

Donation to be falsly faimed and forged, and not to proceede from Constantine, many arguments might here be inferred, if laisure from other matters would suffer me.

First for that no ancient history, nor yet Macrobius maketh any mention thereof.

1. Naulerius reporteth it to be affirmed in the hypstozie of Isidorus: but in the olde copies of Isidorus no such thynge is to be founde.

3. Graecianus the compiler of the decrees, reciteth that decree, not vpon any auncient authoritie, but only vnder the title of Palea.

4. Gelasius is sayd to geue some testimony thereof, in Dist. 17. Sancta Romana, but that clause of the said distinction touching that matter, in the olde ancient bookes is not extant.

5. Otho Pirringensis, who was about the time of Graecian, after hee hath declared the opinion of the fauourers of the Spacie: affirming this donation to be geuen of Constantine, to Siluester the Pope: induceth consequently, the opinion of them that fauour the Empire, affirming the contrary.

6. How doth thys agree, that Constantine did yeelde vp to Siluester all the politicall dominion ouer the west, when as the sayd Constantine at hys death, deuiding the Empire to his three sonnes, gaue the west part of the Empire to one, the East part to the second, the middle part to the third?

7. How is it like that Theodosius after them, being a iust and a religious Prince, would or could haue occupied the Citie of Rome, if it had not bene his right, but had belonged to the pope, & so did many other Emperours after him?

8. The phrase of this decree being conferred to the phrase and stile of Constantine, in his other Edictes and letters as haue specified doth nothing agree.

9. Seeing the papists themselues confesse that the decree of this donation was writt in Greeke, how agreeth that with truth: when as both it was written not to the Grecians, but to the Romanes, and also Constantine himselfe for lacke of the Greeke toung, was faine to vie the Latine toung in the Councell of Nice?

10. The contents of this donation (who soeuer was the forger thereof) doeth bewray it selfe. For if it be true which there is confessed, that he was Baptised at Rome of Siluester, & the iiii. day after his baptisme this patrimonie was giuen (which was before his battaile against Maximinus or Licinius, An. 317. as Niceph. recordeth) howe then accordeth this word that which followeth in the donation, for him to haue iurisdiction geuen ouer the other iiii. principall seas of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Hierusalem: when as the Citie of Constantinople was not yet begun, before the death of Maximinus or Licinius, and was not finished, before the xxviij. yere of the raigne of Constantine, an. 339. or if it be true, as Hierome counteth, that it was finished the xxiiij. yere of his raigne, which was the yere of our Lorde 334. long after this donation by their owne accept.

11. Furthermore, where in the sayde constitution is sayd that Constantine was baptised at Rome of Siluester, & thereby was purged of Leprosie: the fable thereof agreeth not with the truth of historie: for so much as Eusebius, lib. 4. De vita Constantini, Hieronymus in Chron. Ruffin. lib. 1. cap. 11. Sozomenus, lib. 2. cap. 34. doe altogether consent that hee was Baptised not at Rome, but at Nicomedia: and that moreouer, as by the sayd testimonie doth appeare, not of Siluester but of Eusebius bishop of Nicomedia, not before his battaile against Maximinus, or Licinius, but in the xxxij. yere of his raigne, a litle before his death.

12. Again, where as Constantine in this donation appointed him to haue the principalltie ouer the other iiii. Patriarchall Seas: that maketh Constantine contrary to himselfe, who in the Councell of Nice afterwarde agreed with other bishops, that al the iiii. patriarchall seas should haue equal iurisdiction, euerie one ouer his owne territorie and precinct.

