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THE FALL OF PAGANISM.

(323 - 395)

A STUDY OF THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF
PAGANISM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
CHRISTIANITY AS THE STATE RELIGION
OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

M.A. THESIS 1914.

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In the conflict between Christianity and Paganism for the dignity of the Established Religion of the Roman Empire, the Fourth Century witnessed the unique recorded example of the death struggle of a great religious system. Though the former gained the nominal victory, it was forced to make so many compromises to Paganism that Bishop Westcott has written :- "The world got into the Church in the Fourth Century and we have never since been able to get it out".

The Roman armies in their all-conquering career came into contact with many different forms of religion. Their practice of drafting soldiers of one conquered part to serve in other far-distant corners of the Empire, and the readiness of the populace to adopt new customs, helped to diffuse many creeds throughout the then known world. Within the dominions of the Caesars were to be found barbarians, who still invoked their demi-gods; philosophers, who looked to the One Supreme God; the Jews, who awaited their Messiah; Eastern mystics, especially those who professed the two chief forms of such religion;

Christians from Judea and Mithraists from beyond Jordan. These last, originally Sun-worshippers of Persia, had developed a cult which Dr. Bigg called "the purest and most elevated of non-Biblical religions".

The father of Constantine must be numbered amongst the more enlightened men of the time, who had forsaken the polytheism of the uncultured for the rational Deism of the philosophers. Such a belief led him to favour the Christians who, like himself, worshipped the One Supreme God and caused Eusebius to praise him in the following terms :- "For after he had, for a long time, given many proofs of royal nobility of soul, in acknowledging the One Supreme God alone and condemning the polytheism of the impious and had fortified his house with prayers of holy men, etc. . . " (a) During the Diocletian persecutions Christians received protection and entertainment at his court, but after his elevation to the rank of Augustus still greater cordiality was manifested. (b)

When Constantine became Caesar, his conduct soon showed that he had been greatly influenced by his early surroundings. For he adopted the same tolerant

(a) Eus.V.C.I,17; II,49.

(b) De Mort. Pers.,15.

attitude towards the new religion. (a) His residence at the Imperial Court at Rome during the last persecution must have convinced him of the horror and futility of employing compulsion in religious affairs. (b) His real beliefs were soon tested. Maxentius decided to march against this general whom the troops had acknowledged Augustus. The struggle was essentially for the purpose of deciding which one should become sole Emperor of the West.

When Constantine was approaching Rome, his adversary tried to gather men to his cause by appealing to the ancient gods and by using magic rites. This determined the other to seek some supernatural aid and set him wondering to which God he could turn. "Considering the matter of Divine assistance, it occurred to him that those who relied on idols had been deceived and destroyed, while his father . . . had honoured the One Supreme God, had found him Saviour . . . He judged it folly to join in the idle worship of those who were no gods and felt it incumbent on him to honour no other than the God of his father" (c) Accordingly he resolved to pray to the God of Constantius, "the One Supreme Being", and, while he was

(a) De Mort. Pers., 24.
 (c) Eus. V. C. I 27-32;
 cf. Soc. I, 2.

(b) Eus. V. C. I, 19;
 Grat. ad Sanct., 25.

thus thinking, he had the famous Vision of the Cross and received the message : "Hoc vinces".

The nature of this vision, whether a miracle, a natural phenomenon, or a mere dream, does not affect the probability of the account of his subsequent conduct.

"At the ~~time~~ above specified, being struck with amazement at the extraordinary vision, and resolving to worship no other God save Him who had appeared to him, he sent for those who were acquainted with the mysteries of His doctrines and enquired also what God was . . . They affirmed that he was God, the only begotten Son of the one and only God", (a) and he thereupon "made the priests of God his counsellors and deemed it incumbent on him to honour the God who appeared to him with all devotion".(a)

Such was Constantine's own account to Eusebius of the way by which he was induced to place himself under the protection of the "One Supreme God". The vague terms used in referring to the Deity force one to doubt whether the Christians were justified in claiming him as a convert. It is sufficient to note that their belief was strong enough to send them to his support at the Battle of Milvian Bridge. For this, apparently, he handed over to the Bishop of Rome, as an official residence previous

(a) Eus. V.C. I,32.

to October 313, the "Domus Faustae", a palace, formerly belonging to the Lateran family. (a)

After his victory Constantine met Licinius, the Emperor of the East, at Milan for the purpose of solemnizing the marriage between the latter and Constantia. This meeting, however, has always been remembered for an event of far greater importance : the publication of the Edict of Milan. The two versions of this document, preserved for us by Eusebius (b) and Lactantius (c), differ very little except that the one (b) has a sort of preamble. This, however, refers to a previous edict, presumably that of Galerius.

The sections of this decree which supply the most important and interesting information are the following :- "While we were happily together at Milan, namely, I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, we decided that the first place must be given to that which concerns the worship of the Divinity by granting to the Christians and to everyone else perfect liberty to follow the religion which he prefers, in order that whatsoever Divinity there be in the celestial mansions may be favourable and propitious to us, and to all those placed under our authority. Wherefore we have decided, being influenced thereunto by wise and just reasons, to refuse

(a) Duchesne Lib. Pont. I, 191. (b) Eus. H. E. X, 5.
(c) Lact. De Mort. Pers. 48.

liberty to no man, whether he be attached to the religious observances of the Christians, or to any other religion which he finds suitable to him, in order that the Supreme Divinity, whom we serve in all freedom, may grant us, in all things, his favour and benevolence. Therefore, be it known to your devotedness, it has pleased us to remove absolutely all the restrictions contained in the letters previously addressed to your offices regarding the Christians, as odious restrictions, incompatible with your clemency; and to allow every person who wishes to observe the Christian religion pure and simple liberty to do so, without being troubled or molested. We have thought fit to notify this expressly to your Solitude, that you may have full knowledge of our intention to give the Christians perfect and entire liberty to practise their religion". . .

"In making this concession to them we wish also that others, too, should have the same entire liberty with regard to their religions and observances".

"As concerning the Christians also we have decided in addition, that the places in which they were accustomed to assemble, if some of them have been bought by your imperial treasury or anyone else, are to be restored to the Christians gratis and without asking any

price for them, without seeking any pretexts or raising any doubtful questions; and that those to whom such places may have been given, must also restore them to the Christians with as little delay as possible. These buyers, however, and those who have received such places as a gift, may address themselves to our benevolence to obtain some compensation, for which our clemency will provide. And since the Christians possessed, not only their places of assembly, but others also belonging to their corporate bodies - that is, to their churches, and not to private individuals - these properties also you will cause to be restored, on the conditions expressed above, without ambiguity or dispute, to these same Christians - that is to say, to their corporations, conventicles, etc. . . . "

In estimating the true importance of this edict, which has figured so prominently in the works of subsequent ecclesiastical authors, five points should be noticed. Therein is stated for the first time in the world's history the doctrine of absolute toleration in religion. All were left free to follow their own beliefs. This new concession was made for the sole purpose of gaining the good-will of Providence, or "the Divinity", for the benefit of the government. Such a view was rendered possible by the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the

One Supreme God revealing Himself by emanations from Himself in these separate Deities. Unlike its predecessor, the Edict of Galerius, it admitted the right of Christianity to spread; for it obviously granted toleration to converts and did not limit it to those who had already embraced that religion. Finally it recognised the Church as a corporate body capable of holding property. Thus it may safely be asserted that the accession of Constantine to supreme power in the West inaugurated the first epoch of religious toleration known to history.

Many have taken this edict as a sure indication of the conversion of Constantine. Such a conclusion is not necessarily true. For any of the enlightened monotheists of that century might have been expected to establish such a system. In fact a few years later, after a time of religious persecution under Constantius, freedom of choice in matters of belief was again acknowledged under the so-called Apostate Emperor, Julian.

However, the conduct of Constantine led the Christians to believe that he desired to support them. So, when he returned to Gaul, the Donatists appealed to him for judgment between themselves and the Catholics. The leaders of both parties were summoned before a Roman Synod in October, 313, where the decision was unfavourable to the schismatics. After another adverse verdict at

the Council of Arles, they forced the Emperor, by their persistent petitioning, to hear their case in person at Milan in 316. As a result of this enquiry edicts were issued against them and their teaching.(a) Such action on the part of a Christian sect shows almost beyond doubt that Constantine had led the people to believe that he had become a convert to the new religion.

Constantine's victories in the West did not satisfy his craving for power, for it was soon manifest that he had no intention of being content with any dignity less than that of sole ruler of the Roman World. The partisan spirit of the contemporary writers and the bigotry of subsequent historians have made it exceedingly difficult to trace the true course of events leading up to the struggle of 323. As this time was one in which some religious motive was attributed to almost every act, one is not surprised to find that Licinius ruler must have been determined to persecute and, if possible, annihilate the Christians. To avoid such a calamity "he (i.e. Constantine) accordingly made the usual warlike preparations and assembled his whole forces". (b) Even Eusebius cannot be consistent in his own accounts of the cause of this conflict; for in another place he declares

(a) Zos.II,17; Aug.Epp.88; 48. (b) Eus.V.C.II,3.

that "being envious of the common benefactor he (Licinius) waged war against him (Constantine) paying regard neither to laws of nature, nor treaties, nor ties of blood, and giving no thought to covenants". (a)

In describing the persecution of the Christians in the East, Socrates writes : "He (Licinius) was deeply incensed against the christians on account of his disagreement with Constantine and thought to wound him by their sufferings for religion, and besides he suspected that the churches were praying and zealous that Constantine alone should enjoy the sovereign rule". (b)

Whatever one's view on freedom of speech may be, it is impossible to deny that "praying for another ruler" constitutes a crime in practically every community and must necessarily bring down punishment upon the offenders. Such punishment was called persecution by the writer, who had already mentioned that "from fear of Constantine he (Licinius) avoided open persecution, yet managed to plot against them covertly, and at last proceeded to harass them without disguise. This persecution was local to those districts only where Licinius was".(c)

However, even though the opposing leaders professed to be defending rival religions, the desire of

becoming the sole ruler of the Roman Empire formed the actual, if not immediate, cause of the campaign of 323. Licinius, defeated by land and sea (a), surrendered on condition that his life should be spared (b); but, for some reason, he was killed during the following year at Nicomedia. (c) Constantine thus became sole Emperor of a dominion stretching from Britain in the West to the frontier of Persia in the East.

(a) Soz.I,7; Zos.II,22-3.

(b) Zos.II,28.

(c) Eutrop.X,6.

The Fourth Century was undoubtedly in many ways the most critical period in the history of Christianity. During this time its creeds were formulated to set up, if possible, a faith which could be accepted as orthodox. Many may ask why there was necessity for such a clear statement of fundamental doctrines. The answer is furnished, in part at least, by what may be called the external history of the Church. For during this time she was destined to replace Paganism as the Established Religion of the Roman Empire. But a State Church must necessarily possess unity in order to fulfil its proper function.

It is with this external history that we must deal in this essay. For the sake of clearness, attention will first be paid to the disestablishment of Paganism between the years 323 and 361.

Soon after the grant of toleration to all religions, to which reference has already been made, Constantine earned the undying "hatred of the Roman Senate and people" by refusing to take part in the sacred rites of Jupiter Capitolinus. (a) This may well be regarded as the opening of the war against the pagan cult. It is clear, however, that this did not lead to any prohibition

(a) Zos. II, 7.

of public sacrifices and divinations, because a law of 319 opens in the following terms :- "Approach the public altars and shrines and celebrate your customary festivities; for we do not forbid your former rites to be carried on in broad daylight". (a) The next act, however, implies that some regulation had been made against such ceremonies:- "It is right to repress, and to punish by justly severe laws, the practice of those who give themselves up to the magic arts and who seek to drag pure souls into libertinage; but those who use this art for finding remedies for diseases, or who in the country make use of it to prevent wind, snow, and hail from destroying crops, ought not to be persecuted. Neither the safety nor consideration of anyone is imperilled by acts whose object is to insure to men the benefits of "the Divinity" and the fruits of their labours". (b) On the other hand, full instructions are found concerning the consultation of the haruspices in the event of the palace being struck by lightning. (c)

However, if the evidence of Eusebius in his Life of Constantine were accepted it would be seen that the Emperor did not allow images to the gods to be erected in the temples, nor state sacrifice to be any longer

(a) Cod.Theod.IX,XVI,2.

(b) Cod.Theod. IX,XVI,3.

(c) Cod.Theod. XVI,X,1.

offered. In addition those provincial governors and officials who still adhered to the old religion had to refrain from participating in its rites and ceremonies.(a) Nevertheless, in spite even of such definite statements, no one can believe that public sacrifices ceased; for the laws of the next emperor were repeatedly directed against their observance after the death of Constantine. (b)

Besides, this Emperor himself declared that he had no intention of trying to compel people to desert their ancient gods, when he wrote as follows :- "My own desire is for the common good of the world and the advantage of all mankind, that my people should enjoy a life of peace and undisturbed concord. Let those, therefore, who still delight in error, be made welcome to the same degree of peace and tranquillity which they have who believe. For it may be that this restoration of equal privileges to all will prevail to lead them into the straight path. Let no one molest another, but let everyone do as his soul desires . . . With regard to those who will hold themselves aloof from us, let them have, if they please, their temples of lies; we have the glorious edifice of Thy Truth which Thou hast given us as our home.

(a) Eus. V.C. II, 44-5.

(b) Cod.Theod. XVI, X, 2
and 4.

We pray, however, that they may receive the same blessing, and thus experience the heartfelt joy which unity of sentiment inspires". (a) Libanius, the famous pagan philosopher, like-wise knew nothing of the prohibition of public sacrifices at this time; for he wrote :- "And since they mention him who spoiled temples (of their revenues and gifts) we shall omit observing that he did not proceed to the taking away of sacrifices". (b)

If we pause for a moment to review the available evidence for the sake of ascertaining Constantine's attitude in this matter, it seems just to say that, though there exists no proof of legislation against the ancient rites as such, he certainly did his best to discourage public sacrifices and to encourage conversion to Christianity.

It is quite unnecessary to do more than just mention the strife between Constantius, Constans, and Constantine II on their accession to the Empire, before continuing the enumeration of the laws issued against public sacrifices. A decree of 341 forbade these practices in the following terms :- "Let superstition cease! Let the folly of sacrifice be abolished! Whoever contrary to the laws of the Divine Prince, our father, and

(a) Eus. V.C. II,56.

(b) Liban. Orat. pro Templis.

this present command of our clemency shall dare to sacrifice must be judged and punished!" (a) This failed to accomplish its purpose, for it was found necessary to reiterate the prohibitions a few years later, probably in 346. "It is our pleasure that in all places and all cities the temples be immediately shut and carefully guarded, that none may have the power of offending. It is also likewise our pleasure that all our subjects should refrain from sacrifices. If any should be guilty of such an act, let him feel the sword of vengeance, and after his execution let his property be confiscated to public use. We denounce the same penalties against the governors of the province if they neglect to punish the criminals". (b)

In spite, however, of the apparent definiteness of these laws the ancient ceremonies must still have survived in many places, for two more instances of similar legislation are found in the Theodosian Code during this reign. The one, in 353, stated "that nocturnal sacrifices, sanctioned by the authority of Magnentius, should be abolished, and successively the wicked licentiousness should be done away": (c) the other declared that all those who were convicted of having sacrificed to idols

(a) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,2. (b) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,4.

(c) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,5.

or of having worshipped images should be put to death": (a)

Moreover, additional support is given to the conclusion that sacrifices were absolutely forbidden by the ecclesiastical historian, Sozomen, who wrote :-

"The Emperors (i.e. Constantine II, Constans, and Constantius) confirmed the laws of their father and issued new ones prohibiting the offering of sacrifices, the worship of ~~images~~, and any other pagan observance". (b)

Before examining the evidence of pagan writers on this subject, it would be better to describe the attacks made on the temples.

For the time of Constantine no laws are to be found; but Sozomen suggests that some temples were shut or destroyed, either on account of the gross immorality of their officials, or because the conversion of the people had removed the necessity for their survival.(c)

Under the date 346, or as many scholars believe, 342, is found a law saying :- "Though the superstition ought to be entirely stopped, however we decree that the temples outside the walls of towns shall not suffer damage, for many have been the original places for the public games, and it is not right to destroy buildings where the Roman people have enjoyed the ancient festi-

(a) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,6.

(b) Soz. III,17.

