

The dayes, yeates, monethes, and times, keepe their appoynted turnes The earth abideth firme and vnremouable at thy worde, and the winde at the time (by thee directed) stormeth & bloweth. The streaming waterie floudes, ebbe in time according as they flow. The raging sea abideth within her bounded limites And for that the Ocean Sea fretcheth out her selfe in equall length and breadth with the whole earth: this must needes be wrought with some marueilous workmanship of thine owne hand: which thing vnlesse it were at thy will made and disposed, without all doubt, so great difference and partition betweene, woulde or this time haue brought vter ruine & destruction, both to the life of man, as to all that belogeth to man beside. Which for that they haue such great and huge conflicts amongst themselves, as also the inuifible spirites haue: we geue thee thanks, O Lorde most mighty God of all Gods, that all mankinde hath not bene destroyed thereby. Surely, euen as greatly as thy benignitie and gentlenes, is manifested by diuers & sundry benefites bestowed vpon vs: so much also is the same fet forth and declared in the discipline of thy eternall word, to those that be heauenly wite, & apply themselves to the attainment of sincere & true vertue. But if any such there be, that little regard or haue but small respect vnto the consideration thereof: let them not blame or lay a fault in others that do the same. For that Phisicke whereby health is obtained, is manifestly offered vnto all men: now therefore let no man go about to subuert that, which experience it selfe doth shew (of necessitie) to be pure and good. Let vs therefore altogether vie the participation of this benefite bestowed vpon vs, that is to say, the benefite of peace and tranquillitie, setting a part all controuersie. And let no man hurt or be prejudiciall to his fellowe for that thing, wherein he thinketh him selfe to haue done wel. If by that, which any man knoweth and hath experience of, hee thinketh he may profite hys neighbour, let him doe the same, if not, let him geue ouer, and remit it til on other time. For there is a great diuersitie betwixt the willing and voluntary embracing of religion, and that whē a man is thereunto enforced and coacted. Of these things haue I made a more larger discourse, then in deede, the scope of mediocritie requireth: especially because I woulde not haue my faith (touching the veritie) to be hid. For that I heare there be some, which complain the olde accustomed haunting of their temples, & that the power of such darkenesse is cut of and taken away: which thing surely I woulde take in better part, were it not that the violent rebellion of flagitious error, were so fixed in many mens heartes, whereby they thirst after the vter subuersion of the common vweale and Empire.

Such was the goodnesse of this Emperour Constantinus, or rather such was the prouidence of almighty God toward his Church, in stirring him vp: that all his care and study of minde was set vpon nothing els, but onely howe to benefit & enlarge the commodities of the same. Neither was it to him enough to deliuer the Church and people of God, from ourward veneration of soaue tyrants and persecutors. No les beneficiall was his godly care also in quietting the inward dissensions and disturbance within the Church among the Christian bishops themselves, according as we read of Moses the deliuerer of y<sup>e</sup> Israellites, in agreeing the brethren together, when he saw them at variance. Exodus. 17. No lesse also did his vigilant study extend in erecting, restoring, & enriching the Churches of God in all Cities, and in prouiding for the ministers of the same. And therefore writing to Anulinus his chiefe captaine, declareth his will & minde to him in letters, concerning the goddes whych did appertaine to the Churches of the Christians: that hee shoulde procure vigilantly for the same: that all such goddes, houses, and gardenes, belonging before to the rigot of Churches, shoulde agayne be restored in all speedie wise: and that hee therein might be certified with speede. &c.

Agaynauer, he writing to the saide Anulinus in an other letter, signifieth vnto him in this effect: that for so much as the concept of God his reuerent religion, is & hath bene euer the greatest decay to the name & people of Rome, as contrary the maintaining and reuerencing the same, hath euer brought prosperitie to all common weales: Therefore he in consideration therof, hath taken that order, & geuerly to him in charge, that though y<sup>e</sup> prouince, where he hath to doe, which was in Aphyca where Cecilianus was Bishop, he should there see & prouide, that all such ministers and Clerkes, whose vocation was to serue in the Church, should be freed and exempted from all publike duties and burdens: whereby they being so priuiledged, and all impediments remoued, which shoulde hinder their diuine ministracion: thereby the comon vtilitie of the people might the better flourish. &c.

Furthermore, the sayde Constantinus in an other letter writing to Miltiades, Bishop of Rome, and to Marcus, declareth in his letters to them, howe Cecilianus Bishop of Carthage, hath ben accused vnto him by diuers of his col-

leages and fellowe byshops. wherfore his will is, that the sayd Cecilianus, with x. byshops his accusers, with x. other his defendants should repaire vp to him at Rome, where in the present assistance of the foresayde Miltiades, Rheticus, Maternus, Marinus, and of other their fellowe Colleages, the cause of Cecilianus myght be harde, and rightly examined, so that all schisme and division might be cut of from among them: wherem the earnest desire of Constantinus to peace and vnitie, may well appeare.

