

Synopsis 12 – Persecution/Miscellaneous

Copyright 2016 Glen L. Thompson

This document is provided for personal and educational use. It may not be used for commercial purposes without the permission of the copyright holder.

Last updated 2/7/17

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
Manes and the Manichaeian Heresy		
<p>1.22.1 But amidst the good wheat, tares are accustomed to spring up; for envy loves to plot insidiously against the good. Hence it was that a little while before the time of Constantine, a species of heathenish Christianity made its appearance together with that which was real; just as false prophets sprang up among the true, and false apostles among the true apostles.</p> <p>1.22.2 For at that time a dogma of Empedocles, the heathen philosopher, by means of Manichaeus, assumed the form of Christian doctrine. Eusebius Pamphilus has indeed mentioned this person in the seventh book of his Ecclesiastical History, but has not entered into minute details concerning him. 1.22.3 Therefore, I deem it necessary on me to supply some particulars which he has left unnoticed: it will be known who this Manichaeus was, from where he came, and what was the nature of his presumptuous daring.</p> <p>1.22.4 A Saracen named Scythian married a captive from the Upper Thebes. On her account he dwelt in Egypt. Having versed himself in the learning of the Egyptians, he subtly introduced the theory of Empedocles and Pythagoras among the doctrines of the Christian faith. Asserting that there were two natures, a good and an evil one. He termed, as Empedocles had done, the latter Discord, and the former Friendship. Of this Scythian, Buddas, who had been previously called Terebinthus, became a disciple. After proceeding to Babylon, which the Persians inhabit, he made many extravagant statements respecting himself, declaring that he was</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>born of a virgin and brought up in the mountains.</p> <p>1.22.5 The same man afterwards composed four books, one he entitled <i>The Mysteries</i>, another <i>The Gospel</i>, a third <i>The Treasure</i>, and the fourth <i>Heads [Summaries]</i>. But, pretending to perform some mystic rites, he was hurled down a precipice by a spirit and perished.</p> <p>1.22.6 A certain woman at whose house he had lodged buried him. Taking possession of his property, she bought a boy about seven years old whose name was Cubricus. This lad she freed. After giving him a liberal education, she soon after died and left to him all that belonged to Terebinthus, including the books he had written on the principles taught by Scythian.</p> <p>1.22.7 Cubricus, the freedman, took these things with him and withdrew into the regions of Persia, where he spread the books of Buddas or Terebinthus among his deluded followers as his own. He changed his name, calling himself Manes.</p> <p>1.22.8 Now the contents of these treatises apparently agree with Christianity in expression, but are pagan in sentiment. For Manichaeus was an atheist and incited his disciples to acknowledge a plurality of gods, teaching them to worship the sun. He also introduced the doctrine of Fate, denying human free-will, and affirmed a transmutation of bodies, clearly following the opinions of Empedocles, Pythagoras, and the Egyptians. He denied that Christ existed in the flesh, asserting that he was an apparition. He rejected moreover the law and the prophets, calling himself the ‘Comforter,’—all of which dogmas are totally at variance with the orthodox faith of the church. In his epistles he even dared to call himself an apostle.</p> <p>1.22.9 But for a pretension so unfounded he brought upon himself merited retribution in the following manner.</p> <p>1.22.10 The son of the Persian monarch having been attacked with disease, his father became anxious for</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>his recovery and left no means untried in order to effect it. And as he had heard of the wonder-working of Manichaeus, and thinking that these miracles were real, he sent for him as an apostle, trusting that through him his son might be restored. 1.22.11 He accordingly presented himself at court. With his assumed manner he undertook the treatment of the young prince. But the king, seeing that the child died in his hands, shut up the deceiver in prison with the intention of putting him to death. However, he devised a way to escape and fled into Mesopotamia. 1.22.12 But the king of Persia, discovering that he was dwelling there, caused him to be brought to him by force. After flaying him alive, he stuffed his skin with chaff and suspended it in front of the gate of the city.</p> <p>1.22.13 These things we state not having manufactured them ourselves, but collected from a book entitled <i>The disputation of Archelaus bishop of Caschara</i> (one of the cities of Mesopotamia). For Archelaus himself states that he disputed with Manichaeus face to face, and mentions the circumstances connected with his life to which we have now alluded.