(c) Soz. II,4. cf.Eus.V.C. III,
54-58.

vals". (a) Yet, as we have already seen the next edict in the Code definitely decrees :- "It is our pleasure that in all places and in all cities the temples be immediately shut and carefully guarded that none may have the power of offending". (b) Again the ecclesiastical historian quoted above bears out the laws with a general statement : "The Emperors ordered that all temples, whether in cities or in the countries, should be closed".(c)

On the other hand, Christians were threatened with severe penalties for attempting to demolish or in any way desecrate the temples or monuments of the heathen. The necessity for such restrictions was so urgent and frequent that the edict was published four times with slight alterations, in 340, 349, and 357. (d)

As an example of the kind of influence brought to bear on the Emperor by some of the so-called Christians, the work of Firmicus Maternus, a convert from Paganism, must be quoted. In his book "De Errore Paganorum Religionum", addressed to Constantius and his colleagues, he demanded the abolition of pagan rites in the following terms :- "For we must make an end to them, Most sacred Emperors; you must cut short all this by severe legisla-

(a) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,3.

(b) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,4.

(c) Soz. III,17.

(d) Cod.Theod. IX,XVII,
1-4.

tion. It is for this cause that God has given you the Empire and has led you on from one success to another. Remove, remove without fear, the ornaments of the temples; send the gods to the mint and appropriate for yourselves their possessions". Again in a later passage he continued :- "What I have just said clearly indicates, unless I am much mistaken, O Emperors, that the buildings which the people, subject to their superstitions, have built, are not temples consecrated to the glory of the true God, but tombs prepared to honour the memory of certain unrighteous men. It is in these that error and impiety preserve the miserable remains of their bodies, that the cruelty of their death is renewed by the immolation of their victims, that grief deadened by time is reawakened by ceremonies yearly observed, and that a cult which bears some relation to a religion is a public lesson of incest and parricide. I most humbly beseech you, O Emperors, to allow me to show you the indispensable obligation of abolishing completely these abominations and to use all the force of law to attain this end. Do not allow these pernicious errors to spread any longer in this empire, nor to be the cause of the loss of such a number of your subjects".

He then proceeded to justify his recommendation

of compulsory conversion by taking the analogy of giving medicine to invalids. "It is impossible to be gentle with them. It is necessary to force them to take the nastiest remedies. When they have recovered and have the freedom to judge, they will recognise the benefit to them of the apparent severity".

Finally, in the concluding portion of his lengthy address he tried to prove that idolatry was practically extinct in the Empire. "There remains little to do by the authority of your edicts to achieve the downfall of the demon and the abolition of idolatry; this deadly poison is almost entirely destroyed. Raise, then, the standard of the Faith, under the favour of which you have overcome all your enemies. Order the law of God to be published and command that it be kept in all the Empire. Let the Establishment of the Christian Religion and the ruin of profane superstitions be the result of your victories You will demolish the temples by the hands of men, as they have been built by demons, in extending peaceably His (God's) mighty hand. Raise up trophies to be an eternal monument of the defeat of error".

Were the above the only available evidence, few would be found who did not believe that the suggestions of this writer were successfully carried out and paganism

ceased to exist as a public religion, and that the temples were shut and often destroyed. But one of the leading non-Christian philosophers of the time held a different view. Symmachus, who headed the deputations from the Senate in their endeavours to obtain the re-instatement of the Altar of Victory in the closing years of the century, wrote the following words about Constantius in his most famous appeal (a) :- "He (the Emperor) diminished none of the privileges of the sacred virgins, he filled the priestly offices with nobles, he did not refuse the cost of the Roman ceremonies, and following the rejoicing Senate through the streets of the eternal city, he contentedly beheld the shrines with unmoved countenance; he read the names of the gods inscribed on the pediments; he enquired of the origin of the temples and expressed admiration for their builders. Although he himself followed another religion, he maintained its own for the empire, for everyone has his own customs, everyone his own rites". However, it must not be forgotten that this same Emperor had removed the Altar for which the orator was then pleading. "Constantius, of August memory, though not yet initiated in the sacred mysteries, thought that he would be polluted if he saw the altar. He ordered it to be removed, he did not command that it

(a) Sym. Ep. X, 54.

should be replaced". (a)

Libanius attacked Constantius in his Oration for the Temples in the following passage :- "And since they mention his son and how he destroyed the temples when they who pulled them down took no less pains in destroying them, than the builders had done in raising them - so laborious a work was it to separate the stones cemented by the strongest hands :- since, I say, they mention these things I will mention somewhat yet more disgraceful :- That he, indeed, made presents of the temples to those who were about him, just as he might give a horse, or a slave, or a dog, or a golden cup". (b) At another time he declared that Constantius received from his father sparks of evil and used them to set going a huge fire. "The first stripped the Gods, the second destroyed the temples". (c)

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that Paganism gained much of its strength from other sources than public sacrifices. Indeed, some have been led to think that its vital force lay in the practice of private divination. In 319 Constantine began the attempts to stop such rites by decreeing that no priests or diviners should enter the house of a citizen for these purposes. The penalties for breach of this law were death by

(a) Amb. Ep. 18.

(b) Liban. Orat. pro Temp.

(c) Quoted in Beug. I, 145.

burning for the priest and confiscation of property and deportation for the person who called him. Informers were offered rewards. (a) However, this legislation might have been the action of a devout pagan, since both Tiberius (b) and Diocletian (c) had regarded private consultation of the haruspices as a crime contrary to the Law of Twelve Tables.

This decree did not prove quite effective. For in 357 Constantius issued two edicts, one forbidding the consultation of magicians and diviners, the other condemning the practice of astrology. (d) Further proof of the failure of these laws to accomplish the ends for which they were originally published is supplied by the writings of Julian. He, himself, was initiated into several mysteries and consulted the diviners at Athens and Ephesus.

Still there remains one other institution in connection with the ancient religion which was attacked in some degree. In 314 Constantine earned the hatred of the citizens of Rome by his omission of the secular games. (e) The motive of this action becomes obscure,

(a) Cod. Theod. IX, XVI, 1 and 2. (b) Suetonius C. 63.

(c) Cod. Just. IX, VIII, 2. (d) Cod. Theod. IX, XVI, 4 and 5

(e) Zos. II, 17.

when it is known that he instituted the Sarmatian Games in 322. (a) He showed, however, his dislike for certain parts of these festivities by condemning Gladiatorial shows (b), but in the next reign the chief reason brought forward to preserve the temples was "that many have been the original places for the public games, and it is not right to destroy buildings where the Roman people have enjoyed the ancient festivals". (c)

The events which have been chronicled above led Libanius to describe the position of pagans at the end of the reign of Constantius in the following terms :- "He received from his father sparks of evil and used them to set going a huge fire. The first stripped the gods, the second destroyed the temples, and, every sacred law being abolished, he extended even to learning, and by means known to us, the ignominy with which he had covered sacred things; that was natural; for, to philosophers, orators, and all the initiated in the cult of Mercury and the muses, the temples and discourses are allied things. He never called any of these people into his palaces, never praised them, nor entertained them, nor listened to their discourses; but, on the other hand, he cherished,

(a) Lact. Div. Instit. VI, 20. (b) Cod. Theod. IX, XVI, 1.

(c) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 3.

gathered round him, and established as teachers and counsellors, barbarous men, infamous eunuchs to whom he entrusted the affairs of state and lent his name. To him the robe of office, to them the power. These men forbade the study of eloquence, worrying and injuring by every means the friends of learning". (a)

Thus it has been seen that the chief charge brought against the Emperors was that of destroying the temples. But such conduct received no official support. In fact, laws were issued punishing Christians for this offence. (b) However, there is much more reason to believe that many of the temples were shut. One of the laws ordering the closing of these buildings especially stated that they should be "carefully guarded". (c) Yet, it must be admitted that the complaint of Libanius received ample justification. For statues and decorations from these sacred fanes beautified the "most Christian" city of Constantinople, and adorned the palaces of the Emperors and their courtiers who lived "in discord among the sacred pillars taken from the temples". (d) Many of the remaining ones owed their preservation, as we have just seen, to their association with the pastimes

- (a) Orat. pro Templis. (b) Cod.Theod. XVI,X,3; IX,
XVII, 1-4.
- (c) Cod. Theod. XVI,X,4. (d) Lib. Orat. pro Templis.

of the people with which the Emperor dared not interfere.

Such actions clearly indicate a certain decline in the offering of public sacrifices to which reference is made in the early part of the Oration for the Temples:-

"But when the Empire came to his son (i.e. Constantius) or rather the form of Empire, for the government was really in the hands of others, who from the beginning had been his masters ; he, therefore, was led into many wrongs and among others to forbid sacrifices". In spite of the edicts, and of this assertion, pagan ceremonies did not cease. For, besides the declaration of Symmachus already quoted, other evidence has been brought forward by writers, especially by M. Beugnot (a), to show that the ancient religion retained much of its activity during the years 337 to 360. New gods continued to be added to the already long list; (b) on the failure of the provision fleet to reach Rome the Altar of Castor and Pollux received its victims in the temple at Ostia (b); libations of human blood were still made to Jupiter whom the people yet believed to be supreme in heaven. (c)

The same chapter of M. Beugnot's book contains many examples of altars dedicated to pagan gods at this

(a) Beugnot I, 145 sqq. (b) Amm. Marc. XIX,10.

(c) Lact. quoted in Beug. I, 150.

time. One of the most striking is the one erected by Memmius Vitrasius Orfitus, praefect of the city for six years. It is dedicated to Apollo and bears the following inscription :-

A P O L L I N I S A N C T
M E M M I U S V I T R A S
O R F I T U S V . G .
B I S . P R A E F . V R B I
A E D E M P R O V I D I T
C U R A N T E F L . C L A U D I O
E V A N G E L O V . G . C O M I T E .

Two considerations, however, greatly help to clear away most of the difficulties which have arisen. First, in a great Empire such as the Roman, it is absolutely impossible to enforce one rigid code of laws throughout its whole extent. How could the same system apply to the cultured philosophers of Athens and Alexandria as well as to barbarous tribes of Germany and the North Balkans? Also the very form of most of the edicts implied that they were not intended to be universal. They were letters to the rulers of certain parts of the dominions of the Emperors. Unfortunately the scantiness of the available evidence prevents the compilation of a

list of places and their religions at the time. But enough has been seen already to prove that the city of Rome itself showed no great tendency to give up her ancient gods. We have also been unable to find any record of a break in the history of the temple of Serapis at Alexandria before the great "crusade" of Cynegius at the close of the fourth century. Many other places must have followed the example of these great centres. But this does not disprove the issue of the edicts against sacrifices, nor the reality of the attacks on the temples.

Secondly, an argument of Libanius used in a later portion of his oration helps to explain the comparative silence of most pagan writers concerning the prohibition of sacrifices :- "Sacrifices were forbidden by the two brothers (Valens and Valentinian) but not incense. So that we have not more reason to be uneasy for what is denied us, than to be thankful for what is allowed". Might it not be that the pagans were content to omit in the stronger Christian centres the acts of sacrifice, in order to retain all other forms of their services?

In conclusion, if one remembers the exclusion from the presence of the Emperor of all orthodox Christians (a), one cannot gainsay the truth of the judgment

(a) Soc. II, 8-9; Jul. Ep. 52.

of the eminent pagan philosopher : "And every sacred law being abolished, he extended even to letters and by means known to us, the ignominy with which he had covered sacred things: that was natural; for to philosophers, orators, and all the initiated in the cult of Mercury and the Muses, the temples and discourses were allied things. He never called any of these people into his palaces, never praised them: nor entertained them, nor listened to their discourses". (a)

THE EMPERORS AND THE CHURCH (323 - 361)

Having now dealt with the Disestablishment of Paganism we must next turn to the dealings of the Emperors with the other religion to find out to what extent Christianity was established in the years between 323 and 361. The main sources, from which information can be gained, are the works of the Ecclesiastical historians, the laws of the Theodosian Code, and the writings of Constantine himself.

Assuming that the acts attributed to Constantine in the Life by Eusebius actually took place, (that writer's conclusions may be disregarded), we find that the Emperor grew more and more devout as the years rolled on. "He directed his likeness to be stamped on the golden coin of the empire with the eyes uplifted as if in prayer to God; and this money became current throughout the Roman world. His portrait also, at full length, was placed over the entrance gates of the palaces in some cities, the eyes upraised to heaven, and the hands outspread as if in prayer". (a) Such an eulogy, however, could be made of any devout pagan; but the writer soon gives more definite

(a) Eus. V. C. IV, 15.

information. "Still nobler proofs of his piety might be discerned by those who mark how he modelled, as it were, his very palace into a church of God, and himself afforded a pattern of zeal to those assembled therein: how he took the Sacred Scriptures into his hands, and devoted himself to the study of those divinely inspired oracles; after which he would offer up regular prayers with all the members of his imperial court". (a) "The Emperor, himself, as a sharer of the holy mysteries of our religion, would seclude himself daily at a stated hour in the innermost chambers of his palace; and there, in solitary converse with God, would kneel in humble supplication and entreat the blessings of which he stood in need. But especially at the salutary feast of Easter, his religious diligence was redoubled". (b) He listened, standing, to a discourse of Eusebius on the Holy Sepulchre. (c)

He also desired that his army should enjoy more religious benefits. So he made it possible for all of them, who wished it, to take part in the "services of the Church of God" on Sunday "in order that they might be able, without impediment, to perform their religious worship".

(d) Later on we learn that "he caused the sign of the most salutary trophy to be impressed on the very shields

(a) Ibid. IV, 17. (b) Ibid. IV, 22.

(c) Ibid. IV, 33. (d) Ibid. IV, 18.

of his soldiers, ~~and~~ commanded that his embattled forces should be preceded in their march, not by golden images as heretofore, but only by the standard of the cross". (a) He took bishops with him on his expedition against the Persians and one tent was set aside for use as a church.(b)

He gave many gifts to churches for different purposes. "In some cases he granted lands, in others he issued supplies of food for the support of the poor, or orphan children, and widows; besides which he evinced his care and forethought in fully providing the naked and destitute with clothing". (c) He ordered fifty copies of the Holy Scriptures to be placed in churches that he was going to build in the city named after him. (d) He dedicated the Church at Jerusalem on the anniversary of his tricennalia. (e) He erected the basilica at Constantinople which was dedicated to the Apostles. (f) He showed his appreciation of the Christians by raising Gaza to the dignity of a separate city as a reward for the conversion of its citizens. (g)

Moreover, the gentler tone of many of the laws

- (a) Ibid. IV, 21. (b) Ibid. IV, 56. (c) Ibid. IV, 28.
 (d) Ibid. IV, 36. (e) Ibid. IV, 40. (f) Ibid. IV, 58.
 (g) Ibid. IV, 38.

issued during this reign points to Christian authorship. It has been asserted that the compiler of the Theodosian Code excluded the laws he did not desire from his collection. Such exclusion, however, does not detract from the value of those remaining whose authenticity has seldom been seriously questioned. (a) Some of these refer directly to the affairs of the Church, its clergy and worship, whilst others may be taken as showing the effect of Christian belief on the general tone of legislation.

Thus it was decreed in 319 that those who devote themselves to the service of the divine religion, that is those who are called clergy, should be excused all burdens lest they be called away from their religious ceremonies by the profane envy of these burdens. (b) This led to so much abuse that it had to be restricted in July of the next year (c), and yet again in June 326.

In 321 the Emperor decided to modify the laws regarding celibacy, since this had by that time become almost a rule among the clergy of the West. (d)

Further, public works and the sitting of the law courts on Sundays were suspended. (e) Manumission of slaves was allowed in Churches as well as before

(a) Boyd, "Eccles: Edicts of Theod. Code".

(b) Cod. Theod. XVI, II, 2. (c) Cod. Theod. XVI, II, 3.

(d) Cod. Theod. XVI, II, 4. (e) Cod. Theod. II, VIII, 1;
Eus. V. C. IV, 18.

magistrates. (a)

Next, under the heading of laws influenced by Christian motives, though not dealing with ecclesiastical affairs, we find that attempts were made to improve the lot of slaves. Those condemned to the mines were not to be branded in the face "which is fashioned in the likeness of Divine Beauty". (b) When estates were divided care was to be taken that the families among the slaves should not be split up. (c) In future, masters were to be less harsh in their punishment of slaves. If a slave were killed or wantonly tortured, the owner would receive punishment. (d)

Lastly, the laws began to recognise the sanctity of marriage. Married men must no longer keep concubines. (e) Rape received severe punishment, the woman being disinherited, and the abettors, if slaves, were killed, if freemen, banished. (f) In order to stop infanticide the state undertook the charge of the children of parents who could not afford to keep them. (g)

(a) Cod. Theod. IV, VII, 1. (b) Cod. Theod. IX, XI, 2.