Vpon the lyke cause and argument also, he wyrteth to Chrestus Byshop of Syracula, so desirous to vnitely peace and concord in the church, that he offereth to him with his vnder Ministers and thre seruants, hys free carpage to come vp to him vnto the Council of other bishops, for the agreeing of certaine matters belonging to the Church.

Hee wyrteth also an other letter to the foresayde Cecilianus Byshop of Carthage.

To the prouinces like wise of Palestina & those parties about, hee directeth his Edicte in the behalfe of the Christians: for the releasing of such as were in captiuitie: and for the restoring agayne of them, which had sustained any lesse in the former persecution before, & for the refreshing of such as heerebefore had bene oppressed with any ignominy, or molestation, for the it confusion sake: declaring in the sayd Edicte, howe that his whole body, life and soule, and what heeuer is in hym, hee oweth to God, and to the seruice of him. &c.

Agaynauer an other lere he wyrteth to Eusebius, for the edifying of newe Christian Churches, & restoring of them whych had bene wasted before by forcine enemies. And after hee had collected the Synode of Nice, for the studie of peace and vnitie of the Church, he wyrteth vpon the same to Alexander and Arius. In which hys letters hee most lamentably uttered the great grieue of his heart, to see and heare of theyr contentions and dissention: whereby the peace and comon harmonie of the Church was broken, the Synode prouoked & resisted, the holy people of the Lorde divided into partes and riuales, contrary to the office of god and circumspect men, whose duetie were rather to nouerly conuerse and to seeke tranquillity. And though in some small poynts and light trifles they did disagree from other: yet as the example of Philosophers might teache them, who although in some part of a sentence or peece of a question, some might dissent from other: yet in the vnitie of their profession, they did all ioyne as fellowes together. In like case were it theyr duetie in such fruitles questions (or rather peeces of questions) to keepe them in the conceptions of their mindes, in silence vnto themselves, and not to bring them forth into publicke Synodes, to breake therefore from the communion of the reuerent Council. Declaring moreover in the sayde Epistle, the first origine and occasion of thys theyr contentious dissention to vyle vpon vaine & trifling termes, vile causes, and light questions, and peeces rather of questions: about such matters as neither are to be moued, nor to be answered vnto, being moued, more curious to be searched, and perillous to be expelld, then necessary to be inquired, magisque puerilibus ineptijs, quam sacerdotum ac cordatorum virorum prudentiæ conuenientia, as he there doth terme them. wherfore by al manner meanes he doth labour them, doth entreat them, and perswade them, not onely with reason, but also with teares and sighing sobbes, that they would restore agayne peace vnto the Church, and quietnesse to the rest of his life (which other wise would not be sweet vnto him) and that they would returne agayne to the communion of the reuerent Council. who in so doing should open his way and purposed iourney into the East partes, which other wise hearing of their discord and dissention, would be foyre to see with his eyes, that which greeceth him now to heare with hys eares: with much more in the same Epistle contained, but this is the effect of the whole. Euseb. de vita Constant. Lib. 2. Thus much I thought summarily to comprehend, whereby the diuine disposition and singular gentile nature of this meeke & religious Constantine might more notoriously appeare to all Princes: for them to learne by hys example, what zeale and care they ought to beate toward the Church of Christ, & how gently to gouerne, and how to be beneficiall to the same.

Many other Edictes & Epistles wyrtten to other places and parties, he expelld at large in the seconde booke of Euseb De vita Constantini: wherem the zealous care and sincerely beneficence of this noble Emperour toward the Church of Christ may appeare. wherof in a briefe recapitulation such specialities we haue collected as here followeth, and is to be seene in ZoZo Lib. 1. Cap. 8. 9.

First hee commanded all them to be set free, who sooner for the confession of Christ, had bene condemned to banishment,

The earth stayd vnder the power of God.

Who they be that Constant. accompteth wise in deede.

Experience a tryall of the truth.

Constantinus neyther for feare dissembled hys fayth, neyther through pollicye defaceth Gods glory.

Constantinus compared to Moses, in deliuing the people, and agreeing them together. The letter of Constantinus to Anulinus hys captayne.

An other letter of Constantine to Anulinus.

The contempt of gods religion, chiefest decay of common weales.

An other letter of Constantine to Miltiades Byshop of Rome.

The earnest desire of Constantinus to peace and vnitie.

The letter of Constantine to Chrestus Byshop of Syracula.

The edicte of Constantinus to the rulers of the prouince of Palestina.

The letter of Constantine to Eusebius.

The council of Nice. The effect of the letter of Constantine to Alexander and Arius. ex Euseb. de vita Constant. Lib. 2.

Constantine set forth a spectacle to all Princes to follow.