</p> <p>1.22.14 Envy thus delights, as we before remarked, to be insidiously at work in the midst of a prosperous condition of affairs. But for what reason the goodness of God permits this to be done, whether he wishes by it to bring into activity the excellence of the principles of the church and to utterly break down the self-importance which is wont to unite itself with faith or for what other cause, is, at the same time, a difficult question, and not relevant to the present discussion. For our object is neither to examine the soundness of doctrinal views nor to analyze the mysterious reasons for the providences and judgments of God, but to detail as faithfully as possible the history of transactions which have taken place in the churches.</p> <p>1.22.15 The way in which the superstition of the</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>Manichaeans sprang up a little before the time of Constantine has been thus described. Now let us return to the times and events which are the proper subjects of this history.</p>		
<p>Two miracles in Hestiae/Michaelium</p>		
	<p>2.3.10 But I cannot omit mentioning the case of Aquilinus, who is even at the present time residing with us and who is an advocate in the same court of justice as that to which we belong. I shall relate what I heard from him concerning this occurrence and what I saw. Being attacked with a severe fever, arising from a yellowish bile, the physicians gave him some foreign drug to drink. This he vomited and, by the effort of vomiting, diffused the bile, which tinged his countenance with a yellow color. Thus he had to vomit all his food and drink. For a long time he remained in this state. Since his nourishment would not be quiet in him, the skill of the physicians was at a loss for the suffering.</p> <p>2.3.11 Finding that he was already half dead, he commanded his servant to carry him to the house of prayer, for he affirmed earnestly that there he would either die or be freed from his disease. While he was lying there, a Divine Power appeared to him by night and commanded him to dip his foot in a confection made of honey, wine, and pepper. The man did so and was freed from his complaint, although the prescription was contrary to the professional rules of the physicians, a confection of so very hot a nature being considered adverse to a bilious disorder.</p> <p>2.3.12 I have also heard that Probianus, one of the physicians of the palace, who was suffering greatly from a disease in the feet, likewise met with deliverance from sickness at this place and was accounted worthy of being visited with a wonderful and Divine vision. He had formerly been attached to the Pagan superstitions, but afterwards became a Christian. Yet, while he admitted in one way or another the probability of the rest of our doctrines, he could not</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>understand how, by the Divine cross, the salvation of all is effected.</p> <p>2.3.13 While his mind was in doubt on this subject, the symbol of the cross, which lay on the altar of this church, was pointed out to him in the Divine vision. He heard a voice openly declaring that, as Christ had been crucified on the cross, the necessities of the human race or of individuals, whatsoever they might be, could not be met by the ministration of Divine angels or of pious and good men. For that there was no power to rectify apart from the venerated cross. I have only recorded a few of the incidents which I know to have taken place in this temple, because there is not time to recount them all.</p>	
The persecution of Christians in Persia		
	<p>[Conversion begins among the Persians]</p> <p>2.8.2b I think that the beginning of the conversion of the Persians was due to their exchange with the Osroenians and Armenians. For it is likely that they would converse with such Divine men and make experience of their virtue.</p> <p>2.9.1a When, in course of time, the Christians increased in number, began to form churches, and appointed priests and deacons,</p>	
	<p>[Magi and Jews accuse Symeon of Seleucia and Ctesiphon]</p> <p>2.9.1b The Magi, who as a priestly tribe had from the beginning in successive generations acted as the guardians of the Persian religion, became deeply incensed against them. The Jews, who through envy are in some way naturally opposed to the Christian religion, were likewise offended. They therefore brought accusations before Sapor, the reigning sovereign, against Symeon, who was then archbishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, royal cities of Persia. They charged him with being a friend of the Caesar of the</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	Romans and with communicating the affairs of the Persians to him. ¹	
	<p>[Sapor levies taxes against Christians] 2.9.2a Sapor believed these accusations and at first, ground the Christians with excessive taxes, although he knew that the generality of them had voluntarily embraced poverty. He entrusted the exaction to cruel men, hoping that, by the want of necessaries and the atrocity of the exactors, they might be compelled to abjure their religion. This was his aim.</p>	