(c) Cod. Theod. II, XXV, 1. (d) Cod. Theod. IX, XII, 10 & 11.

(e) Cod. Just. V, 26. (f) Cod. Theod. IX, XXIII, 1.

(g) Cod. Theod. XI, XXVII, 1 & 2.

When the writings of Constantine are examined it will be seen that they show this Christian influence as much as his laws. Here, however, several fresh difficulties arise. The authenticity of much that the Emperor wrote has frequently been questioned. Some of the works attributed to him are undoubtedly spurious, while others owe a great deal to the inspiration of his many Christian advisers, especially to Hosius.

The Oration of Constantine from which many of the following quotations have been taken, though it owes much to the translators, must indeed reflect, in the main, the religious opinions of the orator, and as it will be seen that it contains abundant evidence of decidedly Christian teaching, he cannot have been opposed to that religion.

His belief in the Holy Trinity is proved by the following statements :- "God the Father (a) Almighty (b), Lord of all"(a) ; "And may the Spirit of God the Father and the Son accord His Mighty aid" (c); For they calumniate Christ, the author of every blessing who is God and the Son of God" (d); "Had they not willingly withdrawn themselves from the guidance of the Holy Spirit";

(a) Ad Eus. 2; in Eus. V.C. III, 61.

(b) Ad Eus. I; in Eus. V.C. II, 46.

(c) Orat. ad Sanct. I. (d) Ibid XI.

"Seeing that the Holy Spirit dwelling in the minds of many men". (a)

That he regarded the Divinity of Christ and the Conception by the Holy Ghost as truths is made evident by the remarkable passage in the eleventh Chapter of the Oration, which is of such importance that it demands quoting in full. "Since, then", says the Orator, "nothing exists without a cause, of necessity the cause of existing substances preceded their existence. But since the world and all things that it contains exist, and are preserved (saved), their preserver (saviour) must have had a prior existence. So that Christ is the cause of preservation (salvation); and the preservation of things is an effect: even as the Father is the cause of the Son, and the Son the effect of that cause. Enough then has been said to prove the priority of his existence. But how do we explain his descent to this earth and to men? His motive in this, as the prophets had foretold, originated in his watchful care for the interests of all; for it needs must be that the Creator should care for his own works. But when the time came for him to assume a terrestrial body and so sojourn on the earth, the need requiring, he devised for himself a new mode of birth.

Conception was there, yet apart from marriage: childbirth, yet pure virginity: and a maiden became the mother of God! An eternal nature received a beginning of temporal existence: a sensible form of a spiritual essence, a material manifestation of incorporeal brightness, appeared a radiant dove, like that which flew from the ark of Noah, alighted in the virgin's bosom". Even if much of the theology of this statement was due to the work of the translators, yet it is impossible to imagine any one but a Christian uttering words of such unmistakable meaning.

Many phrases, of which those quoted below form only a small selection, indicate that their author gave full concurrence to the Catholic teaching about the Atonement - "Thus do we render thanks to Thee, our God and Saviour, according to our feeble power; unto Thee, O Christ, supreme Providence of the mighty Father, who both savest us from evil, and impartest to us Thy most blessed doctrine". (a) "Long since had His passion, as well as His advent in the Flesh, been predicted by the prophets". (b) To these must be added such phrases as :- "Our common Lord and Saviour"; (c) "Our Saviour, our hope and our Life". (d)

(a) Orat. ad S. C. XI. (b) Ibid XVI.

(c) Ad Eus.; in Eus. V. C. II, 46.

(d) Ad Eccles. Alex. in Soc. I, 9.

Everlasting Life is regarded as the reward of a Christian. "For the reward of obedience to God is imperishable and everlasting life, to which they may aspire who know Him, and frame their course of life so as to form a pattern to others". (a) "If we in any sense aspire to blessedness like that of God, our duty is to lead a life according to His commandments: so shall we, having finished a course consistent with the laws which He has prescribed, dwell for ever superior to the power of fate, in eternal and undecaying mansions". (b) "He (i.e. Plato) further teaches the admirable doctrine, that those who have passed a life of virtue, that is the spirits of good and holy men, are enshrined, after their separation from the body, in the fairest mansions of heaven". (c)

His own successful career had revealed to him the power of Divine Providence to which he often refers in his writings, e.g., "In accordance, therefore, with the soundest reason, we may say that there is One Being whose care and providence are over all things, even God the Word, who has ordered all things"; (d) and "Thus do

(a) Orat. ad S. C. XII.

(b) Ibid XIV.

(c) Ibid IX.

(d) Ibid IX.

we render thanks unto Thee, our God and Saviour, according to our feeble power; unto Thee, O Christ, supreme Providence of the mighty Father For what mortal is he who shall worthily declare Thy praise, of whom we learn that Thou didst from nothing call creation into being and illumine it with light; that Thou didst regulate the confusion of the elements by the laws of harmony and order"? (a) and "We have received from Divine Providence" (b)

A modified view of the doctrine of justification by works is expressed in the quotations concerning the future life which have been given above and in the letter to the people of Palestine in which he writes:- "Since it appears that they who faithfully observe His holy Laws and shrink from the transgression of His commandments are rewarded with abundant blessings" (c)

He writes against those who "declare and profess that they believe things contrary to the divinely inspired Scriptures". (d)

The indwelling of God in the heart of man is frequently mentioned as the cause of all actions. "And when this habit of confidence is established in the soul,

(a) Ibid XI. (b) Ad Eccles. Alex. in Sec. I, 9.

(c) Ad Prov. Palest. in V. C. II, 24.

(d) Ad Eccles. Alex.

God himself dwells in the inmost thoughts. But He is of invincible power: the soul, therefore, which has within it Him who is thus invincible, will not be overcome by the perils which may surround it". (a)

God selects special agents for special work, for He himself "was the instrument whose services he chose and esteemed suited for the accomplishment of His will", (b) and "The Church was ordained for the salvation of all". (c)

Before concluding this analysis of the religious attitude of Constantine three more passages in which he gives his ideas of the Christian Faith will be quoted. "For", he says, "righteous prayer is a thing invincible; and no one fails to attain his object who addresses holy supplication to God; nor is a refusal possible except in the case of wavering faith; for God is ever favourable, ever ready to approve of human virtue. While, therefore, it is natural for man occasionally to err, yet God is not the cause of human error. Hence it becomes all pious persons to render thanks to the Saviour of all, first for our own individual security; and then for the happy posture of public affairs: at the same time entreating the favour of Christ with holy prayers and constant supplication that he would continue to us our present

(a) Orat. ad S. C. XV.

(b) Ad Prov. Palest.

(c) Orat. ad S. C. I.

blessings. For He is the invincible ally and protector of the righteous: He is the supreme judge of all things, the prince of immortality, the giver of everlasting life". (a) "Compare our religion with your own. Is there not with us genuine concord, and unwearied love of others? If we reprove a fault, is not our object to admonish, not to destroy; our correction for safety, not for cruelty? Do we not exercise, not only sincere faith towards God, but fidelity in the relations of social life? Do we not pity the unfortunate? Is not ours a life of simplicity which disdains to cover evil beneath the mask of fraud and hypocrisy? Do we not acknowledge the true God, and His undivided sovereignty? This is real godliness: this is religion sincere and truly undefiled: this is the life of wisdom: and they who have it are travellers, as it were, on a noble road which leads to eternal life". (b) "For after he had enlightened the world by the glorious discretion and purity of his character, and had ascended into the mansions of his Father's house, he founded his church on earth, as a holy temple wherein the worship due to the Supreme Father and to himself should be piously performed The Church was ordained for the salvation of all . . . And may the

Spirit of the Father and the Son accord his mighty aid,
while I utter the words which He shall suggest to speech
or thought". (a)

Thus the writer believed in the Holy Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the Incarnation by miraculous birth, the Atonement, the Resurrection, Eternal Life, Divine Providence, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, future rewards and punishments according to works done in this life, the union of God and man by faith and grace, and in the catholic mission of the Church.

Now, the person who delivered the oration and in whose name the letters, above quoted, were issued, must have intended to convey to the inhabitants of the Empire that he was an ardent follower of Jesus Christ. That he was successful in doing so is quite evident from the opinions of both the Christian writers, who bestow praise on him without limit, and the pagan ones, many of whom are unable to find words which adequately express their contempt. Hence his writings point to the same conclusions as his acts and laws, i.e., that he was either a sincere Christian or the greatest hypocrite that ever lived. Till some reasons are brought forward to confirm the latter statement we must agree that Constantine was

a Christian. Not only was he a Christian, but a Catholic as well, for he openly sided with the orthodox party against heretics both before and after the Council of Nicaea. (a)

This survey of the life of Constantine has omitted three important questions about which there has been much discussion - the foundation of Constantinople, the alleged murder of Crispus and Fausta, and the date of his baptism.

After the Emperor had aroused the undying hatred of Rome by his attitude towards her religion, he appears to have spent some time in trying to find a site for a new capital. Since the limits of the Empire had spread so far to the East, his attention was naturally directed towards the Levantine shores of the Mediterranean. He first began to build a city near Troy; but, under the guidance of God, as Sozomen would have his readers believe (b), or attracted by the magnificent situation of the place, as sounder criticism would suggest, he finally decided to convert Byzantium into the new Capital. The two accounts of Zosimus and Sozomen are somewhat confusing. The pagan states that the existing temples of Byzantium

(a) Eus. H. E. X, 5.

(b) Soz. II, 3.

were not destroyed and the city itself was dedicated to Tyche (Fortune) though without temple services; (a) the ecclesiastic, that, as the city became the capital of the empire during the period of religious prosperity, it was not polluted by altars, Grecian temples or sacrifices. (b)

The temples of the East were spoiled in order to adorn the new city with statues and other monuments, chief among which were the sacred ornaments removed from the oracle at Delphi, and the statue of Apollo. The latter was of bronze, and represented the God of Day, or, as it was afterwards interpreted, the emperor himself, with a sceptre in his right hand, the globe of the world in his left, and a crown of rays glittering on his head. According to Gibbon the rays of the sun had been replaced with what were supposed to be the Nails of the Passion. Such a strange arrangement does not reflect much to the credit of the founder of the city if he pretended to be a genuine Christian.

If these be the facts, it is impossible to draw any other definite conclusion as to the attitude of Constantine towards paganism from them, except that he

(a) Zos. II, 31.

(b) Soz. II, 3.

certainly favoured Christianity. For though Zosimus mentions that temples were permitted to remain, he leads one to understand that no new temples were opened. Such a course only agrees with the conclusion that the whole attitude of the time was one of toleration.

Secondly, the deaths of Crispus, Licinius and Fausta, in 326, are reported by the historians Zosimus (a) and Eutropius. (b) It is in this direction that most adverse criticism has been passed on the Emperor. "But the pride of prosperity", writes Eutropius, "caused Constantine greatly to depart from his former agreeable mildness of temper. Falling first on his own relatives he put to death his son, an excellent man; his sister's son, a youth of amiable disposition; soon afterwards his wife; and subsequently many of his friends".

The other pagan historian, though more severe in his condemnation, suggests a reason. "For", says he, "he murdered without reason or law his son Crispus because he had come into suspicion of intimacy with his step-mother Fausta". Helena then either brought a counter charge against the latter, or proved the innocence of the former and the intrigue of the latter, and in this way obtained the condemnation of her daughter-in-law. It

(a) Zos. II, 29.

(b) Eutrop. X, 6.

must be mentioned that recent German historical research has led some writers, especially Schultze, to assert that Fausta was still living in 340. (a) Since this, however, is contrary to the views of many historians, it would be well to accept the version stated by the majority, especially as it is supported by the silence of most of the Christian writers of the time, and by the expressed evidence of one. "I am aware", writes Sozomen, "that it is reported by the pagans that Constantine, after slaying some of his nearest relations, and particularly, after assenting to the murder of his son Crispus, repented of his evil deeds, etc. . . ." (b)

Many writers, following Gibbon, have used these facts to prove that Constantine was a man of very degenerate character, and that he thought of nothing but gratifying his own desires. Such a course of action shows lack of sound critical power. That the death of these persons did take place at his command seems proved beyond doubt. For we see that Sozomen was forced to admit it in his endeavour to defend his hero from another accusation which will be investigated later. But such condemnation has been passed without proper examination of the causes of the deeds. It may be that the victims received the due reward of conspiracy; or that Fausta

(a) Vide Boyd, Ecclesiastical Edicts of Theodosian Code.
 (b) Soz. I, 5.

plotted to remove her stepson so as to give her own sons a better opportunity, and that, when she was found out she, herself, had to pay the penalty of her crime; or that the charge of Zosimus was true; or that the Emperor was seized with a fit of madness into which despots who carry their lives in their hands are liable to fall at times.

Whatever the motive may have been it seems unjust to bring forward these admittedly isolated acts, about which so little is really known, to prove that the doer was of degenerate character and had not embraced the Christian Faith.

In connection with this phase in the life of Constantine the question of the date of his baptism must be discussed. If the account of Zosimus is true this event took place after the murder of Crispus and the other relatives because the Christian minister offered him the absolution which the pagan priests all refused. (a) Such a date is proved false by the evidence of Sozomen, (b) Eusebius (c), and Socrates (d), who all agree in fixing it at the year 337 just previous to his death. These would surely mention an earlier date, if there existed any possibility of it being true.

(a) Zos. II, 29.

(b) Soz. II, 35.

(c) V. C. IV, 62.

(d) I, 39.

Some critics have brought forward the charge of insincerity against Constantine on account of this delay. Others have tried to show that this is sufficient evidence to prove that he was not a Christian. Such an allegation might be true if the standard of some parties of modern times be accepted; but if investigation be made into the contemporary customs it will be seen that many bishops taught the advisability of delaying baptism till the death-bed, for "clinic" baptism was a safe guarantee of everlasting life.

Even if he did delay his admittance to the Catholic church till a few weeks before his death his laws and letters, his presence at Synods, his discourses, his charity, his munificence to Churches, clearly showed that to the outer world Constantine professed Christianity.

After his death his sons adopted different forms of religion, Constans being Orthodox and Constantius Arian. The latter allowed himself to be ruled in church affairs by the bishops of the sect to which he belonged. Julian mentions this in a letter to Hermogenes. "Allow me to exclaim as if I were a poetic speaker - 'Oh! I who had no hopes of being saved, had no hope of hearing that thou hadst escaped from the three-headed Hydra!' By Jove! do not believe that I speak of Constantius! That

man was what he was. I would speak of those wild beasts who were around him, who spied on everyone and rendered him still more cruel". In another letter the same writer alludes to the influence of George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria (a) :- "You will certainly reply that he (George) incited Constantius against you . . ." As a result of this intrigue the Orthodox bishops were deprived of their sees and exiled. (b) Chief among the clergy who suffered under these decrees was the saintly Athanasius of Alexandria.

This persecution of Christians and the treatment which he meted out to the members of his own family, many of whom he had murdered (c), only made a reaction inevitable. Since he had driven his sole heir into the camp of the pagans, it necessarily followed that that reaction should take the form of an attempted revival of Paganism.

(a) Ep. 43.

(b) Soc. II, 8-9. Jul. Ep. 52.

(c) Soc. III, 1; Soc. V, 1.

JULIAN BEFORE 361.

In order to understand the reaction that set in, after Julian had succeeded in making himself sole Emperor in 361, some notice must be taken of his earlier training. He and his brother Gallus were the sole survivors of the family after the massacres of 337. (a) When they were studying under Eusebius of Nicomedia (b) at Macellum they acted as readers in the churches. Later, in 357, Julian became one of the most popular students at Constantinople. (c) For this reason Constantius forced him to retire to Nicomedia. (c) In spite of the assumption of almost monastic habits the young prince had to make solemn promises not to attend the lectures of the Syrian Sophist Libanius. The promise was kept in the letter, but arrangements were made by which the lecture notes were handed to the future Emperor. Describing these events Libanius wrote :- "He is sent to the city of Nicomedia as a place of less importance than Constantinople. But this was the beginning of the greatest blessing both to

(a) Soc. III, 1; Soz, V, 1. (b) Amm. Marc. XXII, 9.

