

They would worship none but Jesus. And were thus, irreverent towards Caesar. Who was later worshipped as a God.

All this led to the persecution of the church at Rome. Jewish persecution was imprompted by religious zeal and intollerance. Roman persecution was prompted by personal spite and political motives, to supress and isolate this transforming religion. The church in Rome was growing too rapidly for comfort of the emperor.

The first real mark was persecution under Nero - he was the adopted son of Cláudius. The same emperor who expelled Aquila and Priscilla. His reign in 54 began and ended in 68 by his suicide in the 31st year of his age. He was the last of the Caesars.

Nero was popular with the masses. He who keeps down taxes is forgiven many faults. Nero did not rule his provinces without oppression. He was described by one historian as a spoiled boy. His conduct was that of a clown.

Rome knew immoral emperors. But Nero presented the emperor who was devoid of all dignity. Bad as Rome was, they were shocked the year after Paul wrote Romans, Nero had his mother Agrippina murdered. She was a detestable woman and had poisoned Claudius. Never the less, to kill one's mother was a horrible crime - even to the meanest.

Then there was the prepudiation of his wife - following the death of his mother. And two years later, July 64 a destructive fire destroyed 10 of the 14 quarters of Rome, and left thousands homeless.

The monuments of Grecian art and the trophies of the Gallic wars - the

holiest temples, the handsome palaces, were swept away.

the Gallic wars - the