	<p>[Sapor orders clergy killed and churches demolished] 2.9.2b Afterwards, however, he commanded that the priests and conductors of the worship of God should be slain with the sword. The churches were demolished, their vessels were deposited in the treasury, and Symeon was arrested as a traitor to the kingdom and the religion of the Persians. 2.9.3a Thus the Magi, with the co-operation of the Jews, quickly destroyed the houses of prayer.</p>	
	<p>[Symeon's speech before Sapor] 2.9.3b Symeon, on his apprehension, was bound with chains, and brought before the king. There the man declared his excellence and courage. For when Sapor commanded that he should be led away to the torture, he did not fear and would not prostrate himself. 2.9.4 The king, greatly exasperated, demanded why he did not prostrate himself as he had done formerly. Symeon replied, "Formerly I was not led away bound in order that I might abjure the truth of God, and therefore I did not then object to pay the customary respect to royalty. But now it would not be proper for me to do so, for I stand here in defense of godliness and of our opinion." 2.9.5 When he ceased speaking, the king commanded him to worship the sun, promising, as an inducement, to</p>	

¹¹ The persecution of Christians under Sapor seems to have happened after the death of Constantine-
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shapur_II#Relations_with_the_Christians

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>bestow gifts upon him and to hold him in honor, but on the other hand, threatening, in case of non-compliance, to visit him and the whole body of Christians with destruction. When the king found that he neither frightened him by menaces nor caused him to relax by promises, and that Symeon remained firm and refused to worship the sun or to betray his religion, he commanded him to be put in bonds for a while, probably imagining that he would change his mind.</p>	
	<p>[The lapsed Usthazanes is reconverted and martyred] 2.9.6 When Symeon was being conducted to prison, Usthazanes, an aged eunuch, the foster-father of Sapor and superintendent of the palace, who happened to be sitting at the gates of the palace, arose to do him reverence. Symeon reproachfully forbade him in a loud and haughty voice, averted his countenance, and passed by. For the eunuch had been formerly a Christian, but had recently yielded to authority and had worshiped the sun. 2.9.7 This conduct so affected the eunuch that he wept aloud, laid aside the white garment with which he was robed, and clothed himself, as a mourner, in black. He then seated himself in front of the palace, crying and groaning, and saying, ‘Woe is me! What must not await me since I have denied God; and on this account Symeon, formerly my familiar friend, does not think me worthy of being spoken to, but turns away and hastens from me.’ When Sapor heard of what had occurred, he called the eunuch to him and inquired into the cause of his grief. He asked him whether any calamity had befallen his family. 2.9.8 Usthazanes replied and said, ‘O king, nothing has occurred to my family. But I would rather have suffered any other affliction whatsoever than that which has befallen me, and it would have been easy to bear. Now I mourn because I am alive and ought to have been dead long ago; yet I still see the sun which, not voluntarily, but to please thee, I professed to worship.</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>Therefore, on both accounts, it is just that I should die, for I have been a betrayer of Christ and a deceiver of thee.' He then swore by the Maker of heaven and earth that he would never swerve from his convictions.</p> <p>2.9.9 Sapor, astonished at the wonderful conversion of the eunuch, was still more enraged against the Christians, as if they had effected it by enchantments. Still, he spared the old man and strove with all his strength, by alternate gentleness and harshness, to bring him over to his own sentiments.</p> <p>2.9.10 But finding that his efforts were useless, and that Usthazanes persisted in declaring that he would never be so foolish as to worship the creature instead of the creator, he became inflamed with passion and commanded that the eunuch's head should be struck off with a sword. When the executioners came forward to perform their office, Usthazanes requested them to wait a little, that he might communicate something to the king.</p> <p>2.9.11 He then called one of the most faithful eunuchs, and bade him say to Sapor, 'From my youth until now I have been well disposed, O king, to your house, and have ministered with fitting diligence to your father and yourself. I need no witnesses to corroborate my statements; these facts are well established. For all the matters in which at diverse times I have gladly served you, grant me this reward: let it not be imagined by those who are ignorant of the circumstances that I have incurred this punishment by acts of unfaithfulness against the kingdom, or by the commission of any other crime.</p> <p>2.9.12 But let it be published and proclaimed abroad by a herald, that Usthazanes loses his head for no knavery that he has ever committed in the palaces, but for being a Christian and for refusing to obey the king in denying his own God.'</p> <p>2.9.13 The eunuch delivered this message, and Sapor, according to the request of Usthazanes, commanded a herald to make the desired proclamation. For the king</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>imagined that others would be easily deterred from embracing Christianity, by reflecting that he who sacrificed his aged foster-father and esteemed household servant would assuredly spare no other Christian. Usthazanes, however, believed that as by his timidity in consenting to worship the sun, he had caused many Christians to fear. So now, by the diligent proclamation of the cause of his sufferings, many might be edified by learning that he died for the sake of religion and so might become imitators of his fortitude.</p>	
