

by constantine himselfe to be true.

An admonition concerning the material crosse not to be worshipped, but to be a meane to bring Constantine to the faith of him which was crucified.

Constantinus with hys army approacheth toward Rome,

Psal. 7. Maxentius taken in hys owne trap.

Maxentius beaten in the field.

Maxentius drowned by hys owne bidge.

Pharao a figure of Maxentius the last persecutor in Rome.

Pharao and Maxentius compared.

Exod. 15. The figure of the old testament verified in the new.

The glorious and victorious host of Christ.

Persecution in the West ceased for a M. yeares till the time of W. J. C. l. 156.

ning thereof, behold in the night season in his slepe Christ appeared to him with the signe of the same crosse, which he had seene before, bidding him to make the figuration thereof, and to carie it in hys warres before him, and so should he haue the victorie.

Wherin is to be noted (good Reader) that this signe of the Crosse, and these letters added withall: In hoc vince, was giuen to him of God, not to induce any superstitious worship or opynion of the Crosse, as though the crosse it self, had any such power or strength in it, to obtaine victorie: but onely to beare the meaning of another thing, that is, to be an admonition to him, to seeke and aspire to the knowledge and faith of him, which was crucified vpon the crosse for the saluation of him, and of all the world, and so to let forth the glory of hys name, as afterwarde it came to passe. This by the way, now to the matter.

The next day following after this night vision, Constantinus caused a crosse after the same figuratio to be made of golde and precious stone, and to be borne before him in steade of his standard: and so with much hope of victorie & great confidence, as one armed from heauen speeche himselfe toward his enemy. Against whom Maxentius being constrained perforce to issue out of the Citie, sendeth all his power to ioyne with him in the field beyond the river of Tybur, where Maxentius craftely by a drawynge downe a bridge called Pons Miluius, caused an other deceitfull bidge to be made of boates and whirries, being ioynd together, and covered ouer with boades and planks in manner of a bridge, thinking therewith to take Constantine as in a trap. But here it came to passe which in the 7. psalme is writtē.

He digged a pit, and fell therein himselfe. Let his working returne vpon his owne head, and his vnrighteousnesse vpon hys owne pate, which here in this Maxentius was rightly verified.

For after the two hostes did meete, her being not able to sustaine the force of Constantine fighting vnder the crosse of Christ against hym, was put to such a flight, and driven to suche an exigent, that in reepping backe, for had thinking to get the Citie, vpon the same bidge which he did lay for Constantine, was ouerturned by the fall of hys horse into the bottome of the floude, and there with the weight of his armour, he with a great part of his beate men were drawned. Repentent vnto vs the like example of Pharao & his host drawned in the red sea, who not vnaptly seemeth to beare a Prophetical figuratio of this Maxentius. For as the children of Israel were in long thraldome and persecution in Egypt vnder tyrantes there, till the drawing out of this Pharao they last persecutor: so was this Maxentius and Maximinus and Licinius the last persecutors in the Romane Monarchie of the Christians, whome thys Constantine fighting vnder the crosse of Christ, did vanquish and set the Christians at liberty, who before had bene persecuted now 300. yeares in Rome, as hath bene hetherto in this historie declared.

Wherefore as the Israelites with their Moses at the drawing out of their Pharao, long gloriously vnto the Lorde, who myraculously had cast downe the horse and horsemen into the sea: So no lesse reioycing and exceeding gladnesse was here, to see the glorious bande of the Lorde Christ fighting with his people, and vanquishing hys enemies and persecutors.

In histories we read of many victories and great conquests gotten: yet we neuer read, nor cuer shal of any victorie so wholsom, so commodious, so approprie to making as this was, which made an ende of so much bloodshed, & obtained so much libertie & life to the posterity of so many generations. For albeit that some persecutio was yet stirring in the East countreys by Maximinus and Licinius, as shall be declared: Yet in Rome and in all the west partes, no martyr died after this heauely victorie gotten. And also in the East partes the said Constantine with the said crosse borne before him, consequently vpon the same so vanquished the tyrantes, and so established the peace of the church, that for the space of a iust 33. yeares after that, we reade of no set persecution against the Christians, vnto the time of Iohn Wickliffe, when the bishops of Rome began with fire to persecute the true members of Christ, as in further proccesse of thys historie (Christ graunting) shall appere. So happie, so glorious (as I sayde) was this victorie of Constantine, surnamed the great. For the ioy & gladnes wherof, the Citizens who had sent for him before, with exceeding triumph brought him into the citie of Rome, where he w the crosse was most honourably receiued and celebrated the space of vij. dayes together, hauing moreover in the market place, his image set vp, holding in his right hande the signe of the crosse, w this inscription: Hoc salutaris signo, veraci fortitudinis indicio, ciuitatem nostram iugo tyranni ereptam liberaui. That is, with this wholesome signe, the true

D. J.

when

selfe. But the Courtiers when they sawe that the woman tarped so long, they being displeas'd therewith, brake open the doores, and found her there lying dead. Then returned they and declared this matter to the Emperour, who was so far past shame, that in steade of repentance, hee was the more set on fire in attempting the like.

