

very eloquent, a good philosopher, & in disputation sharp and ingenious. He was accustomed to say, that an Emperour ought to refuse no labor, for the vtilitie of the common weale: yea, & that to aduenture the mangling of his body for the remedy thereof, but if other waies it maye be holpen to cherish the same. This Aurelius, Victor, Pomponius, Letus, & Ignacius write of him. And Aelius Lampridius saith writing vpon the life of Heliogabalus, that Constantinus was wont to saye, that an Empire was giuen by the determinate purpose of God, that he to whom it was giuen should to employ his diligence, as he might be thought worthy of the same at the hands of the gyuer. Which same saying also Augustine noteth in his 3. booke against Cresconius. epilt. 49. and 50.

He first entered into the Empire, by the mercifullnes of God minding after long waues of dolefull persecution to restore vnto his church peace and tranquillitie, an. 311. as Eusebius accompteth in his Chronicle. His raigue continued, as Eutropius affirmeth, 30. yeares, Letus saith 32. yeares lacking 2. monethes. Great peace and tranquillitie enioied the Church vnder the raigue of this good Emperour, which tooke great paine and trauell for the preservation thereof. First, yea and that before he had subdued Licinius, he let forth many edictes for the restitution of the goods of the church, for the renouing of the Christians out of exile, for taking away the dissension of the Doctours out of the Church, for the setting of them free from publicke charges, and such like, euen as the copies of his constitutions here vnder declare, which Eusebius in his 10. booke, and 5. chapter, repeateth in this wise.

*\* The copy of an Epistle of Constantinus, sent to his subiectes inhabiting in the East.*

Vltor Constantinus Maximus, Augustus, to our louing subiectes inhabiting throughout the east parts, sendeth greeting. The thing it selfe, which in the sure and most firme law of nature is conteyned, doth giue vnto all men (euen as God hath ordeyned the same) sufficient perseverance and vnderstanding, both of such things as man ought to foresee, as also what things presently he ought to meditate. Neither is there any thing therein to be doubted, of such as haue their mindes directed to the scope or marke of perfect vnderstanding: so that the perfect comprehending of sound reason, and the perseverance thereof, be compared with the knowledge of God, being the true and perfect vertue. Wherefore let no wise man be troubled, although he see diuers men of diuers dispositions. For wisdom which springeth of vertue cannot abide, or acquaint her selfe with fonde ideotes, vnles, that (on the other side) the malice of peruerse litherne prolong her daies, and cause the same Ideocie to suruiue. Wherefore assuredly the crowne and price of vertue lieth open vnto all men, & the moste mightie God ordereth the iudgement of the same. I vndoubted as many felicitas as possible is, will endeour my selfe to testifie and confesse vnto you al, the hope which is in me. I think verily that the Emperours which before this time haue lately bene, euen for their tyranny had the Empire taken from them: & my father onely exercising and vsing al meekenes and lenity in his affaires, calling vpon God the father, with great deuotion & humility, hath bene exalted to the same. And all the rest, as men wanting their wits, and in comparison as sauage beastes, rather did giue themselves to like cruelty, then vnto any lenitie & gentlenes towards their subiects: in which tyranny euery one for his time being noofoled, vterly subuerted the true and vnfallible doctrine. And so great malice was their kindled in their brestes, that when all things were in peaceable tranquillitie, they made and rayfed most cruell and bloody intestine or ciuill warres. It is credibly informed vs, that in those daies, Apollo gaue answers but not by any mans mouth, but out of a certaine caue & darke place (saying) that he was much disquieted by those that were the iust men and liuers vpon the earth, so that he could or would not for them, declare a truth of such things as others demanded: & hereby it came to passe that such false deuinations were geuen from the golden tables in Apollos temple. And this thing did his propheticall priest playne of, when he tooke vp againe the heare of his head, that other had cōtemptuously cast down, & that the neglecting of his diuination was the cause of so many euils, amongst men. But let vs see what was the ende hereof: we now boldly & without all feare inuocate & worship the omnipotent God. when I was a childe I heard, that he which then was chiefe Emperour of Rome, vnhappy, yea, most vnhappy man being seduced, and brought into error, by his souldiers, curiously inquired who were those iust men vpon the earth that Apollo ment: and one of his priests which was nere about him, made answer that they were the christians. This answer hereupon vnto him being as delectable, as hony vnto the mouth, drew the sword giuen

vnto him to be a reuenger vpon euill doers and malefactours against the professors of the irreprehensible sanctimony and religion. And straight way he gaue forth a commission (to bloody homicides as I may well call them) & gaue commandment to all the Iudges, that they should endeavour themselves with all the cunning they had to the deuising of more greuouser, & sharper punishments against the poore Christians. Then, then I say, a man myght haue scene, how greatly the honest professors of that religion, were molested with cruelty, and daily suffered no small injuries and contumelies, and that also they suffered and sustained the same with such téperancy as though they had had no injuries done vnto them at all. Which temperance and patience of theirs was the cause why the furious citizens were the more madder & raging against them. What fires, what tortures, what kinde of torments were there, but they without respecte either of age, or sexe were enforced to feele?