	<p>[Symeon and many other Christians are executed by Sapor in Persia]</p> <p>2.10.1 In this manner the honorable life of Usthazanes was terminated. When the intelligence was brought to Symeon in the prison, he offered thanksgiving to God on his account. The following day, which happened to be the sixth day of the week, and likewise the day on which, as immediately preceding the festival of the resurrection, the annual memorial of the passion of the Savior is celebrated, the king issued orders for the decapitation of Symeon. For he had again been conducted to the palace from the prison, had reasoned most nobly with Sapor on points of doctrine, and had expressed a determination never to worship either the king or the sun.</p> <p>2.10.2 On the same day a hundred other prisoners were ordered to be slain. Symeon beheld their execution, and last of all he was put to death. Amongst these victims were bishops, presbyters, and other clergy of different grades.</p> <p>2.10.3 As they were being led out to execution, the chief of the Magi approached them, and asked them whether they would preserve their lives by conforming to the religion of the king and by worshipping the sun. As none of them would comply with this condition, they were conducted to the place of execution, and the executioners applied themselves to the task of slaying these martyrs.</p> <p>2.10.4 Symeon, standing by those who were to be</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>slain, encouraged them to be steadfast and reasoned with them concerning death, the resurrection, and piety. He showed them from the sacred Scriptures that a death like theirs is true life; whereas to live, and through fear to deny God, is as truly death. He told them, too, that even if no one were to slay them, death would inevitably overtake them; for our death is a natural consequence of our birth. The things after those of this life are perpetual and do not happen alike to all men. But, as if measured by some rule, they must give an accurate account of the course of life here. Each one who did well will receive immortal rewards and will escape the punishments of those who did the opposite. He likewise told them that the greatest and happiest of all good actions is to die for the cause of God.</p> <p>2.10.5 While Symeon was pursuing such themes, and like a household attendant, was exhorting them about the manner in which they were to go into the conflicts, each one listened and spiritedly went to the slaughter. After the executioner had despatched a hundred, Symeon himself was slain; and Abedechalaas and Anannias, two aged presbyters of his own church, who had been his fellow-prisoners, suffered with him.</p>	
	<p>[Sapor murders many Christians, including high-ranking officials]</p> <p>2.11.1 Pusices, the superintendent of the king's artisans, was present at the execution. Perceiving that Anannias trembled as the necessary preparations for his death were being made, he said to him, 'O old man, close your eyes for a little while and be of good courage, for you will soon behold the light of Christ.' No sooner had he uttered these words than he was arrested and conducted before the king.</p> <p>2.11.2 And as he frankly avowed himself a Christian and spoke with great freedom to the king concerning his opinion and the martyrs, he was condemned to an extraordinary and most cruel death, because it was not lawful to address the king with such boldness. The executioners pierced the muscles of his neck in such a</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>manner as to extract his tongue. On the charge of some people, his daughter, who had devoted herself to a life of holy virginity, was arraigned and executed at the same time.</p> <p>2.11.3 The following year, on the day on which the passion of Christ was commemorated and when preparations were being made for the celebration of the festival commemorative of his resurrection from the dead, Sapor issued a most cruel edict throughout Persia, condemning to death all those who should confess themselves to be Christians. It is hid that a greater number of Christians suffered by the sword. 2.11.4 For the Magi sought diligently in the cities and villages for those who had concealed themselves. Many voluntarily surrendered themselves, lest they should appear, by their silence, to deny Christ. Of the Christians who were thus un-sparingly sacrificed, many who were attached to the palace were slain, and amongst these was Azades, a eunuch, who was especially beloved by the king.</p> <p>2.11.5 On hearing of his death, Sapor was overwhelmed with grief, and put a stop to the general slaughter of the Christians; and he directed that the teachers of religion should alone be slain.</p>	