(c) Soz. V, 2; Soc. III, 4.

himself and the world. For there existed there a spark of mantic art still smouldering which had with difficulty escaped the hands of the impious. "By the light of this", (turning to Julian), "you first tracked out what was obscure and learned to curb your vehement hatred of the gods, being rendered gentle by the revelation of divination". (a)

So, in spite of all elaborate precautions, the worst fears of the Emperor were realised. The conversion begun at Nicomedia, was completed elsewhere under the guidance of the greatest Neo-Platonist of the time - Maximus of Ephesus. The veiled hints of the philosophers of Nicomedia aroused the curiosity of Julian to such an extent that he went to Ephesus, where he was initiated into some of the mysteries of the Eastern cults. (b)

In order to appreciate the attitude of mind which led Julian to desert Christianity, it is necessary to understand the environment in which he placed that religion. A Christian Emperor had either ordered, or consented to the murder of, his nearest relatives, and had kept his brother and himself in almost perpetual imprisonment. His teachers had been more concerned in

quarrelling with their fellow worshippers than in teaching the great fundamental truths of their religion. They attacked the classics, which he had learned to love, and the teaching therein contained, which taught as high morals as those practised by the pseudo-Christians. He had been subjected to a continuous espionage. Finally his temperament and intellectual powers had been totally misjudged.

On the other hand, the pagan coterie soon recognised the capabilities of their convert and strove to give him the idea that he had been chosen by the Gods to revive the ancient Hellenic system. (a) So he promised to restore the temples, if he became Emperor. But, as this was not likely to occur in the near future, he decided to deceive the world by a renewed interest in, and devotion to, Christianity. (b)

Fearing some injury to himself, or being seized with an all-conquering desire for freedom, he succeeded in escaping from the guard which for some time had been keeping close watch over him. He hid himself in different places for several months (c), till Eusebia intervened on his behalf. (d) Now, or perhaps earlier,

(a) Soc. III, 1. (b) Soc. III, 1; Soz. V, 2; Am. Marc. XXII, 5.

(c) Soc. III, 1. (d) Jul. Ep. 7.

he spent some time in study at Athens where he met Gregory of Nazianzen (a) who wrote of him as follows :- "I had long foreseen how matters would be from the time that I was with him at Athens. He had come there shortly after the violent measures against his brother, having asked permission of the Emperor to do so. He had two reasons for this sojourn - the one more honest, namely to visit Greece and its schools; the other more secret and known only to a few friends, namely to consult with the heathen priests and charlatans about his plans, because his wickedness was not yet declared". (b) The object of this visit is also stated by Eunapius and by the two historians, Socrates and Sozomen (c).

He was recalled to Milan in 355, and, though he first thought of writing to his protectress to obtain permission for him to continue his studies, he finally obeyed the command of his Emperor. He was led to this decision by the voice of the gods ordering him "to become their instrument for whatever purpose they chose". (d) He was created Caesar, in spite of the protests of Eusebia, who apparently feared some treachery. (e)

(a) Arm. Marc. XIV, 2. (b) Orat. V, 23 and 24.

(c) Soc. III, 1; Soz. V, 2; Eunap. Vita Max.

(d) Julian Ep. 7.

(e) Arm. Marc. XV, 8; Zos. III, 1; Soc. III, 1; Soz. V, 2

He married Helena, the Emperor's sister, before starting on an expedition against some barbarian tribes of Gaul. To the astonishment of all, the clever student of Athens became, in a few months, the daring and accomplished general of Gaul. After a series of brilliant victories he was proclaimed Emperor by his troops. (a) When Constantius refused to acknowledge him and prepared an army to go against him, he executed a series of remarkable forced marches across the Black Forest which brought him along the Danube to Sirmium in November 361. (b) During this march he threw aside all dissimulation and came forward openly as a pagan. (c)

His first public sacrifice filled him with so much delight that he wrote to Maximus :- "We worship the gods openly and all the army who accompanied me profess the true religion. We offer up bulls in public and we render thanks to the gods in many hecatombs. The gods command me to consecrate myself to their service with all my might, and most readily do I obey them. They promise us great returns for our efforts, if we are not remiss".(d) The timely death of Constantius prevented a terrible civil war and left Julian sole emperor.

(a) Zos. III, 2; Amm. Marc. XX, 4-5.

(b) Amm. Marc. XX, 8; XXI, 9, 15.

(c) Amm. Marc. XXI, 1; XXII, 1; Julian Ep. 7. (d) Ep. 38.

JULIAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY.

Julian's accession to sole power heralded an attempt to revive Paganism as the religion of the Empire. This return, of course, meant an attack on Christianity which was carried out in two ways, by argument and by act. Unfortunately the loss of the Emperor's work "Against the Christians" has deprived posterity of what would have been the most important source of information concerning the philosophical objections to the religion of the Cross. It is possible, however, to use one of the various reconstructions of the work from the passages found in the reply of Cyril. The one used below is that by Taylor which was privately printed in 1809.

He stated the purpose for which the work was written in the following terms :- "It appears to me proper that I should explain to all men the causes through which I am persuaded that the fraudulent machination of the Galileans is the fiction of men, composed with an evil intention". Much space is given to the destruction of many of the legends of the Old Testament, e.g. the one

concerning the creation of woman. "For these things are perfectly fabulous, since how is it reasonable to suppose that God was ignorant that the woman who was made as an help-meet for Adam would rather be pernicious than beneficial to him". He attacked the statement that God is the God of the Jews only, for "if that is so all these are partial conceptions and unworthy of divinity". He proceeded to criticise and ridicule the Tower of Babel.

In spite, however, of his attacks on Judaism, he preferred Jews to Christians. "If you, who had deserted us, had attached yourselves to the doctrine of the Hebrews, you would not have been in so thoroughly a bad condition, though worse than you were before, when you were amongst us. For you would have worshipped one God instead of many Gods, and not as is now the case, a man, or rather a number of miserable men. You would have had a hard or stern law, with much that is barbarous in it, instead of mild and gentle customs, and would have been so far the losers, but you would have been pure and more holy in religious rites. As it is you are like the leeches, and suck all the worst blood out of Hebraism and leave the purer behind". . . . "For you do not take any notice whether any mention is made by the Jews of holiness, but you emulate their rage and bitterness,

overturning temples and alters, and cutting the throats
 not only of those who remain firm in paternal institutes,
 but also of those heretics who are equally erroneous with
 yourselves, and who do not lament a dead body in the same
 manner as you do (a reference to the contest between
 Arians and Trinítarians). For neither Jesus nor Paul
 exhorted you in this way. But the reason is, that
 neither did they expect you would ever arrive at the power
 which you have obtained. For they were satisfied if
 they could deceive maid-servants and slaves, and through
 these married women and men such as Cornelius and Sergius;
 among whom if you can mention one that was at that time
 an illustrious character, believe that I am a liar in all
 things". He expanded this charge of subservience against
 the Church : "Jesus himself, who is so much celebrated
 to you was one of those who were in subjugation to Caesar..
 . . . But after he was born, of what good was he the
 cause to his kindred? For it is said they were
 unwilling to obey him. . . But Jesus who commanded
 spirits, who walked on the sea and, as you say, made the
 heaven and the earth (for no one of his disciples dared
 say that except John alone, nor he clearly and explicitly),
 could not change the deliberate choice of his friends and
 kindred to their own salvation".

He could not understand their position with regard to Greek culture : "Why do you apply yourselves to the discipline of the Greeks if the reading of your writings is sufficient for you? Though it is better to forbid men the reading of them, than the eating of consecrated animals. For he who eats of these, as Paul says, is not at all injured, but the conscience of a brother who sees it may, according to you, be scandalized". . . . "But from these disciplines, whoever among you is naturally of a generous disposition will depart from impiety, so that even he who has but a small portion of a naturally good disposition will, through these, most rapidly abandon your piety. It is better therefore to restrain men from these disciplines, than from sacred victims".

He was surprised that the followers of Jesus deserted Judaism, since their founder came 'to fulfil the Law'. Severe as these attacks are, they are as nothing when compared with his sweeping condemnation of the worship of Jesus as God. Moses never spoke of the "first-born Son of God", but expressly said :- "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve". It was wrong to call the Mother of Jesus God-bearing, for it was impossible for a human being to be the

Mother of God and for her son to be the Saviour. For God says :- "I am, and there is no other Saviour beside Me". "But you are so unfortunate as not even to keep to the Apostolic traditions. Neither Matthew, Luke, nor Mark called Jesus God, but this excellent John, perceiving that a great multitude in many of the Greek and Latin cities were affected with the disease, and hearing, I suppose, that the sepulchres, too, of Peter and Paul were receiving worship, secretly indeed, but still receiving worship, first dared to assert it".

He completely failed to understand the Christian view of asceticism and martyrdom, and wrote in one of his letters the following criticisms: "Over those, who do not venerate the gods, there rules a species of evil demons by which many of these impious ones are rendered insane, so that they seek to die, as if they were certain to fly direct to heaven, when their lives have been taken by violence. Others inhabit the deserts instead of cities, notwithstanding that man is by nature a social and domestic animal; and these men are likewise dominated by evil demons who force them into the misanthropy. And these impious beings abandon themselves voluntarily to these demons, and rebel against the eternal and beneficent

gods". (a)

It is hardly necessary to say that Julian determined to show favour to the Pagans, but it is necessary to find out whether the charge of persecuting the Christians be true or false. Libanius in his Necrological Discourse says that Julian inaugurated the worship of the gods, "rejoicing over those who followed him, contemptuous towards his opponents, striving to persuade them, but never allowing himself to stoop to violence". "Nevertheless, he did not lack inducements to renew the bloody persecution of other times", but he stood firm, convinced that "it is not through fire and sword that he could impose renunciation of a false conception of the gods, since even if the hand sacrifices, the conscience reproves, and there is, therefore, a shadow of a conversion and not a change of opinion. And then it happens that these, later on, obtain pardon, while those who are killed are honoured as if they were gods. Being convinced of all this, and seeing that through persecution the cause of the Christians has benefited, he abstained from it. Those who loved virtue he led to the truth, but he used no violence against those who loved evil . . . He loved to visit the cities in which the temple had been preserved, and he considered them deserving his favour;

those which wholly, or in part, had become alienated from the worship of the gods he held as impure, but gave them, as his other subjects, that which they needed, but certainly not without displeasure".

Gregory, in his seventh Oration, gives the Christian view of the same subject : "The Emperor of unhappy memory was raging against us, whose madness in rejecting Christ, after making himself its first victim, had now rendered him intolerable to others; though he did not, like other fighters against Christ, grandly enlist himself on the side of impiety, but veiled his persecution under the form of equity, and ruled by the crooked serpent which invested his soul, dragged down into his own pit his wretched victims by manifold devices. His first artifice and contrivance was to deprive us of the honour of our conflicts by causing us, who suffered for being Christians, to be punished as evil-doers; the second was to call this process persuasion, and not tyranny, so that the disgrace of those who chose to side with impiety might be greater than their danger. Some he won over by money, some by dignities, some by promises, some by various honours which he bestowed, not royally but in right servile style. At last he assailed Caesarius" - (here follows a description of the public

argument between Julian and Caesarius, a relative of Gregory).

Let us now see what evidence the letters of Julian supply on his treatment of the "Galileans": "By the Gods", he writes, "I do not wish anyone to injure the Galileans nor to strike them unjustly, nor to illtreat them in any way. I only insist that the worshippers of the gods shall be held in the greatest esteem, since the stupidity of the Galileans would send us to destruction, if we are not saved therefrom by the mercy of the gods".(a) "I thought", he writes in another letter, "that the leaders of the Galileans would be more grateful to me than they were to him who was my predecessor in the imperial rule. For in his reign it was the fortune of most of them to be sent into exile . . . ; but in my reign the contrary happens. For those who had been banished have been recalled, and those whose property had been confiscated have received all their possessions back by a law passed by us. But they have reached such a pitch of madness and folly, that because they are not allowed to tyrannize or to behave to each other as they used to do, or to treat us, the worshippers of the gods, as they

(a) Ep. 7.

have been in the habit of treating us; being inflamed with wrath, they move every stone and dare to excite the populace and stir them up to sedition, being impious towards the gods and disobedient to our decrees, although they are so humane. I permit none of them, however, to be dragged to the altars against their will, and I openly declare that if any one desires to participate in our rites and libations, they must first purify themselves and supplicate the punishing divinities. It would thus be impossible for us to permit any of those unbelievers because they desire or pretend to be present at our sacred rites, before they have purified their souls with prayers to the gods, and their bodies by lustration according to the law".

"Now it is manifest that the crowd deceived by the clergy break out in riots, because the clergy are allowed to act with impunity. In fact for those who exercised tyranny, it is not sufficient that they are not obliged to pay the penalty of the evil that they have done, but desiring to re-acquire the old power, now that the law no longer permits them to be judges, and to write wills, to appropriate the inheritance of others and to take all for themselves, they encourage every kind of disorder, and by throwing, if I may so say, fuel on the fire, they add

greater ills to the ancient troubles, and drag on the the multitude to discord. I have therefore decided to proclaim and render manifest to all by this decree, the duty of not assisting the clergy in causing riots and not permitting themselves to be persuaded to throw stones and disobey the magistrates. Otherwise all are allowed to assemble together as often as they wish and to make such prayers as they think fit. But they must not let themselves be led into disorderly actions unless they wish to be punished. I believe it opportune to make this declaration and especially to the citizens of Bostra, because Bishop Titus and the priests around him, in a memorial they have sent me, accuse the population of being inclined to disorder, in spite of their exhortations".

"Here is the phrase of the memorial which I quote in this my decree :- 'Although the Christians equal the Greeks in numbers, restrained by our exhortations, they will in no way disturb anyone'. So the Bishop speaks of you. You see he says your good conduct is not the fruit of your inclination, but is rather due to the power of his exhortations. Therefore you should, of your/own freewill, banish him from the city as your accuser, and come to an agreement among yourselves, so that there should be neither dispute nor violence. The misguided should not offend

those who adore the gods loyally and justly, according to the law given us from eternity, and the worshippers of the gods, on their side, should not assail the dwellings of those who sin more from ignorance than conviction. We must persuade and instruct men by means of reason, not with blows or violence, or by tormenting the body. Now, as in times past, I exhort those who are jealous for the true religion to do no wrong to the multitude of the Galileans and not to attack or insult them. We should not hate but pity those who act perversely in matters of supreme importance; because the greatest good is piety and impiety the greatest evil.

Those who, abandoning the worship of the gods, have given themselves up to the adoration of the dead and relics will find their punishment in themselves. We should pity them as we pity those who are afflicted with some disease, and we should rejoice over those who have been liberated and saved by the gods". (a)

Another letter shows the way in which he treated over-zealous pagans for carrying their zeal too far against Christians. In this case it was concerning the murder of George of Alexandria (b). He wrote to the people as follows: "Even if you do not respect your

founder, Alexander, and still more the great and most holy god Serapis, how is it possible, I ask of you, that you forget to consider your duty towards the Empire and towards humanity? And I will also add the thought of us, whom all the gods, and the great Serapis especially, considered worthy to govern the earth, - of us who had the right of instituting proceedings against those who had offended you? But perhaps you were deluded by anger and passion, which is always dangerous and disturbing to the judgment, so that, notwithstanding your impulse, which, in the beginning, had rightly counselled you, you were induced to transgress the law, and shamelessly to commit, as a body, those crimes you so justly condemned in others.

In the name of Serapis, tell me, on what account did you become infuriated against George? You will certainly reply that he incited Constantius against you, and introduced an army into the sacred city, and induced the governor of Egypt to seize the most venerated temple of the god, violating the images, the votive offerings, and the sacred ornaments.

Against you, naturally burning with indignation and attempting to defend the god, or rather, we should say, the property of the god, the Governor iniquitously, illegally, and impiously sent his soldiers, fearing more

than Constantius, George, who watched him to see how he behaved, not out of fear lest he might be tyrannical, but rather that he might treat you with temperance and civility.

Thereupon, enraged against this George, who was an enemy of the gods, you have defiled the sacred city when, instead, you might have consigned him to the judgments of the magistrates. And thus there would have been neither murder or crime, only perfect justice, that would have protected you, the innocent ones, and punished this sacrilegious wretch and at the same time given a lesson to others, however numerous they may be, who do not respect the gods, have no regard for cities such as yours, and for prosperous populations, and consider cruelty as a necessary adjunct to power. Compare this letter with the last I sent you and note the difference (what praise did I render you!). And even now I would like to praise you, but cannot for your transgressions. Your citizens have dared, like dogs, to tear to pieces a man, and after that they were not ashamed to uplift their bloodstained hands to the gods.