Then did the earth without doubt, herselfe bewaile her children and the round worlde which containeth all things, being sprinkled and imbrued with their blood made dolefull lamentation for them, and the daye it selfe prouoked for to mourne, was made amafed for them. But what is this to purpose. Now the very barbarous nations reioyce for their sakes which reuealed and harboured them, when they were afraid and fled from vs: keeping them as it were in most louing & amiable captiuitie. And they saued not onely their liues, but also were a defence for their religion. And now also the Romaine nation remembreth and hath before there eies this blame and spotte, which the Christians that were of that time, worthely gaue vnto them when they by them were banished (as vnfitte members of their common wealth) amongst the barbarous people. What needeth to make further reherfall of the mourning lamentation, which the heathen people themselves throughout all the world, made for the pittifull murder and slaughter of them? After this it came to passe that they which were authors of all these mischiefs died also, and were committed for there reward to the most filthy & horrible dungeon of hel. They being so intangled with intestine and ciuile warres, left alieue neyther name nor kinsmen of their owne: which thing vndoubtedly had not chaused vnles the wicked deuination of Apollos oracles had deceiued & bewitched the. To thee therefore now I pray, oh most mightie God, that thou wilt vouchsafe to be mercifull, and pardon all the east parts and inhabitants of the same, being oppressed with present calamitie: and that by mee thy seruauant thou wilt of thy goodnes helpe and relieue the same. And these things rashly craue I not at thy hands: oh Lord, most mighty and holiest God of all. For I being perswaded by the onely oracles haue both begone and also finished wholesome and profitable things, and further by the bearing and shewing of thine ensigne, haue ouercome a mighty and strong host, and when any necessitie of the common weale (to my charge committed) requireth thereunto, (following those signes & tokens of thy vertues) I boldly go forth and fight against mine enemies: and for this cause haue I sacrificed my soule vnto thee, purified and clesed both with thy loue and feare. Yeatruely, thy name doe I sincerely loue, and thy power doe I reuerence, which by many tokens and wonders hath shewed and confirmed thereby my beleefe & faith. Therefore will I doe my endeour, and bende my selfe thereunto, that I may redifie thy most holy house, which those wicked & vngodly Emperours haue with so great ruine laid wast, thy people do I desire to bring & stablish, in firme peace & tranquillitie, & that for the publicke vtilitie of all the inhabitants of the earth. Those which yet erre & are out of the way, enioy the benefite of peace and quietnes, with, and amongst the number of the faithful sort: for I trust the restitution of the like societie, and participation may be a meanes to bring them also that erre into the perfecte way of verity. Let no man therefore be greuous one vnto another but what euery man thinketh best that let him doe. For such as are wise ought thoroughly to be perswaded, that the onely meane to liue holily and as they should doe, whome the spirite of God moueth, to take their delight and recreation in reading his holie will. And if others wilfully will go out of the way, cleauing to the Synagogues of false doctrine, they maye at their owne perill: as for vs we haue the most worthy house or congregation of Gods veritie, which he according to his owne goodnes & nature hath giuen vs. And this also we wish vnto thee, that with like participation & common consente, they may fele wyth vs the same delectation of mind. For this our religio is neither new nor newly inuented, but is as old as wee beleuee the creation of the worlde to be: and which God hath commaunded to be celebrated with such worship as both seemed and pleased him. But all liuing men are lyers, and are deceiued with diuers and sundrye illusions. Thou O God for Christ thy sonnes sake, suffer not this wickednes againe to take roote: thou hast set vp a cleare burning light, that thereby as many as thou hast chosen maye come vnto thee. These thy myracles approue the same. It is thy power that kepeth vs in innocencye and fydelytie. The Sunne and the Moone runne their appointed course: neyther yet in ranging wise, wander the starres to what place of the worlde they list themselves.

The sword geuen for to be augmented vpon malefactours.

A great commendation of the christians.

The earth bewayled the martyrs deaths.

The authors of all mischiefe punished.

Apollo lying oracles the cause of so many martirs deaths.

Constant. prayer.

Constant. Faith confirmed by the myracles of the crosse.

The clemency of a good Emperour.

A good iudgement.

One religion from the beginning of the worlde.

The prayer of Constantine was fulfilled. Each thing in their creation preach the very and true God

The common saying of Constantinus.

August. contra. Crescon epist. 49. 50.

The raygne of Constantinus.

The effect of some of hys constitutions.

Euseb. Lib. 10. cap. 5.

The law of nature made perfect, compared with the knowledge of God.

Lithernes the nurse of ignorance, and ignorance the enemy to wisdom. Tyranny deprieth Emperours.

Bloudy tyrants make ciuile warres. Apollo gaue answer out of a caue in the ground, that he was disquieted by the Christians.