	<p>[Tarbula executed on false charges]</p> <p>2.12.1 About the same period the queen was attacked with a disease. Tarbula, the sister of Symeon the bishop, a holy virgin, was arrested with her servant, who shared in the same mode of life. In the same way a sister of Tarbula who, after the death of her husband, abjured marriage and led a similar career. The cause of their arrest was the charge of the Jews, who reported that they had injured the queen by their enchantments, on account of their rage at the death of Symeon.</p> <p>2.12.2 As invalids easily give credit to the most repulsive representations, the queen believed the charge, and especially because it came from the Jews. Since she had embraced their sentiments and lived in the observance of the Jewish rites, she had great</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>confidence in their veracity and in their attachment to herself. The Magi seized Tarbula and her companions and condemned them to death. After having sawn them asunder, they fastened them up to poles and made the queen pass through the midst of the poles as a medium for turning away the disease.</p> <p>2.12.3 It is said that this Tarbula was beautiful and very stately in form, and that one of the Magi, having become deeply enamored with her, secretly sent a proposal for intercourse. He promised as a reward to save her and her companions if she would consent. But she would give no ear to his debauchery, treated the Magi with scorn, and rebuked his lust. She would rather prefer courageously to die than to betray her virginity.</p>	
	<p>[Persian persecution restricted to clergy]</p> <p>2.12.4 As it was ordained by the edict of Sapor, which we mentioned above, that the Christians should not be slaughtered indiscriminately, but that the priests and teachers of the opinions should be slain, the Magi and Arch-Magi traversed the whole country of Persia, studiously maltreating the bishops and presbyters. They sought them especially in the country of Adiabene, a part of the Persian dominions, because it was wholly Christianized.</p>	
	<p>[Martyrdom of St. Aicepsimas and hundreds of others in Persia]</p> <p>2.13.1 About this period they arrested Aicepsimas the bishop and many of his clergy. After having taken counsel together, they satisfied themselves with the hunt after the leader only; they dismissed the rest after they had taken away their property.</p> <p>2.13.2 James, however, who was one of the presbyters, voluntarily followed Aicepsimas, obtained permission from the Magi to share his prison, and spiritedly ministered to the old man. He lightened his misfortunes as far as he was able and dressed his wounds. For not long after his apprehension the Magi had injuriously tortured him with raw thongs in forcing him to worship the sun. On his refusal to do so had</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>retained him again in bonds.</p> <p>2.13.3 Two presbyters named Aithalas and James, and two deacons, by name Azadanes and Abdiesus, after being scourged most injuriously by the Magi, were compelled to live in prison, on account of their opinions. After a long time had elapsed the great Arch-Magi communicated to the king the facts about them to be punished. After receiving permission to deal with them as he pleased, unless they would consent to worship the sun, he made known this decision of Sapor's to the prisoners.</p> <p>2.13.4 They replied openly that they would never betray the cause of Christ nor worship the sun. So he tortured them unsparingly. Acepsimas persevered in the manly confession of his faith, till death put an end to his torments. Certain Armenians, whom the Persians retained as hostages, secretly carried away his body and buried it.</p> <p>2.13.5 The other prisoners, although not less scourged, lived as by a miracle. And because they would not change their judgment, were again put in bonds. Among these was Aithalas, who was stretched out while thus beaten, and his arms were torn out of his shoulders by the very great wrench. He carried his hands about as dead and swinging loosely, so that others had to convey food to his mouth.</p> <p>2.13.6 Under this rule, an innumerable multitude of presbyters, deacons, monks, holy virgins, and others who served the churches and were set apart for its dogma, terminated their lives by martyrdom.</p> <p>2.13.7 The following are the names of the bishops, so far as I have been able to ascertain: Barbasymes, Paulus, Gaddiabes, Sabinus, Mareas, Mocius, John, Hormisdas, Papas, James, Romas, Maares, Agas, Bochres, Abdas, Abdiesus, John, Abramins, Agdelas, Sapore, Isaac, and Dausas. The latter had been made prisoner by the Persians, and brought from a place</p>	

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>named Zabdaeus. He died about this time in defense of the dogma. And Mareabdes, a chorepiscopus², and about two hundred and fifty of his clergy, who had also been captured by the Persians, suffered with him.</p>	