But George, you say, deserved this punishment. Certainly, I reply, and one even more severe and harsh.

Because of his actions against you, you will say. I admit it. But if you say by your hands, I shall reply, no, since there are laws that each one of you should respect and love. And if it so happens that anyone transgresses them, the majority of you should follow and obey them, and not turn away from that which has been providently instituted. It is lucky for you, O Alexandrians, that you have committed this crime under my government, because out of respect for the divinity and regard for my uncle and namesake who governed your city, I feel towards you a fraternal benevolence. But a pure and rigorous government would have treated the culpable audacity of your citizens as a grave illness which must be cured by drastic medicine. However, in place of this, I shall offer you, for the reasons stated above, that which will be more acceptable to you, exhortation and reasoning, by which I feel sure you will be persuaded, if you are, as you said you are, Greeks of the old stock, and if there remains traces of that admirable and noble origin in your souls and customs".

The impartial historian Ammianus Marcellinus referring to the murder of this bishop, wrote :- "When this event reached the Emperor's ear, he roused himself

to avenge the impious deed: but when about to inflict the extremity of punishment on the guilty, he was appeased by the intercession of those about him and contented himself with issuing an edict in which he condemned the crime which had been committed in stern language and threatening all with the severest vengeance if anything should be attempted for the future contrary to the principles of justice and law". (a)

So far it is quite clear that Julian refrained from any open persecution, but short of that he did all in his power to favour the pagans and hinder the Christians. When a case of illegal assault and murder arose, he found himself in an awkward dilemma. His sincere love of justice and his appreciation of the dignity of the law urged him to punish the offenders. His sympathy with them forced him to let them off with a warning. He endeavoured, however, to use any subtle means possible against the Christians, especially if he could justify his conduct by some interpretation of their own teaching. The best example of such an attack is given in the letter to Hecebolus : "I have always used the Galileans well

(a) Amm. Marc. XXII, 11.

and abstained from violent measures of conversion; but the Arians, ~~luxuriating~~ in their wealth, have treated the Valentinians in a manner that cannot be tolerated in a well-ordered city. In order, therefore, that they may enter more easily into the kingdom of heaven in the way in which their wonderful law bids them, I have ordered all the money of the Church of Edessa to be seized for division among the soldiers and its estates to be confiscated". (a)

When we come to Julian's treatment of Athanasius, we have much more difficulty in reconciling the action with the profession of toleration. Athanasius had taken advantage of Julian's edict permitting all exiled Christians to return to the Empire(b) and had taken up residence at Alexandria again. The Emperor was indignant at this and sent this message to the Governor of Egypt: "A man exiled by so many decrees, by so many Emperors, should certainly have awaited a special authorisation before re-entering the country, and should not immediately offend the laws by his audacity and folly, as if they seemed to have no importance to him. We have allowed the Galileans exiled by Constantius to

return to their homes, but not to their churches. And now I hear that this most audacious Athanasius, puffed up by his habitual impudence, has resumed that which they call the episcopal throne, which is most decidedly disagreeable to the pious people of Alexandria. We, therefore, order him to leave the city the very day on which he receives this letter, and this he may consider as a proof of our leniency. But if he remain, we shall condemn him to the greater and more vexatious chastisements". (a) Athanasius remained in spite of these threats. So another letter was sent : "If you did not want to write to me on other subjects you should at least have informed me about Athanasius, that enemy of the gods, as you were well aware of what I had wisely decided some time ago. I swear by the mighty Serapis that if, before the Kalends of December, this enemy of the gods, Athanasius, has not left, not only the city, but also Egypt, I shall impose on the province administered by you the fine of 100 pounds of gold. You know how slow I am to condemn, but also that I am much slower pardoning when I have condemned". Then, apparently, in a burst of passion, he admits the reason of his hatred of the Bishop:

"With my own hand", he continues. "To me it is a grief to be disobeyed. By all the gods nothing could give me more pleasure than the expulsion, from every corner of Egypt, of Athanasius, that criminal who has dared, during my reign, to baptise Greek wives of illustrious citizens. He must be persecuted". (a)

In yet another letter Julian showed such hatred for Athanasius that could only be bred of fear. It was written to the Alexandrians and ran as follows :- "If you would be willing to be persuaded by me, it will afford you great happiness. If you wish to remain faithful to the foolishness and the teachings of evil-minded men, arrange things among yourselves, but do not ask me for Athanasius. There are already too many of his disciples ready to tickle your ears . . . Would that the wickedness of this impious teaching were limited to Athanasius alone! You have an abundance of able persons, and there is no difficulty in choosing. Anyone that you may pick out in the crowd, so far as the teaching of the Scriptures is concerned, would not be inferior to him whom you desire. And if you prefer Athanasius for some other quality (they tell me that the man is a great intriguer), and because of this make your petition to me, know ye that it is precisely

for this reason I have banished him from the city, because the man who wishes to interfere in everything is by nature unfit to govern Therefore to prevent any disturbance from taking place, we first decreed that he should be banished from the city and now from the whole of Egypt". (a)

The earlier part of the letter we have just quoted reveals once more the position of Julian with regard to the Christian religion: "I swear by the gods, O men of Alexandria, I am much ashamed if any of the Alexandrians at all confess that he is a Galilean But tell me of what blessing to the city have they been the cause who have now introduced new preaching? Your founder, Alexander of Macedonia, was a god-fearing man and not at all like these, or like any of the Hebrews who were far better than they are Not at all by words of Jesus did they cause it (the city) to grow, nor by the doctrine of the most hateful Galileans did they produce for it its constitution, by which it is now rendered happy . . . , and you think that Jesus, whom neither you or your fathers have seen, ought to be considered the God Logos If you trust him who journeyed by the other

way until he was twenty . . . etc". (a)

Two points seem to stand out clearly from the letters dealing with Athanasius. Julian recalled the Christians to their homes but not to their churches; but if this led to a continued spread of the religion, the cause of the conversions must be exiled. These admissions of the letters justify to a large extent the charge of the ecclesiastical historians that his reason for recalling the exiles was to increase the dissensions in the Church. Even Ammianus ascribed 'his clemency to the desire of fomenting the intestine divisions of the Church'. (b) Many of the Christians recognised the truth of this and consequently cried out against this treatment. It is difficult to see what other course a pagan Emperor could follow without forbidding people to join this Church. He could not show favour to anyone Christian sect, but must give liberty to all or none. He showed that he genuinely believed in the maxim that persuasion is the only means of conversion when he invited Christians, both as individuals and as bodies, to his palace to discuss religion. (c)

(a) Ep. 51.

(b) Amm. Marc. XXII, 5.

(c) Amm. Marc. XXII, 5; Gregory Orat. VII.

Such toleration did not imply equality of treatment. He openly professed that he would do his best to assist pagans and to hinder Christians. It was only natural that he should remove the privileges that had been allowed to the Arians during the previous reign. The clergy and widows who had received grants from the municipal revenues were not only deprived of them for the future, but obliged to repay what they had received. (a) The Church lost its right to inherit and the clergy theirs of making wills and of acting as judges in certain cases. (b) The privileges of exemption from taxation and from service on the Curiae were taken away in March 362 by a decree which stated that "we have restored to their duties all the senators and decurions who were exempted whether as Christians or otherwise". (c) The state posting service was no longer to be used by Bishops without payment. (d) All the temples destroyed by the Christians and everything that had been taken from pagan property was to be restored at the cost of those who had wrought the destruction. (e)

It is quite natural that the clergy of the time should regard such injunctions as annoying and unjust, and

- (a) Soz. V, 5.
- (b) Ep. 52.
- (c) Ep. II; Cod. Theod. XII, l. 50.
- (d) Cod. Theod. VIII, V, 12.
- (e) Soz. V, 5.

therefore as acts of persecution; but one cannot deny that the Church could not expect to keep privileges granted her as the State Church. In addition, it should not be forgotten that this treatment compares not unfavourably with the way the first Christian Emperors dealt with the pagans. On the whole the judgment of the contemporary historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, may be regarded as correct. He thought that, however, just as this legislation was in theory, it proved harsh in practice from its cumulative weight and the haste with which it was enforced. (a) In one respect at least, it compares very unfavourably with the action of Constantine. This emperor ordered the state to indemnify those who were forced to give up property, while no mention of such assistance is found in the decrees of Julian.

Next we have to investigate a number of acts which are much more difficult to reconcile with the profession of toleration. First among these stands the exile of St. Athanasius which has already been discussed. Some of the advice to the citizens of Bostra about ejecting their bishop can hardly be described as tolerant. The stringent measures at Antioch, after the destruction

(a) Amm. Marc. XXII, 10.

of the Temple of Daphne - the shutting of the Cathedral and the confiscation of certain property - can scarcely be excused even though there existed⁴ suspicion that some of the Christians were guilty of arson (a). In February 363, the Emperor decreed that no funerals should take place by daylight "so that no one should be detracted by the ill-omened sight of mourning". (b) This was essentially an attack on one of the rites of the Church. He allowed his feelings to get the better of his judgment when he appointed Alexander of Heliopolis Governor of Syria. "I know", he wrote, "that Alexander is not fit to be a governor, but such a man suits this greedy and abusive people". (c)

A case of grave difficulty was reported from Gaza and Maiuma. These two towns had originally been under one government, but the latter had gained the dignity of a separate city from Constantine on account of its devotion to the Christian cause. The inhabitants of Gaza petitioned Julian for the withdrawal of these privileges. On being granted their request they ran so wild with enthusiasm that they attacked their neighbours and set fire to the chapels. Some people were murdered.

(a) *Amm. Marc.* XXII, 13.

(b) *Ep.* 77; *Cod. Theod.* IX, XVII, 5.

The governor, fearing the wrath of the Emperor, arrested the ringleaders. Julian did not reprimand the people of Gaza. He deprived the unfortunate governor of his office. "What great matter is it", he remarked, "if one Greek hand has slain ten Galileans". (a) As we have seen above, Julian could hardly refrain from praising the Alexandrians for their murder of George. Such acts are not congruous with the profession of toleration made so frequently by Julian.

In conclusion the true meanings of the edicts about education must be ascertained before passing a final judgment on the man who attempted to re-establish paganism. In 362 the municipal schools were again brought under state control. "It is necessary that the masters of the schools should be most perfect, first in their morals, second in their eloquence. Now, as it is impossible for me to be present in every city, I order that those who wish to be teachers must not suddenly and without preparation assume that office, but, after being approved by the authority of the government, they shall obtain a decree of the ~~Cunsules~~ ^{Emperors} which must not fail to meet with the approbation of the best citizens. This decree must afterwards be referred to me for examination, so that the one

(a) Soz. V, 9; Greg. Orat. IV.

elected should present himself to the school of the city deserving, because of our judgment, a higher title of honour". (a)

This was only a return to ancient custom, but a letter of the Emperor, probably written during the sojourn at Antioch (b), contains an edict which shows a very different attitude towards Christian teachers. (c) "True learning consists in right opinions, not in literary proficiency. Even in trifles discord between mind and tongue is wrong. But in great things, such as teaching, only a cheat or charlatan will teach one thing when he means another. All teachers, especially those who teach the young, ought to be gentle and not oppose the common belief and try to insinuate their own - rhetoricians, grammarians, and sophists, or teachers of philosophy, and political science in particular.

Now Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Lysias all found their learning on the gods and consider themselves dedicated to Hermes or the Muses. It is monstrous, then, that those who teach these writers should dishonour their gods. I do not wish

(a) Cod. Theod. XIII, III, 5.

(b) ~~Ann.~~ Marc. XIII, 10

(c) Ep. 42.

them to change their religion that they may retain their office, but I give them the choice either not ^{to} teach, or if they prefer to do so, to teach at the same time that none of these authors is guilty of folly or impiety in his doctrine about the gods. They make a living by the writings of these men, and ought not to perjure themselves for a few drachmas.

Up to this time it was unsafe to profess the religion of the gods, but now there is no longer any excuse (as there was then) for reticence of opinions. If such teachers think these authors which they expound wise, let them go to the Churches of the Galileans and expound Matthew and Luke who forbid our sacrifices. I wish, however, that the ears and tongues of you Christians 'may be 'regenerated' as you would say, by these writings which I value so much.

We do not, however, forbid Christian children to go to school. We do not wish to force them into the right path, but to persuade them. The ignorant should, in my opinion, be instructed and not punished".

Gibbon's judgment on this clearly brings out one of the points at issue. "The Christians", he wrote, "were directly forbidden to teach; they were indirectly

forbidden to learn, since they would not frequent the schools of the pagans". In forming a decision, however, it must not be forgotten that Julian was forced to stop Christian teachers in the state schools, because of his views of the state. The schools were part of the state system, which in turn was intimately associated with the state religion. He could not dissociate the three things in his mind. Now, then, could one expect him to allow Christian teachers to use the Classics against the paganism of the Established Religion?

Though it is difficult to reconcile some of the actions of this Emperor with a twentieth century idea of toleration, it must not be forgotten that his reign was the last to show any sign of the slightest form of religious toleration for many hundreds of years. In fact, it shares with the reign of Constantine, after the publication of the Edict of Milan, the glory of being the sole examples of the times of religious liberty down to the sixteenth century. So it must be concluded that, though he sometimes used rather despicable means of doing his best to injure the Christians, Julian never stooped to open, relentless persecution.

JULIAN AND PAGANISM.

After the death of Constantius had made Julian sole emperor, he used all his powers, both as a scholar and a despotic monarch, to re-establish Paganism as the religion of the Empire. Moreover, it is helpful, if not essential, to separate his assistance as philosopher from his aid as Emperor. The fact that the holding of the latter title carried with it the office of Pontifex Maximus rendered his aid more effective, for his temporal power gave him also such a position in the theocratic system that he could use freely his intellectual gifts in the work of reformation and reconstruction. No emperor ever valued so highly this office which he regarded as equal to all the other prerogatives of imperial dignity.

Though Julian's short life did not permit him to write a systematic account of his religious views, some idea of them can be obtained from his different works and letters, especially from those on "The Sovereign Sun" and "The Mother of the Gods". He suggests the Existence

of The Three Worlds ruled over by One Supreme Being. The highest world is the realm of pure ideas where the Supreme Principle, the One, the Highest Good, the First Cause lives and reigns. The second is the intellectual world ruled over by an emanation from the Supreme Principle - the Logos of Plato - the "Sun" of the intellectual world, which is purely spiritual. The third is the world known to the senses and dominated by the visible Sun.

"My own belief is that the Sun is the common parent of all men, to use a comprehensive term". . . .
 "And yet I feel how difficult it is for the human mind even to form a conception of that Sun who is not visible to the senses, if our notion of him is to be derived from the Sun which is visible; but to express the same in language, however inadequately, is, perhaps, beyond the capability of man".

"That divine and all beauteous World, which from the highest vault of Heaven down to the lowest earth is held together by the immutable providence of God, and which has existed from all eternity, without creation and shall be eternal for all time to come, and which is not regulated by anything, except approximately by the Quintessence (of which the principle is the solar light)

placed, as it were, on the second step below the world of intelligence and finalty by means of the Sovereign of all things around whom all things stand". "This being, whether properly to be called 'That which is above comprehension' or the 'Type of things existing' or 'The One' (inasmuch as Unity appears to be the most ancient of all things) or 'The Good' as Plato regularly designates Him, This, then, is the Single Principle of all things and which serves to the universe as a model of indescribable beauty, perfection, unity, and power. And after the pattern of the primary substance that dwells within the Principle, He hath sent forth out of Himself and like in all things unto Himself, the Sun, a mighty god, made up of equal parts of intelligible and creative causes".

"For this reason I believe that the light of the Sun bears the same relation to things visible as Truth does to things intelligible. But this 'whole' (quintessence) inasmuch as it emanates from the model and 'Idea' of the primal and supreme God and exists from all eternity around his immutable being, has received sovereignty also over the gods appreciable by the intellect alone and communicates to them the same good things (because they belong to the world of intelligence) as are

poured down from the Supreme Good upon the other objects of intelligence. For to these latter the Supreme Good is the source of beauty, perfection, existence, and union, holding them together and illuminating them by its own virtue which is the 'Idea' of the Good. The same things, therefore, does the Sun communicate to things intelligible, over whom he was appointed by the Good to reign and to command; although these began and exist at the same moment with himself. . . And, in the third place, this visible disc of the Sun is, in an equal degree, the source of life and preservation to things visible, the objects of sense; and everything which we have said flows down from the Great Deity upon the intelligible gods, the same doth this other visible deity communicate to the objects of sense".

