordianus. In his Epistles decretal (which some likewise to be sayned) he appeareth very deuout, after the common example of other bishops to vphold the dignitie of deuelles, and of Clergie men, saying: that God hath them so familiar with him, that by them he accepteth the offerings and oblations of other, and forgiveth their finnes, and reconcilith them vnto him. Also, that they do make the body of the lord with their owne mouth, and geue it to other, &c. which doctrine how it standeth with the Testament of God, & glory of Christ, let the Reader vie his owne iudgement.

Other notable fathers also in the same tyme were sayned by in the church, as Philetus Bishop of Antioch, which succeeded after Aclepiades aboue mentioned, an. 220. and after him Zebennus bishop of the same place, an. 231.

To these also may be added Ammonius the scholemaster of Origenes, as Suidas suppoeth, also the kindnes of Por-

phiry the great enemy of Christ. Notwithstanding, this Ammonius ended in better grace, as he left diuers booke in defence of Christs religion: so he died constantly persecuted (as Eusebius reporteth) in y^e doctrine of Christ, which he had in the beginning receaued, who was about y^e days of Alexander.

Iulius Aphricanus also about the tyme of Gordianus afoze sayd, is numbred among the old and auncient writers, of whom Nicephorus writeth to be the scholar of Origenes, and a great writer of histories of that tyme.

Vnto these Doctors and Counsellors may be adioyned the story of Natalius, mentioned in the last booke of Eusebius. This Natalius had suffered persecution before like a constant confessor, who being seduced and persuaded by Aclepiodotus and Theodorus (which were the Disciples of Theodorus) to take vpon him to be bishop of their sect, promising to geue him euery month an hundredth and fiftie pieces of siluer, and so he ioyning himselfe to them, was aduonished by vision and reuelatio from the Lord, for such was the great mercy of God, and of our Lord Christ Iesu, that he would not his Martyr, which had suffered so much for his name before, now to perish out of his church. For the which cause (sayth Eusebius) God by certaine visions did aduonish him. But he not taking great heed thereto, being blinded partly with lucre, partly with honor, was at length all the night long scourged of the Angels: In so much that he beyng made thereby very sore, and carry on the moxors putting on sackcloth, with much weeping and lamentation went to Zephyrinus the bishop aboue mentioned, where he falling down before him and all the Christian congregation, shewed them the stripes of his body, and prayed them for the mercies of Christ, that he might be receued into their communion again, from which he had sequestred himselfe before. And so was admitted according as he desired.

After the deceale of Pontianus Bishoppe of Rome afoze mentioned, succeeded next in that place Anterius of whom Iustanus writeth that Pontianus departing away, did substitute him his roome. But Eusebius writeth that he succeeded immediately after him. Damasus sayth, that because he caused the actes and deathes of the Martyrs to be written, therefore he was put to martiridome himselfe, by Maximinus the Iudge. Concerning the tyme of this Bishop, our writers do greatly iare. Eusebius and Marianus Scotus affirmeth that he was Bishop but one moneth. Sabellicus sayth that not to be so. Damasus assigneth to him xii. yeares & one moneth. Volateranus, Bergomenis, and Henricus Erford, geue to him thre yeares & one moneth. Naucleus writeth that he sat one yeare and one moneth. All which are so far discrepant one from an other, that which of them most agreeth with truth, it lyeth in doubt. Next to this Bishop was Fabianus, of whom moe is to be sayd hereafter.

Of Hippolytus, also both Eusebius and Hieronymus make mention that he was a bishop, but where they make no relation. And so likewise doth Theodoretus write him to be a bishop, and also a Martyr, but naming no place. Gelasius contra Euseben sayth, he dyed a Martyr, and that he was bishop of an head Citie in Arabia. Nicephorus writeth, that he was Bishop of Ostia, a port towne neare to Rome. Certain it is, he was a great writer, and left many workes in the Church, which Eusebius and Hierome do recite: by the suppitation of Eusebius, he was about the yeare of our Lord, 230.

Prudentius in his Peristephanon, making mentio of great heapes of Martyrs buried by le. together, speaketh and of Hippolytus, and sayth that he was drawn with wild hories through fields, dales and bushes, and describeth thereof a pitifull story.

After the Emperour Gordianus, the Emperit fell to Philippus, who with Philip his sonne, gouerned the space of vi. yeares, an. 246. This Philippus with his sonne and all his familie, was christened & conuerted by Fabianus & Origenes, who by letters exhorted him and Seuera his wife to be baptised, being the first of all the Emperours that brought in Christianity into the imperiall seat. Bewascurt Pomponius Lerus reporteth of him to be a dissembling prince. This is certayne, that for his Christianity, he with his sonne was slayne of Decius one of his Captiues. Sabellicus Bergomenis Lib 2. sheweth this hatred of Decius agaynst Philippus to be conceaued, for that the Emperour Philip boch the father and the sonne had committed their treasures vnto Fabianus then Bishop of Rome.

The seventh Persecution.

Thus Philippus beyng slayne, after him Decius inhabited the crowne about the yeare of our Lord, 250, by whom was

Iulius Aphricanus writer.

Natalius, Confessor. Ex Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 28.

The Lord will not leete them which haue done or suffered anye thing for him.

Anterius, Bythop of Rome martyr.

Authors disagree.

Hippolytus Bishop and Martyr.

Prudentius Peristephan.

Philippus Emperour. Anno. } 246. } Philippos was first Christian Emperour.

Decius Emperour.

Anno. } 250. }