	<p>[Milles and 16,000 more martyrs in Persia under Sapor]</p> <p>2.14.1 About this period Milles suffered martyrdom. He originally served the Persians in a military capacity, but afterwards abandoned that vocation, in order to embrace the apostolical mode of life. It is related that he was ordained bishop over a Persian city, underwent a variety of sufferings, and endured wounds and drawings. It is also said that, failing in his efforts to convert the inhabitants to Christianity, he uttered imprecations against the city and departed.</p> <p>2.14.2 Not long after some of the principal citizens offended the king, and an army with three hundred elephants was sent against them. The city was utterly demolished and its land was ploughed and sown. 2.14.3 Milles, taking with him only his wallet, in which was the holy Book of the Gospels, repaired to Jerusalem in prayer. From there he proceeded to Egypt in order to see the monks. The extraordinary and admirable works which we have heard that he accomplished are attested by the Syrians, who have written an account of his actions and life.</p> <p>2.14.4 For my own part, I think that I have said enough of him and of the other martyrs who suffered in Persia during the reign of Sapor. For it would be difficult to relate in detail every circumstance respecting them, such as their names, their country, the mode of completing their martyrdom, and the species of torture to which they were subjected. They are innumerable, since such methods are jealously affected by the Persians, even to the extreme of cruelty.</p> <p>2.14.5 I shall briefly state that the number of men and women whose names have been confirmed, and who</p>	

² A rural bishop

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>were martyred at this period, have been computed to be sixteen thousand. Because the multitude outside of these is beyond enumeration, to reckon off their names appeared difficult to the Persians and Syrians and to the inhabitants of Edessa, who have devoted much care to this matter.</p>	
	<p>[Constantine writes to Sapor to stop the Persecution of the Christians] 2.15.1 Constantine the Roman emperor was angry and bore it ill when he heard of the sufferings to which the Christians were exposed in Persia. He desired most anxiously to render them assistance, yet knew not in what way to effect this object. About this time some ambassadors from the Persian king arrived at his court. 2.15.2a After granting their requests and dismissing them, he thought it would be a favorable opportunity to address Sapor in behalf of the Christians in Persia and wrote to him, confessing that it would be a very great and forever indescribable favor if he would be humane to those who admired the teaching of the Christians under him:</p>	
	<p>2.15.2b ‘There is nothing in their religion,’ said he, ‘of a reprehensible nature; by bloodless prayers alone do they offer supplication to God, for he delights not in the outpouring of blood, but taketh pleasure only in a pure soul devoted to virtue and to religion; so that they who believe these things are worthy of commendation.’ 2.15.3 The emperor then assured Sapor that God would be favorable to him if he treated the Christians with compassion, and cited the example of Valerian and of himself in proof of this. He had himself, by faith in Christ and by the aid of Divine inclination, come forth from the shores of the Western ocean, reduced to obedience the whole of the Roman world, and had terminated many wars against foreigners and usurpers. Yet he never had recourse to sacrifices or divinations, but had for victory used only the symbol of the Cross at</p>	<p>[Constantine's letter to Shapur II, asking him to end persecution of Christians] 1.25.1 Not content with having granted the requests of the Iberians, he of his own accord undertook the protection of the Christians in Persia; for, learning that they were persecuted by the heathens, and that their king himself, a slave to error, was contriving various cunning plots for their destruction, he wrote to him, entreating him to embrace the Christian religion himself, as well as to honour its professors. His own letter will render his earnestness in the cause the plainer: In protecting the holy faith I enjoy the light of truth, and by following the light of truth I attain to fuller knowledge of the faith. Therefore, as facts prove, I recognize that most holy worship as teaching the knowledge of the most holy God. This service I</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	<p>the head of his own armies, and prayer pure from blood and defilement.</p> <p>2.15.4 The reign of Valerian was prosperous so long as he refrained from persecuting the Church. But afterwards he began a persecution against the Christians and was delivered by Divine vengeance into the hands of the Persians, w chorepiscopus ho took him prisoner and put him to a cruel death.</p>	<p>profess. With the Power of this God for my ally, beginning at the furthest boundaries of the ocean, I have, one after another, quickened every part of the world with hope. Now all the peoples once enslaved by many tyrants, worn by their daily miseries, and almost extinct, have been kindled to fresh life by receiving the protection of the State.