The debt of the two religious systems, Christianity and Julian's Hellenistic Church, to Platonic Philosophy will be very apparent if the above statement of the Logos theory be compared with that in the first few verses of St. John's Gospel. After this exposition, however, Julian digresses into a very tedious and confusing attempt to relate the many gods of the pagans to the Spiritual Sun by the use of the analogy of the planets

revolving round the visible Sun. In this way he hoped to bring into his Church all pagans from the lowest savage to the most learned philosopher. To this end he composed his other theological treatise to the 'Mother of the Gods'. Its object was to give an explanation, as satisfactorily as possible, of the various legends bound up with some of these cults.

In order to facilitate such interpretation Julian adopts Plato's theory of Ideas, i.e., that the material world is only the reflection of the world of Ideas. He, therefore, concludes this work with a magnificent prayer of which the following is an extract:-

"Oh Mother of Gods and of men, who dost sit on the throne of God, origin of the gods, thou who dost participate in the prime essence of the ideas, comprehending in thyself the cause of all, and dost infuse it in the ideal things, goddess of life, revealer, providence and Creatrix of our souls; thou who hast saved Atys, and hast recalled him from the cavern in which he was hurled; thou who bestowest all gifts on the ideal gods and with them overflowest the sensible world, - I beseech thee, concede to all men happiness, the summit of which is the knowledge of the gods! . . . "

He insists on the mythical character of the

legends with due emphasis. "Let no one suppose that I speak of these things as having really happened; just as if the gods did not know what they should do, or that they were obliged to correct their own mistakes. But the ancients, either guided by the gods, or thinking for themselves, and discovering the causes of things, veiled them with strange myths, in order that this device, by its strangeness and obscurity, might incite us to search after truth".

Further information is gained on these subjects from the piece of a letter of Julian generally called 'The Fragment' : "It is necessary also for us to turn our thoughts continually towards the gods, to have eyes directed with veneration towards their temples, to surround their images with honours and with holy ceremonies, as if we were constantly regarding present gods.

For these statues, these altars, this use of sacred fire, and so many other symbols, have been given us by our fathers as signs of the presence of gods, not to help us to believe that gods exist, but that we might serve and adore them. In fact, as we are of corporeal nature, it is necessary that something of the corporeal should exist in a cult. So the first race of gods,

though incorporeal, have been represented by statues. There is also a second race of gods, sprung from the first who move circularly in the sky and to whom one cannot render an incorporeal cult as by their nature they need none.

There is also necessary a third sort of statues, that to which prayers should be addressed to render the gods propitious. As our subjects in honouring the images of princes which have no need thereof, show their well-wishes, so men in venerating the images of the gods, which have need of nothing, earned protection and assistance from these. A zeal to do what is possible is always a sign and proof of pious devotion, and whoever offers it is evidently disposed to greatest sacrifices.

Indeed, though the Divinity lacks nothing, it is no reason why we should offer him nothing. He needs not our praises. Is that a reason why we should refrain from praising?

O senseless mortal, do you believe that we are led by the nose like you are, by the malice of the devil, and that we take for gods what are only works of art?".

These quotations explain to some extent the theory on which the 'Reformed' Pagan Church was founded.

Now some attempt must be made to see how Julian used his position as Emperor and Pontifex Maximus to organise and establish this Church. Most information on this subject will be found in three letters, to Arsacius (Ep. 49), to Theodorus (Ep. 63), and the Fragment, possibly connected with the one to Theodorus.

Hellenism is not making the progress we would wish, through the fault of those who profess it. The gods make to us splendid gifts, above all our desires, all our hopes. For who then had dared to promise such a prompt and marvellous change in so short a time? But do we believe that sufficient? And do we not remember that the reasons for the spread of an impious religion are its humanity to strangers, its care for the dead, the apparent sanctity of life? I believe that we must put into practice each of these virtues.

Moreover it is not enough that you alone should be irreproachable; all the priests of Galatea ought to be as you. Threaten and persuade to make them virtuous; or rather, deprive them of their sacred office if they, their wives, their children, and their slaves do not set the example of respect for the gods and if they do not prevent the slaves, children and wives of the Galileans from insulting the gods by substituting impiety for the

cult which they ought to follow. Again do not permit any priest to frequent the theatre, to drink in a tavern, to follow a shameful or low trade or art. Honour the obedient, turn out the disobedient.

Establish in each town numerous hostels, so that strangers and travellers may enjoy our hospitality, and not only those of our religion, but all who have need of help. I shall provide the necessary funds. I have assigned annually to Galatia thirty thousand bushels of wheat for distribution and sixty thousand 'xestes' of wine; distribute one-fifth to the poor in the employ of priests, and the rest to foreigners, strangers, and mendicants. It would be disgraceful when the Jews have not a beggar and the Galileans assist both ours and theirs, that our own should be deprived of the help due to them. Teach the Hellens to give their share to this work; accustom them to acts of charity; and tell them it is a work to which I have long devoted myself. Let us not leave to others the zeal for doing good; let us blush at our indifference and let us be first in the way of piety. If I hear that you act thus I shall be very pleased. Seldom visit the governors, but often write them. When they enter a town no priest is to go to meet them. When they approach the temple meet them in the porch. No

soldier is to accompany them into the temple; let those who wish follow. All are equal inside the holy place. You, only, give orders to those who enter. Holy law desires it; for those who obey are truly pious. . . . Inform them that if they desire a special favour of me they must bow the knee before the Mother of the Gods". (a)

After the introduction to the letter to Theodorus he goes on :- "What is the commission, then, with which I charge you. It is the general superintendence of all that concerns religion in Asia, the authority over priests in country and town, and the right to judge the acts of each". (Then he complains of the slackness of pagans compared with the ardour of some Christian sects) - "As for us, such is our coldness towards the gods that we forget the laws of our country. Moreover, those are religions in their way, since the God whom they adore is the being really omnipotent and perfectly good and whom we ourselves adore under other names. They seem to act rightly in not deserting their laws; only they sin in this, that, to the despising of other gods, they worship exclusively one god of whom they think we Gentiles are deprived. So these impious Galileans, the lepers

of human society" . . . (the M.S.S. break off here).

The Fragment contains, besides the explanation of the use of images, some observations on the Pagan priesthood. It gives a sort of Table of Commandments for them. They are not to take part in secular pastimes nor to go to the theatre. Certain books should be read, while others are not suited for them. It concludes with some recommendations for their choice and training: "I say that one ought to choose in the towns the men who are most virtuous, religious, and most humane, poor or rich. It equally matters very little whether they be known or unknown. For he whom custom leaves in obscurity does not deserve to be excluded from the priesthood; whether poor or plebian, the moment he unites these two qualities, love of god and men, make him a priest. One will judge his piety, if he manages to inspire all his family with love of the gods; his humanity, if he shares his goods with the needy and endeavours to spread his charity out as much as possible.

It seems to me that the indifference of our priests to the needy has suggested to the Galileans the idea of practising beneficence, and they have consolidated their perverse work by covering it with these external virtues.

It is thus that the Galileans begin this hospitality, this invitation to feasts that they call Agapes, word and act very common towards the impiety
 . . ." (broken off).

In 362 he wrote to Calixene saying :- "Your faithfulness for the last twenty years deserves the highest praise. I appoint you priestess of the Mother of Gods at Pessinus" (a).

We have seen that Julian recognised the incapability of the divided pagan bodies to resist Christianity. His new state religion required a harmonious set of doctrines and a definite organisation. His knowledge of philosophy convinced him that Neo-Platonism would provide the necessary theological foundation. From this system he obtained, as we have seen, the doctrine of the Trinity of Existence ruled over by One Supreme Being, who revealed Himself in different forms. The first emanation from this "Supreme God" is the "Sun" of the spiritual world or of the world of Ideas. This "Sun" is a creative God around whom the deities are arranged as the planets round the visible sun. This "Sun" in turn has revealed himself as the sun of the visible world, but

the ideal forms must exist before the real forms. As we have already shown the underlying principle is the same as that of the Fourth Gospel. The analogy is even carried further, for 'Light' occupies an important place in the two theories. "I am the Light of the World". "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not". This is the christian statement. The pagan runs : "And in the third place, this visible disc of the Sun is, in an equal degree, the source of life and preservation to things visible, etc" . . . "For this cause I believe that the light of the Sun bears the same relation to things visible as Truth does to things intelligible". Corresponding to this also we get the statement of Jesus :- "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life".

If the fundamental doctrines are very similar, where arises the great differences? After the explanation of the Logos Theory, Julian loses himself in an ingenious attempt to find a place for all the pagan deities in his system; St. John gives an account of the teaching of Jesus based on the text "God is Love". Here lies the great difference and, as we have seen, the

Sovereign Pontiff recognised that Christianity gained much of its force from its moral teaching, especially from its great doctrine of Love or Charity. So he recommended, nay ordered, the practice of this virtue. He forgot, however, that the virtue was of little value unless it sprang from a good motive. He failed to recognise that the hated Galileans had an ideal unattainable on this earth, while Hellenism, as he expounded it, was essentially of this world.

Again, he saw how much the church gained from its organisation. Therefore he issued minute directions about the priesthood. He formed a priestly hierarchy with himself as Sovereign Pontiff. In this capacity he appointed certain people to be priests over certain districts with the power of Metropolitans. In this connection he formulated a number of rules about the conduct of priests, many of them analogous to those which tradition had made for the Christians. He offered suggestions for the proper selection and training of candidates for the priesthood. In fact he attempted to absorb into his Hellenic church all that he thought best of the organisation of the despised Galileans.

The answer, then, to the question - where lay

the weakness of this attempt?, can now be given. Julian endeavoured to find some theory which would allow him to include all the small cults in his state religion and at the same time leave them their creed unaltered. Could a system which admitted low and degenerate cults, without forcing them to try to attain to its highest standard, hope to form a formidable Church? Christianity was hated for refusing to work with other systems and be dragged down by them; but it possessed the true idea, viz., that an attempt must be made to build up a new society with a lofty ideal and a united worship. The Hellenic Catholic Church was a piece of machinery fitted together by man; the Christian Catholic Church was a living organism which had the germ of life within itself and so was capable of growth and development.

There can never exist the slightest doubt as to the enthusiasm of Julian. All writers agree that he was enthusiastic to the extreme. He apparently turned his palace into a temple and knew every day, better than the priests, what festivals were to be kept and what sacrifice they required. He, himself, would act as slaughterer and priest, and indeed possessed a passion for heathen ritual in all its gruesome details.

Ammianus paints a vivid picture of the way in which the blood of victims flowed everywhere at Antioch, with no apparent result except the gorging of the foreign soldiery (a).

Rumours were circulated of secret nocturnal sacrifices and of the pursuit of necromancy (b) which only disgusted the majority of pagan minds a little less than those of the Christians. This superstition and fanatical fervour were very unpalatable to many of those whom he hoped to win, but whom he only made to ridicule (c).

On his accession to the Empire Julian had been full of enthusiasm and full of hope, but, as time went on, he found that in city after city the old religion had sunk much lower than he had expected; that the pagans, even, did not welcome his efforts with great joy; that the resistance of the Christians became more and more determined. So his optimism was turned into pessimism. His tolerance began to give way to intolerant and spiteful actions. He thought he would surely find some signs

(a) Amm. Marc. XXII, 12. (b) Amm. Marc. XXII, 12;
Theod. III, XXV, 27.

(c) Amm. Marc. XXII, 14; XXV, 4.

of a living paganism at Antioch, but to his great disgust he was met by one poor old priest who had managed to obtain a goose for the sacrifice. On demanding why the oracle gave no answer to his enquiry he was told that the Christians used a part of the grounds for a cemetery. In response to his command the bodies were removed and carried, amidst scenes of great fervour, by the Christians to the city. Soon afterwards the famous temple was destroyed by fire. The Christians were suspected of arson. Their cathedral was shut. During his stay here the ridicule of the people caused him to write the Misopogon, a biting satire. It was because of this conduct that he appointed Alexander governor of this city, though he knew him to be absolutely unfit to rule (a).

A little later the Emperor left for the disastrous campaign against Persia (b), where he received the wound which brought about his death in his thirty-second year (c). Thus ended Julian's attempt to restore Paganism. His failure must be attributed mainly to the unique autocratic position he held in state and church alike. The shortness of his reign had made it impossi-

(a) Amm. Marc. XXIII. (b) Amm. Marc. XXIV & Zos. III, 18-26.

(c) Amm. Marc. XXV, 3.

ble to thoroughly organise the new system. He had refused to name his successor. No one was left to carry on his work. He had made his policy unpopular with pagan as well as Christian. He had totally misconceived Christianity and finally he had failed to recognise the impossibility of creating a new religion by the union of a number of dying cults under a philosophical theory.

TOLERATION AFTER REACTION (363-375).

During the twelve years following the death of Julian the Empire was ruled first by Jovian for a few months and then jointly by Valentinian and Valens. All the Roman world were anxious to discover the attitude of the new Emperor towards religious affairs.

As soon as it was known that their leader was dead, the army unanimously elected Sallust, a devout pagan philosopher, to the vacant throne (a). His refusal, on account of old age and infirmities, caused a tumult during which a small number of officers proclaimed their genial comrade, Jovian, with the cry, "Jovianus Imperator" (a). The guards outside the Council chamber took up the shout, and thus a man who was better known on account of the renown of his father than his own, found himself suddenly invested with the purple. It has been suggested and not without reason that the men confused "Jovianus Imperator" with "Julianus Imperator", and thought that their great general had only been severely wounded.

(a) Amm. Marc. XXV, 5.

Such an account differs rather from the highly coloured narrative of Socrates, who endeavours to make one believe that the elevation of the new Emperor to the imperial dignity was the unanimous work of an army eager for a Christian ruler. "On being saluted Emperor, he positively declined to accept the sovereign power; and when the soldiers brought him forward by force he declared that being a Christian, he did not wish to reign over a people who chose to adopt paganism as their religion. They all, then, with one voice answered that they also were Christians: upon which he accepted the Imperial dignity". (a)

On the next morning, however, even though the new Emperor was a Christian, the sacrifices were offered and the entrails of the victims consulted to determine the actions of the day. "The replies", writes Ammianus, "were that his ruin would be completed if he entrenched as he had determined, but that he would conquer if he began to march. So we began our march". (b)

The new Emperor was "of a jolly countenance, accustomed to sport with those who surrounded him, gluttonous and fond of wine and sensuality which, perhaps,

(a) Soc. III, 22.

(b) Ann. Marc. XXV, 6.

(c) Ann. Marc. X

he would have corrected from an Emperor's self-respect"(a). After concluding an ignominious, but probably necessary, treaty with the Persians, by which he deserted the Christian King of Armenia, he returned to Antioch where he was received with great rejoicing. Here he made it clear that Christianity would again be freed from all restrictions. He wrote, says Sozomen, "without delay to the provincial governors, ordering that the people should freely assemble in the Churches"; he "restored to the Churches and the clergy, to the widows and the virgins, the same immunities and every former donation for the advantage and honour of religion which had been granted by Constantine and his sons, and afterwards withdrawn by Julian" (b) He issued a law which runs as follows :- "If any one shall try to force any of the sacred virgins or widows to marry (not only to commit adultery), he shall be punished with death". (c)

The ecclesiastical historians again bring forward their definite assertions that all sacrifices were forbidden (d). No trace of such legislation

(a) Amm. Marc. XXV, 10. (b) Soz. VI, 3, cf. Theod. I, II, and IV, 4.

(c) Cod. Theod. IX, XXV, 2. (d) Soz. VI, 3, and Soc. III, 24.

exists and it will be seen that Themistius suggested that full toleration was granted. For he wrote :- "Your solicitude and love for men are shown in the care you have taken in setting religion on a true foundation. You alone have understood that rulers cannot always constrain their subjects, that there are things beyond authority and force . . . Morals, and above all, piety towards gods and religion are in this class . . . You have acted in this way, divine Emperor, as actual and perpetual chief of the state; you have declared by a law that religious matters shall be left to the conscience of each . . . I regard this law as just as important for us as the treaty with the Persians: by this treaty we are enabled to live at peace with the barbarians; your law procures to us the advantage of living among ourselves without tumults and dissensions". (a)

The silence of most of the pagan writers concerning this short reign tends to strengthen the opinion expressed above; and such would probably be the conclusion of all except for the discovery of the following Inscription by the late Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln over

(a) Orat. pp. 68-70.

a church door in Corfu :-

"This is the gate of the Lord: the righteous shall
enter into it".