13. In summe, briefly to conclude: who so desireth more abundantly to be satisfied touching this matter, let him

read the booke of Marcellus Patavinus, intituled: defensor pacis, An. 1324. of Laurétius Valla, An. 1440. of Antoninus arch-bishop of Florence, who in hys hypstozie, plainly denieth the tenour of this donation to be founde in the olde booke of the decrees. Of Cusanus Cardinalis, Lib. 3. Cap. 2. wyrring to the Councell of Bassil, Anno 1460. Of Aeneas Syluius in Dialogo, of Hier. Paulus Cattalanus, An. 1496. of Raphael Volateranus, An. 1500. of Lutherus, An. 1537. &c. all which by many and euident probations, dispute and proue this donation taken out of a booke De gelis Syluestri, and translated (as they faime) by one Bartholomeus Picernus, out of Greeke into Latine: not to proceede from Constantine, but to be a thing vttruely pretended, or rather a fable imagined, or els to be the dede of Pipinus or Charles, or some such other, if it were euer the dede of any.

And thus hast thou (beloued Reader) briefly collected the narration of the noble actes and heavenly vertues of thys most famous Emperour Constantine the great: a singular spectacle for all Christian Princes to beholde and imitate, and worthy of perpetuall memorie in all congregations of Christian Saintes, whose seruent zeale & pietie in generall, to all cōgregations, and to all the seruants of Christ was notable: but especially the affection and reuerence of hys heart toward them was admirable, to which had suffered any thynge for the confession of Christ, in the persecutions before, them had hee principally in price and veneration, in so much that hee embraced and kiled theyr woundes and stripes, and their eyes, being put out. And if any suche Bishops or any other Ministers brought to hym any cōplaints one against another, (as many times they did) he would take theyr bills of complaint, and burne them before theyr faces: so frudious and zealous was hys mind to haue them agree, whose discord was to hym moze grieue, then it was to themselues. All the vertuous actes and memorabie doings of this diuine & renowned Emperour to comprehend or commit to hypstozie: it were the matter alone of a great volume: wherefore contented with these aboue premised, because nothing of him can be sayde inough, I cease to discourse of him any further.

One thynge yet remaineth not to be omitted, wherein (as by the way of a note) I thought good to admonish the learned Reader, suche as loue to be conuerfant in reading of auncient authors: that in the Ecclesiasticall hypstozie of Eusebius, where in the latter ende of the booke, is added a certaine Oration, Ad cōuentum Sanctorum, vnder the name of Eusebius Pamphilus, here is to be vnderstand, that the sayd Oration is wrongly intituled vpon the name of Eusebius, to which in very truth is the Oration of Constantine hymselfe. For the probation whereof, beside the stile and matter therein contained, and tractation herocally liuely declaring the religious vaine of Constantine) I alledge the very testimonie of Eusebius himselfe in his fourth booke De vita Constantini, where he in expresse wordes not onely declarth that Constantine wrote such an Oration intituled Ad Cōuentum Sanctorum, but also promisseth in the end of hys booke, to annexe the same: declaring moreouer what difficultie the interpreters had, to translate the same from the Romaine speeche, to theyr Bretian toung, Eusebius de vita Constantini. Lib. 4. pag. 211.

And here an end of these lamentable & dolefull persecutions of the primitive Church, during the space of the 300. yeres fro the passion of our Sauour Christ, til the coming of this Constantine, by whom, as by the elect instrument of God, it hath so pleased his almighty maiesty, by his determinat purpose to giue rest after long trouble to his church, according to that S. Cyprian declarth before, pag. 68. to be reueled of God vnto his Church: that after darkenes and stormy tempest should come peacable calme, & stable quietnes to his church, meaning this time of Constantine now present. At which time it so pleased the almighty, that the murdering malice of Satan should at length be restrained, and he him selfe to be tied vp for a thousande yeres, through his great mercie in Christ, to whome therefore he thanks and praise now and for euer. A M E N.

Commendation of Constantine, the Emperour

Constantine killed the woundes of them that suffered for Christ, Constantine burneth the bills of complayntes, and breaketh strife among the Bishops

Note, that the oration ad cōuentum sanctorum is wrongly ascribed to Eusebius, which is the oration of Constantine

Looke aboue pag. 68. Col. 2. line 152.

Satan bound vp for a M. yeres