He was also much addict to the arte Magicall, which to execute, hee was more fitte then the Impericall dignitie. Also sometime he would rippe women when they were in labour, and would search the place where the infant lay, being bozne a litle before. Often he would inuocate Diuels in a secreete maner, and by the answers of them hee sought to breake the warres, which he knew Constantinus and Licinius prepared against him. And to the ende hee might the rather perpetrate hys mischieuous and wicked attempts, which in his vngracious minde he had conceiued, according to his purpose, in the beginning of his raighe hee faimed himselfe to be a fauourer of the Christians. In which thing doing, thinking to make the people of Rome hys friendes, hee commaunded that they should cease from persecuting of the Christians, and hee himselfe in the meane season abstained from no conuentionous vexation of them, till that he began at last to shewe himselfe an open persecutor of them: at which time as Zonaras wyrteth hee most cruelly rag'd against all the Christians thereabouts, veyring them w all manner of iniuries, which thing he in no lesse wise did, then Maximinus, as Euse. in his 8. booke and 15. chap. seemeth to affirme. And Platina declareth in the life of Marcellus the Bishop, that hee banished a certaine noble woman of Rome, because shee gaue her goddes to the Church.

Thus by the grieuous tyranny and vnspcakable wickednesse of thys Maxentius, the Citizens and Senatours of Rome, being much grieued and oppressed, sent thei complaints wyth letters vnto Constantinus, wyth much sure and most hearty petitions, desiring hym to helpe and release their Countrey and Citie of Rome: who hearyng and vnderstanding thei miserable and pitifull state, and grieued therewith not a litle, first sendeth by letters to Maxentius, desiring and exhorting him to refrayne his corrupt doings, and great crueltie. But when no letters nor exhortations would preuaile, at length pitying the woofull case of the Romaunes, gathered together hys power and armie in Britayne and France, where wyth to repress the violent rage of that tyrant. Thus Constantinus sufficiently appoynted with strength of men, but especially wyth strength of God, entred hys iourney coming towarde Italie, whiche was about the last yeare of the persecution. Anno 318. Maxentius vnderstanding of the coming of Constantine, and trusting more to his diuinely Arte of Magike, then to the good will of hys subiectes, wyth hee litle deferred, durst not shewe himselfe out of the Citie, nor encounter wyth him in the open field, but wyth priue garrisons laide in waite for him by the waie, in sundry straightes as he should come. With whom Constantine had diuers skirmishes, and by the power of the Lorde did euer vanquish them and put them to flight.

For wythstanding Constantinus yet was in no great comfort, but in great care and dread in hys minde (approching now weare vnto Rome) for the Magicall charmes and sorceries of Maxentius, where with hee had vanquished before Seuerus sent by Galerius against hym, as hath bene declared, which made also Constantinus the more afayde. Wherefore being in great doubt and perplexity in himselfe, and reuoluing many things in his minde, what helpe he might haue against the operations of hys charming, which bided to cut women great with childe, to take hys diuinely charmes by the entrails of the infants, with such other like feates of deuillishnes which he practised: These things (I say) Constantinus doubting and reuoluing in his minde, in his iourney drawing toward the Citie, and casting by his eyes many times to heauen, in the South part, about the going downe of the sunne, sawe a great brightnesse in heauen, appearing in the similitude of a crosse, wyth certaine starres of equal brightnesse, geuing this inscription like Latine letters, IN HOC VINCE, that is: In thys overcome. Euseb. De vita Constant lib. 2. Niceph. lib. 7. cap. 29. Eutrop. lib. 11. Sozom. lib. 1. cap. 3. Soerat. lib. 1. cap. 2. Vrsipurgens. Chronic. Paul. Diacon. lib. 11. Thys miraculous vision to be true, for the more credit, Eusebius Pamphilus in hys first booke De vita Constantini doeth witness moreouer, that hee had heard the sayde Constantinus himselfe oftentimes repute, and also to sweare this to be true and certaine, which hee did see with his owne eyes in heauen, and also his soundiours about him. At the sight wherof, when he was greatly affonied, and consulting with his men vpon the mea-

A monster in the likeness of an Emperour.

A liuely patern of an hypocrite

Euseb. Lib. 8. cap. 15.

The Romaunes sent to Constantine for succour.

An. 318.

Maxentius feared for hys magicke and sorcery.

A miracle of a crosse appearing to Constantine in heauen.

In hoc Vince.

Euseb. lib. 2.

Niceph. lib. 7. cap. 29.

Eutrop. lib. 11.

Sozom. lib. 1. cap. 3.

Soerat. lib. 1. cap. 2.

Vrsipurgens. Chronic.

Paul. Diacon. lib. 11.

This vision reported and testified