"Having faith as a queen, the fellow-worker of my
might"

"I, Jovian, having destroyed the precincts and altars
of the Greeks",

"To Thee, O Blessed Ruler on High, built this holy
temple"

"As a gift to the king from an unworthy hand".

An isolated inscription of this sort must not be allowed to upset the conclusion reached from a survey of the general information. Moreover, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that in so large and so mixed an Empire, there were bound to be some isolated cases of violence against the heathen and destruction of their idols and temples. Besides, the Emperor had hardly had sufficient time to formulate any plans before he was found dead in his bedroom eight months after his accession (a).

After an interregnum of ten days Valentinian was elected Emperor on February 26th. (b) In response to the insistent demand of the army he consented to divide

(a) Ann. Marc. XXV, 10.

(b) Ann. Marc. XXVI, 2.

the Empire and finally invested his younger brother Valens with the robes of Augustus to rule over the Eastern portion whilst he himself proceeded to the West (a). On his way thither he showed the attitude he had determined to adopt in religious matters, when some Bishops begged him to grant them permission to assemble together to discuss questions of dogma, by replying :- "I am but one of the laity, and have therefore no right to interfere in these transactions: let the priests to whom such matters appertain, assemble where they please". (b) Writing later on the same subject the same historian says :- "For Valentinian, who reigned over the Western regions, was an admirer of the Nicene doctrines, and was imbued with so much reverence for religion, that he never imposed any commands on the priests, nor ever tried to introduce any alteration for better or for worse in ecclesiastical regulations. Although he had become one of the best of the Emperors and had shown his capacity to rule affairs, he considered that ecclesiastical matters were beyond the range of his jurisdiction". (c)

Such opinions, however, are not confined to the

(a) Amm. Marc. XXVI, 5.

(b) Soz. VI, 6.

(c) Soz. VI, 21.

Christian writers, for Ammianus praises him "because he stood midway between different forms of religion, nor did he disturb anyone on this head, nor commanded that this or that should be observed in religious worship; nor did he by threatening prohibitions, bend the necks of his subjects towards that which he himself observed, but left that whole side of life, as he found it, undisturbed". (a)

The Emperor, himself, refers to the same subject of toleration in an edict issued later in his reign by saying :- "The laws given by me at the beginning of my reign are witnesses that the free liberty to follow the religion which he desires is given to every man". (b)

These statements are fully justified by the fact that the Theodosian Code contains no record of any legislation under the headings which deal with Heretics, Jews, and Persecutions, with the sole exception of one law against the Manicheans, and this attacked their magical practices and not their doctrines (c).

Special privileges were granted in 371 to pagan priests who had merited them by their devotion to duty : "They shall enjoy the repose to which the witness of a

(a) Amm. Marc. XXX, 9. (b) Cod. Theod. IX, XVI, 9.
 (c) Cod. Theod. XVI, V, 3.

long work gives them the right . . . We decide that they shall be provided with the honours of ex-counts, honours reserved for citizens who, in the public administration, have shown proof of probity and zeal". (a)

Some writers have been led to think that the practice of pagan ceremonies was forbidden by the laws published against nocturnal sacrifices and magical incantations in the years 364, 370 and 371. (b) That such is not the case can easily be demonstrated. For, firstly, it is definitely stated that the consultation of the haruspices is not censured. (c) Secondly, when Praetextatus petitioned the Emperor for the removal of these restrictions from Greece because it would ruin their worship, exception was made in favour of the Mysteries of Eleusis, although they were celebrated during the night. "Wishing to make laws he began by forbidding nocturnal sacrifices, pretending to stop thereby the impieties which were committed. But Praetextatus, proconsul of Greece, declared loudly that this law would make life insupportable to all pagans. That is why the Emperor desisted and permitted the

(a) Cod. Theod. XII, I, 75.

(b) Cod. Theod. IX, XVI, 7, 8 & 9.

(c) Cod. Theod. IX, XVI, I, 9.

celebration of the sacred mysteries according to ancient custom". (a) Thirdly, the reports of the terrible persecutions of diviners found in Ammianus, which have misled so many, have a far different significance when the full circumstances are examined. The persecution was initiated by Apronianus, Praefect of Rome, who, being a pagan, hated the Christians as much as the magicians. "Apronianus", writes Ammianus, "was labouring with most particular solicitude to suppress the magicians who were now getting scarce". (b) The motive of the persecution was fear of political intrigue. (b)

There remains yet one more law dealing with the pagans to be noticed, and that decreed that the lands which Julian had taken from the Christians and restored to the pagans were now to relapse into the hands of the State for the benefit of the Imperial Treasury. (a)

So a closer study of the facts shows that no charge of intolerance in legislation or act can be brought against Valentinian, though Libanius, differing

(a) Zos. IV, 3.

(b) Amm. Marc. XXVI, 3.

(c) Cod. Theod. X, I, 8.

from others, asserts that "at the instigation of some innovators, sacrifices were forbidden by the two brothers (Valentinian and Valens), but not incense". (a)

In the face of all the other evidence one cannot but think that this zealous philosopher was referring to the prohibition of nocturnal sacrifices and not to the absolute forbidding of all sacrifices.

Most of the religious legislation of this period dealt with abuses which had crept in to the church at various times. Christians were not to be forced to figure in gladiatorial shows. (b) The rights of sanctuary were restricted (c), and those who had become clergy to escape taxation and civic duties were to be deprived and made to accept their responsibilities. (d) Clergy engaged in commerce had to pay the requisite tax. (e)

In 370 a law was passed which merits special attention because it helps to illustrate the life of the Roman clergy during this period of transition.

- (a) Orat. pro Temp. (b) Cod. Theod. XIV, III, II.
- (c) Cod. Theod. XII, I, 9.
- (d) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 17,18,19.
- (e) Cod. Theod. XIII, I, 5.

It forbade the clergy, whether secular or monastic, to frequent the houses of virgins and widows and to receive bequests from such persons. (a)

The circumstances which called forth such a decree are vividly set forth in Mrs. Oliphant's "Makers of Modern Rome", where she quotes the following letter of St. Jerome :-

"What are these men? To those who see them pass they are more like bridegrooms than priests. Some among them devote their life and energy to the single object of knowing the names, the houses, the habits, the disposition, of all the ladies in Rome. I will sketch for you . . . the day's work of one of them . . . Our hero rises with the sun; he regulates the order of his visits, studies the shortest ways, and arrives before he is wanted, almost before his friends are awake. Temperance, modesty and fasting are his sworn enemies. He smells out a feast and loves savoury meats. He knows all the news, proclaims it in an authoritative tone, and is better informed than anyone else can be This man was born in the deepest poverty, brought up

(a) Cod. Theod. XVI, II, 20.

under the thatch of a peasant's cottage, with scarcely enough of black bread and millet to satisfy the cravings of his appetite; yet now he is fastidious and hard to please, disdaining honey and the finest flour. An expert in the science of table, he knows every kind of fish by name, and whence comes the best oysters . . . In another kind of vice he is not less remarkable; his mania is to lie in wait for old men and women without children. He besieges their beds, when they are ill, serves them in the most disgusting offices, more humble and servile than any nurse. When the doctor enters he trembles, asking with a faltering voice how the patient is, if there is any hope of saving him. If there is any hope, if the disease is cured, the priest disappears with regrets for his loss of time, cursing the wretched old man who insists on living to be as old as Methusalem" (a).

Ammianus adds more colour to this terrible picture with the following description of the vices of the Roman Church :- "The praefecture of Juventius was accompanied with peace and plenty, but the tranquillity

of his government was disturbed by a bloody sedition of the distracted people. The ardour of Damasus and Ursinus to seize the episcopal seat surpassed the ordinary measure of human ambition. They contended with the rage of party; the quarrel was maintained by the wounds and death of their followers; and the praefect, unable to resist or appease the tumult, was constrained by superior violence to retire into the suburbs. Damasus prevailed: the well-disputed victory remained on the side of his faction; one hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies were found in the Basilica of Sicininus, where the Christians hold their religious assemblies; and it was long before the angry minds of the people resumed their accustomed tranquillity. When I consider the splendour of the capital, I am not astonished that so valuable a prize should inflame the desires of ambitious men, and produce the fiercest and most obstinate contests. The successful candidate is secure that he will be enriched by the offerings of matrons; that, as soon as his dress is composed with becoming care and elegance, he may proceed in his chariot through the streets of Rome; and that the sumptuousness of the Imperial table will not equal the profuse and delicate entertainments

provided by the taste and at the expense of the Roman Pontiffs. How much more rationally would those pontiffs consult their true happiness, if, instead of alleging the greatness of the city as an excuse for their manners, they would imitate the exemplary life of some provincial bishops, whose temperance and sobriety, whose mean apparel and downcast looks, recommend their pure and modest virtue to the Deity and his true worshippers". (a) One need not ask if there existed any need for the issue of the laws which we have mentioned above. It seems as if the hand of Providence had given to the world an Emperor who was determined to do his best to stop the secularisation of the Church and the abuse of religious privileges, just at the time when the Church needed space for recuperation ready for the final conflict.

Whilst the Emperor of the West was pursuing this wise policy, his brother in the East had been gaining a reputation, justly or unjustly, as a persecutor. The character of the man, the freedom of the Statute Book from persecuting laws, and the silence of Valentinian, indicate that party hatred has distorted

(a) Ann. Marc. XXVII, 3.

history. For Valens was an Arian. There exists no justification of the charges of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret that he was guilty of arranging for the sinking of a ship containing eighty orthodox Ecclesiastics after they had complained of his treatment of Arians. (a) The only law of note that can be found in the Theodosian Code is one which orders the Count of the East to drag from seclusion those who had associated themselves with the monks of Egypt for the sake of shirking civil responsibilities. As an alternative they could renounce their temporal possessions. (b) According to Ammianus and Zosimus the persecution of the magicians was carried out with much more severity in the East than the West (c). Socrates asserts that, in consequence of a prophecy about the successor to the Empire, all the people called Theodorus, Theodosius, Theodotus, or Theodolus were killed (d), but chief among those who perished ranked Maximus of Ephesus, the most famous magician of the East.

(a) Soc. IV, 16; Soz. VI, 14; Theod. IV, 24.

(b) Cod. Theod. XII, 1, 63.

(c) Amm. XXIX, 1; Zos. IV, 13.

(d) Soc. IV, 15.

THE FINAL CONFLICT (375-395).

THE ALTAR OF VICTORY.

After the death of Valentinian in 375 Gratian became Emperor of the West, but according to Zosimus refused to accept the robe of Pontifex Maximus. "In taking possession of the temporal power the Emperors became Sovereign Pontiffs also. Constantine, even, though he renounced the true religion to profess the religion of the christians, and after him Valentinian and Valens, received this honour with gladness. But Gratian, having refused it and having surrendered the robe to the pontiffs, the chief of them said, "Since Gratian does not wish to be Pontiff, Maximus will". (a)

In 378 the new Emperor appointed Theodosius to fill the throne of the East, rendered vacant by the death of Valens. This event was celebrated by an edict promising freedom of worship to all, except diviners. (b) This led everyone to believe that there would be no desertion

(a) Zos. IV. 36.

(b) Soc. V, 2; Soz. VII, 1.

of the policy of toleration of the previous reigns. A change, however, began when the young Emperor came under the influence of St. Ambrose of Milan, who aroused in him an ardour for orthodoxy. Consequently, in 379 the recent grant of toleration was withdrawn and certain heresies, especially that of re-baptism, condemned. (a) This, however, only served as a prelude to the real stern struggle which was to prove the last great fight of Paganism for official recognition in the Roman Empire.

In 382 Gratian ordered the Altar of Victory, which Julian had replaced in its old place, to be again removed from the Senate House at Rome. (b) A deputation of Pagans, headed by Symmachus, was refused a hearing at the instigation of the Bishop of Milan. (c) This new attack on the outward symbol of the ancient religion heralded a more determined onslaught against the means which sustained its very life. For a law of Honorius, issued in 416, calls our attention to the real work of this time. "In accordance with the decrees of the Emperor Gratian we order that all properties which the error of pagans applied to sacred uses

(a) Cod. Theod. XVI, V, 5. (b) Sym. Ep. X, 54.

(c) Amb. Ep. XVII.

shall be added to our estate". (a) Further details must be withheld for a while until the examination of the literature on this subject after a later attempt to gain the restoration of the Altar. This was made after Gratian's death, to Valentinian II in 384 (b). St. Ambrose, fearing that the young ruler would yield to the eloquence of so renowned an orator as Symmachus addressed a threatening letter to his pupil from which the following extracts are made :

"Salvation is not sure unless everyone worship in truth the true God, that is the God of the Christians, under whose sway are all things".

"Everyone is a soldier of this true God and he who receives and worships Him . . . at least ought not to give any countenance to the worship of idols and profane ceremonies".

"Since then, most Christians Emperor, there is due from you to the true God, both faith and zeal, care and devotion for the faith, I wonder how the hope has arisen up to some, that you would feel it a duty to restore by your command altars to the gods of the heathen and to furnish the funds requisite for profane

sacrifices; for whatsoever has long been claimed by either the imperial or the city treasury you will seem rather to give from your own funds, than to be restoring what is theirs".

They complain about their losses who never spared our blood, who destroyed the very buildings of the churches. They petition for privileges who by the last law of Julian denied us the common right of speaking and teaching . . . Since these things (the altar, etc.) have been forbidden . . . and were abolished at Rome by Gratian . . . , do not, I pray you, either pluck up what has been established in accordance with the faith, nor rescind your brother's. In civil matters, if he established anything, no one thinks that it ought to be treated lightly, while a precept about religion is trodden under foot".

"If to-day any heathen emperor should build an altar, which God forbid, to idols and compel Christians to come together thither, in order to be amongst those who were sacrificing, so that the smoke . . . might choke their breath and throats of the faithful, and should give judgments in that court where members were compelled to

vote after swearing at the altar of an idol (for they explain that an altar is so placed for this purpose, that every assembly should deliberate under its sanction, as they suppose, though the Senate is now made up with a majority of Christians). A Christian who was compelled with such a choice as this to come to the Senate would consider it to be persecution, which often happens, for they are compelled to come together even by violence. Are these Christians, when you are emperor, compelled to swear at a heathen altar? When you are emperor, this is sought and demanded that you should command an altar to be built and the cost of profane sacrifices to be granted".

"But this cannot be decreed without sacrilege, wherefore I implore you not to decree or order it, nor to sign any decrees of that sort"

"But far be it from the Senate to have petitioned this, a few heathen are making use of the common name. For nearly two years ago, when the same attempt was being made, Damasus . . . sent me a memorial, which the senators in great numbers put forth, protesting that they had given no such authority, that they did not agree with such requests of the heathen, nor give consent

to them, and they declared publicly and privately that they would not come to the Senate, if any such were decreed".

"Let a copy of the memorial, which has been sent, be given to me that I may answer more fully".

"Certainly is anything else is decreed, we bishops cannot contentedly suffer it and take no notice; you indeed may come to church, but will find either no priest, or one who will resist you".

"What will you answer a priest who says to you :-
 'The Church does not seek your gifts, because you have adorned the heathen temple with gifts. The Altar of Christ rejects your offerings, because you have made an altar for idols . . . The Lord Jesus rejects your service because you have served idols? . . . The Virgins consecrated to God have no privileges from you and do the Vestal virgins claim them?"

"What will you answer your brother? Will he not say to you? - 'I did not feel that I was overcome, because I left you as Emperor; I did not grieve at dying because I had you as my heir; I did not mourn at leaving my imperial command because I expected that my decrees, especially those concerning divine religion,

would endure through all ages. I had set up this memorial of piety and virtue. I offered up these spoils gained from the world, these trophies of victory over the devil, these I offered up as gained from the enemy of all and in them is eternal victory. What more could my enemy take away from me? You have abrogated my decrees which so far he who took up arms against me did not do. Now do I receive a more terrible wound in that my decrees are condemned by my brother. My better part is endangered by you: that was the death of my body, this my reputation. Now is my power annulled and what is harder, annulled by my own family". . . .

"What will you answer your father also?" . . .

This letter attained its object; the petition was refused and the memorial of Symmachus sent to St. Ambrose.

First it must be noticed that, in spite of the assertion of Ambrose, Symmachus claimed to represent the will of the Senate and people of Rome. "As soon as the most honourable Senate, always devoted to you, knew that crimes were made amenable to law, and that the reputation of late times was being purified by pious

princes, it, following the example of a more favourable time, gave utterance to its long suppressed grief and bade me be once again the delegate to utter its complaints". . .