</p> <p>1.25.2 The God I reverence is He whose emblem my dedicated troops bear on their shoulders, marching whithersoever the cause of justice leads them, and rewarding me by their splendid victories. I confess that I reverence this God with eternal remembrance. Him, who dwells in the highest heavens, I contemplate with pure and unpolluted mind.</p> <p>1.25.3 On Him I call on bended knees, shunning all abominable blood, all unseemly and ill-omened odors, all fire of incantation, and all pollution by which unlawful and shameful error has destroyed whole nations and hurled them down to hell.</p> <p>1.25.4 God does not permit those gifts which, in His beneficent Providence, He has bestowed upon men for the supply of their wants to be perverted according to every man's desire. He only requires of men a pure mind and a spotless soul, and by these He weighs their deeds of virtue and piety.</p> <p>1.25.5 He is pleased with gentleness and modesty. He loves the meek, and hates those who excite contentions; He loves faith, chastises unbelief; He breaks all power of boasting, and punishes the insolence of the proud. Men exalted with pride He utterly overthrows, and rewards the humble and the patient according to their deserts.</p> <p>1.25.6 Of a just sovereignty He makes much, strengthens it by His aid, and guards the counsels of Princes with the blessing of peace.</p> <p>I know that I am not in error, my brother, when I confess that this God is the Ruler and the Father of all men, a truth which many who preceded me upon the imperial throne were so deluded by error as to attempt</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>to deny. But their end was so dreadful that they have become a fearful warning to all mankind, to deter others from similar iniquity.</p> <p>1.25.7 Of these I count that man one whom the wrath of God, like a thunderbolt, drove hence into your country, and who made notorious the memorial of his shame which exists in your own land. Indeed, it appears to have been well ordered that the age in which we live should be distinguished by the open and manifest punishments inflicted on such persons.</p> <p>1.25.8 I myself have witnessed the end of those who have persecuted the people of God by unlawful edicts. Hence it is that I more especially thank God for having now, by His special Providence, restored peace to those who observe His law, in which they exalt and rejoice.</p> <p>1.25.9 I am led to expect future happiness and security whenever God in His goodness unites all men in the exercise of the one pure and true religion.</p> <p>1.25.10 You may therefore well understand how exceedingly I rejoice to hear that the finest provinces of Persia are adorned abundantly with men of this class. I mean Christians; for it is of them I am speaking. All then is well with you and with them, for you will have the Lord of all merciful and beneficent to you.</p> <p>1.25.11 Since then you are so mighty and so pious, I commend the Christians to your care, and leave them in your protection. Treat them, I beseech you, with the affection that befits your goodness. Your fidelity in this respect will confer on yourself and on us inexpressible benefits.</p> <p>1.25.12 This excellent emperor felt so much solicitude for all who had embraced the true religion that he not only watched over those who were his own subjects, but also over the subjects of other sovereigns. For this reason he was blessed with the special protection of God, so that although he held the</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>reins of the whole of Europe and of Africa, and the greater part of Asia, his subjects were all well-disposed to his rule and obedient to his government.</p> <p>1.25.13 Foreign nations submitted to his sway, some by voluntary submission, others overcome in war. Trophies were everywhere erected, and the emperor was styled Victorious.</p> <p>The praises of Constantine have, however, been proclaimed by many other writers.</p> <p>We must resume the thread of our history. This emperor, who deserves the highest fame, devoted his whole mind to matters worthy of the apostles.</p> <p>1.25.14 While men who had been admitted to the sacerdotal dignity not only neglected to edify the church, but endeavored to uproot it from the very foundations. They invented all manner of false accusations against those who governed the church in accordance with the doctrines taught by the apostles, and did their best to depose and banish them.</p> <p>1.25.15 Their envy was not satisfied by the infamous falsehood which they had invented against Eustathius, but they made use of every plan to effect the overthrow of another great bulwark of religion.</p> <p>These tragic occurrences I shall now relate as concisely as possible.</p>
	<p>2.15.5 It was in this strain that Constantine wrote to Sapor, urging him to be well-disposed to this religion. For the emperor extended his watchful care over all the Christians of every region, whether Roman or foreign.</p>	