"In the exercise of a two-fold office, as your Prefect I attend to public business, and as delegate I recommend to your notice the change laid on me by the citizens".

Ambrose argues that the majority of the Senate were Christian and that a few heathens were making use of the common name. His eagerness, to meet the possible objection of why did they permit the petition, seems almost to imply that they were not a majority. For he says that by not being present they sufficiently said what they wished. Two points are worthy of notice. Why did ^{not} the Christian Senators bring forward some more definite statement of their power in the Assembly, and why did they not go to more trouble to show that the petition could only be regarded as the work of a minority?

According to the Bishop of Milan the memorial contained three main arguments. Rome demands her ancient rites again. Her priests and Vestal virgins should still be paid by the Treasury. A general

famine followed the withdrawal of the priests' stipends.

The first was stated in the following way:-

"We demand the restoration of that condition of religious affairs which was so long advantageous to the state.

Let the rulers of each sect and each opinion be counted up; a late one (Julian) practised the ceremonies of his ancestors; a later (Val.I) did not put them away. If the religion of old times does not make a precedent, let the connivance of the last do so".

"Who is so friendly with the barbarians as not to require an altar of Victory? Your fame, which will last for ever, owes much and will owe more to victory. Let those be adverse to this power whom it has never benefitted. Refuse to desert a patronage friendly to your triumphs! . . . Now if a long period gives authority to religious customs, we ought to keep faith with so many centuries and to follow our ancestors, as they happily followed theirs".

"Let us now suppose that Rome is present and addresses you in these words : 'Excellent Princes, fathers of your country, respect my years to which pious rites have brought me. Let me use the ancestral

ceremonies, for I do not repent of them. Let me live after my own fashion, for I am free. This worship subdued the world to my laws, these sacred rites repelled Hannibal from the walls and the Senones from the Capitol. Have I been reserved for this, that in my old age I should be blamed? I will consider what it is thought should be set in order, but tardy and discreditable is the reformation of old age".

"We ask, then, for peace for the gods of our fathers and our country".

In his attempt to prove that the Emperor should not grant this request the Bishop replies to this defence in detail and points out that though "these sacred rites repulsed Hannibal from the walls and the Senones from the Capitol", this cannot be taken as a proof of their strength, for "while the gods were fighting against him, he arrived a conqueror at the very walls of the city. Why did they suffer themselves to be besieged, for whom their gods were fighting in arms? And why should I say anything of the Senones, whose entrance into the inmost Capitol the remnant of the Romans could not have prevented, had not a goose by its frightened cackling betrayed them?

See what sort of protection the Roman temples have.
Where was Jupiter at the time? Was he speaking in the
goose?"

"But why should I deny that their sacred rites
fought for the Romans? For Hannibal also worshipped
the same gods. Let them choose then which they will.
If these sacred rites conquered in the Romans, then they
were overcome in the Carthaginians; if they triumphed in
the Carthaginians, they certainly did not benefit the
Romans".

"Let, then, that invidious complaint of the
Roman people come to an end. Rome has given no such
charge".

Here the pagan's appeal to conservatism, put
into the mouth of Rome, is answered in a similar way by a
statement of progressive development which it would be
difficult to improve.

"She speaks with other words : "Why do you
daily stain me with the useless blood of the harmless
herd? Trophies of victory depend not on the entrails
of flocks, but on the strength of those who fight. I
subdued the world by a different discipline (then he
enumerates examples of how valour had won victories for

the Empire and not the gods and how prophecies of victories had proved false). "I mourn over my downfall, my old age is tinged with that shameful bloodshed. I do not blush to be converted with the whole world in my old age. It is undoubtedly true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age blush which cannot amend itself. Not the old age of years is worthy of praise, but the old age of character. There is no shame in passing to better things. This alone was common to me with the barbarians, that of old I knew not God. Your sacrifice is a rite of being sprinkled with the blood of beasts. Why do you seek the voice of God in dead animals? Come and learn on earth the heavenly warfare; we live here, but our warfare is there. Let God Himself, who made me, teach me the mystery of heaven, not man who knew not himself. Whom rather than God should I believe concerning God? How can I believe you who confess that you know not what you worship?"

Secondly, the payment of the Vestal Virgins and priests is sought in the following terms :-

"With what advantage to your treasury are the prerogatives of the Vestal Virgins diminished? Is that refused under the most bountiful of emperors which

the most parsimonious have granted? Their sole honour consists in that, so to call it, wage of chastity. As fillets are the ornament of their heads, so is their distinction drawn from their leisure to attend to the offices of sacrifice. They seek for, in a measure, the empty name of immunity, since by their poverty they are exempt from payment. And so they who diminish anything of their substance increase their praise, inasmuch as virginity dedicated to the public good increases in merit when it is without reward!

"Let such gains as these be far from the purity of your treasury. Let the revenue of good princes be increased not by the losses of priests, but by the spoils of enemies. Does any gain compensate for the odium?"

"The treasury also retains lands bequeathed to virgins and ministers by the will of dying persons. I entreat you, priests of justice, let the lost right of succession be restored to the sacred persons and places of your city only noble virgins and ministers of sacred rites are excluded from property sought by inheritance".

The reply of the Bishop of Milan consisted mainly of a comparison between the Vestal Virgins and the Church Virgins. Referring to the plea - 'Let the Vestal Virgins retain their privileges' - he wrote : "Let those speak thus who are unable to believe that virginity can exist without reward, let those, who do not trust virtue, encourage by gain. See the whole number whom the fillets and chaplets for the head, the dye of the purple robes, the pomp of the litter surrounded by a company of attendants, the greatest privileges, immense profits, and a prescribed time of virginity, have gathered together. (Then follows the comparison) The first victory of chastity is to conquer the desire for wealth Let us, however, lay down that bountiful provision should be granted to virgins. What an amount will overflow to christians! What treasury will supply such riches".

"They complain also that public support is not considered due to their priests and ministers. But on the other hand even the inheritance of private property is denied us by recent laws and no one complains"

"Wills are written on behalf of ministers of the temples, no profane person is excepted . . the clergy

alone are excluded from the common right"

"No one, however, has denied gifts to the shrines and legacies to the soothsayers, their land alone has been taken away, because they did not use religiously that which they claimed in the right of religion The possessions of the Church are the maintenance of the poor. Let them count up how many captives the temples have ransomed, what food they have contributed for the poor, to what exiles they have supplied the means of living. Their lands then have been taken away not their rights".

The third reason brought forward was the general famine of the previous year. "A general famine followed this (the removal of privileges, etc. from the virgins and priests) and a poor harvest disappointed the hopes of all the provinces. . . . The year failed through sacrilege, for it was necessary that what was refused to religion should be denied to all"

The following arguments occupy the chief position in the reply :-

"But let it be that they suppose that the injuries done to their gods were arranged in the past

year. Why have they been unnoticed in the present year?"

"Who, then, is so unused to human matters as to be astonished at the differences of years? And yet even last year we know that many provinces abounded in produce. What shall I say of the Gauls who were more productive than usual? The Pannonians sold corn which they had not sown. . . . So then the former year did not wither because of sacrilege and the latter flourished with the fruit of faith".

Having now satisfactorily answered all the main questions the Christian comes to what he calls "the last and most important point":- "Whether you ought, O Emperor, to restore those helps which have profited you, for he says, "Let them (i.e. the Gods) defend you and be worshipped by us". Here St. Ambrose certainly attains the height of his eloquence in a magnificent and somewhat passionate statement of the law of progress worthy of quotation and study, because it shows the nobility of thought of which Christianity was capable and consequently helps to explain the conversion of eminent pagan scholars.

In answer to the demand above mentioned the reply runs :- "This it is, most faithful princes, which we cannot endure, that they should taunt us as they supplicate their gods in your names, and without your commands, commit an immense sacrilege, interpreting your shutting your eyes as consent. Let them have their guardians to themselves; let these, if they can, protect their worshippers. For if they are not able to help those by whom they are worshipped, how can they protect those by whom they are not worshipped?"

"But, he says, the rites of our ancestors ought to be retained. But, what, seeing that all things have made progress towards what is better? The world itself, which was at first compacted of the germs of the elements throughout the void, in a yielding sphere, or was dark with the shapeless confusion of the work as yet without order, did it not afterwards receive (the distinction between sky, sea and earth being established), the forms of things whereby it appears beautiful? The lands freed from the misty darkness wondered at the new sun. The day does not shine in the beginning, but as time proceeds, it is bright with the increase of light, and grows warm with the increase of heat".

"The moon, herself, when first rising again, waxes to her monthly age, is hidden from us in darkness, and filling up her horns little by little, so completing them opposite to the sun, glows with the brightness of clear shining".

"The earth was, in former times, without the experience of being worked for fruits; afterwards when the careful husbandman began to lord it over the fields and to clothe the shapeless soil with vines, it put off its wild disposition being softened with domestic cultivation".

"The first age of the year itself, which has tinged us with a likeness to itself as things begin to grow, as it goes on becomes springlike with flowers soon about to fall and grows up to full age in fruits at the end".

"We, too, inexperienced in age, have an infancy of our senses, but changing as years go on, lay aside the rudiments of our faculties".

"Let them say, then, that all things ought to have remained in their first beginnings, that the world covered with darkness is now displeasing, because it has brightened with the shining of the sun. And how much

more pleasant is it to have dispelled the darkness of the mind than that of the body, and that the ray of faith should have shone, than that of the sun. So, then, the primeval state of the world as of all things has passed away, that the venerable old age of hoary faith might follow. Let these whom this touches find fault with the harvest because its abundance comes late; let them find fault with the vintage, because it is at the close of the year; let them find fault with the olive, because it is the latest of fruits!

"So, then, our harvest is the faith of our souls; the grace of the church is the vintage of merits, which from the beginning of the world flourished in the Saints, but in its last age has spread itself over the people that all might notice that the faith of Christ has entered minds which were not rude; but the opinion being exploded which before prevailed, that which was true is rightly preferred".

In conclusion, an answer is supplied to the questions - "where shall we swear to obey your laws and commands? By what religious sanction shall the false mind be terrified, so as not to lie in bearing witness?"

It is as follows :- "Does then your mind, which is contained in the laws, gain assent and bind to faithfulness by heathen ceremonies? The faith is attacked, not only of those who are present, but of those who are absent, and what is more, O Emperors, your faith, too, is attacked, for you compel if you command. Constantius, of August memory though not yet initiated in the sacred mysteries, thought that he would be polluted if he saw the altar. He commanded it to be removed, he did not command it to be replaced. The removal has the authority of an act; the restoration has not that of a command".

By these means St. Ambrose succeeded in preventing the restoration of the Altar, and in a section, which has purposely omitted in order to receive separate treatment, he seems to point straight to the real motive of the appeal. "We glory in yielding our blood, an expense moves them. We consider these things in the place of victories, they think them loss. Never did they confer on us greater benefits then when they ordered Christians to be beaten, proscribed, and slain. Religion made a reward of what unbelief thought to be a

punishment. See their greatness of soul! We have increased through loss, through want, through punishment; they do not believe that their rites can continue without contribution".

From this, and from what has been quoted concerning the Virgins and priests, it will be seen that Symmachus really resented the final disestablishment and disendowment of Paganism. He practically admitted that it could not compete with Christianity unless it received material aid from the State. It needed the glories of a magnificent ritual; it needed the prestige of being the Established Religion. If robbed of such support, its doom was sounded.

Other attempts to gain this restoration of the Altar were made in 389. In describing these St. Ambrose wrote :- "I openly addressed myself to the most gracious Emperor Theodosius and hesitated not to speak to him face to face. He, having received a similar intimation from the Senate, although it was not the whole Senate who asked it, at length gave his consent to my suggestion".

"Once more an embassy was sent from the Senate to the Emperor Valentinian of blessed memory, when he was in Gaul, but was able to extort nothing from him.

At that time I was absent and had written nothing to him". (a)

After the murder of Valentinian in 392, at the instigation of the pagan Abrogastes, Eugenius, who, if not a pagan himself, was the tool of pagans and "by no means sincere in his professions of christianity" (b), was placed on the throne. It was to this man that Ambrose sent the letter(57) from which the last quotations have been taken. His reason for so doing is best given in his own words: "But when your Majesty assumed the reins of government it was found that this boon had been granted to men of eminence in the state, but in religion, heathens. And perhaps, it may be said, your Majesty, that it is not a restitution to temples on your part, but a boon to men who have deserved well of you. But the fear of God ought, you know, to lead us to act with constancy, as is done in the cause of liberty not only by priests, but by those who serve in your armies or are reckoned among the provincials. Envoys petitioned you, O Emperor, for restitution to the temples, but you consented not; others again required it, but you resisted; yet subsequently you have thought

(a) Amb. Ep. 57.

(b) Soz. VII, 22.

fit to grant it as a boon to the petitioners themselves".

"The Imperial power is indeed great, but let your Majesty consider the greatness of God. Although they urged their suit with such perseverance, ought not your Majesty from respect for the most high and true and living God, to have resisted still more perseveringly, and to have refused what was derogatory to the Divine Law?"

"Who grudges you bestowing on others whatsoever you please? We do not pry closely into your munificence, nor are we jealous of the advantage of others; but we are ministers of the Faith. How will you offer your gifts to Christ?"

Thus the Altar was restored to its place and property given back to the temples for a short time until, as will be seen later, Theodosius invaded Italy to overthrow the usurper and undo his work.

THEODOSIUS.

Meanwhile it will be necessary to go back a few years to trace the course of events in the eastern part of the Empire after the death of Valens. Gratian made Theodosius Emperor of the east. The aim of this man, who, perhaps, did more than any one else to strike the final blow at Paganism, is best stated in the words of one of his laws :- "That the name of the one and supreme God should be celebrated in all parts". (a) The statute book contains convincing evidence of his determination to wipe out heresy and permit only the Catholic form of worship. (b)

His campaign against the old religions, with which we are here concerned, was pursued in a cool, deliberate, systematic way. In 381 sacrifices for divination, whether performed by day or night, were forbidden, because it "is necessary to honour God by suitable prayers and not to outrage him by sacrilegious

(a) Cod. Theod. XVI, V, 6. (b) Cod. Theod. XVI tit V.

practices". (a) This was followed four years later by still more stringent legislation (b), and in 391 two laws are found, one by Valentinian II, prohibiting the use of temples and the adoration of statues. (c) In the following year Theodosius issued a law which sounded the death-knell of Paganism. (d)

"Let no one at all, irrespective of class, order of men or rank, notwithstanding his position of power and the office he holds, whether he be powerful by chance of good birth, or humble in rank, circumstances and fortune, in any possible place, in any city, let no man either slay an innocent victim in honour of images totally devoid of sense, or by any secret propitiation sacrifice, showing his respect to the hearth-god by fire, the guardian deity by wine, the household gods with fumes, nor let him kindle lights, pile on incense, or hang up garlands".

But if any one shall dare to slay a victim with the intention of sacrificing it, or to consult smoking entrails, let him be charged as a man is when

- (a) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 7. (b) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 9.
 (c) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 10 & 11.
 (d) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 12.

accused of treason, and everyone has freedom to accuse; let him receive a suitable sentence, even though no enquiries shall have been made by him either contrary to the safety of the Emperor or even about it. For it is sufficient to constitute a crime that a man should wish to abrogate the laws of nature herself, to make unlawful enquiries, to disclose secrets, to attempt what is forbidden, to seek an end of another's safety, to promise hopes of another's death. Anyone who honours images with incense, or by hanging fillets on trees, or raising altars of turf, must surrender the places where he practised these heathenish superstitions. For all places in which it shall be known that incense has arisen - if they belong to the incense-burners - we decree, must be surrendered to the Imperial Treasury. But if, on the other hand, any one shall attempt to perform this kind of sacrifice in temples, public shrines, houses or fields belonging to someone else, and if he be known to have done without the knowledge of the owner, the owner shall be fined 25 pounds of gold; but if the owner be a conniver of the fact he shall suffer the same penalty as the sacrificer. We wish the judges and defenders and also the citizens of various cities to regard the law in this

way that the information gained by the latter may be used, and things reported through the former be brought to light. But if these men think that something is to be concealed for the sake of their own popularity, or passed over by their carelessness, they will yield themselves to the law. But should they, after the warning that has been given, defer punishment by some pretence, they shall be fined 30 pounds of gold and be degraded in office".

Some months later, Theodosius went to Italy and, after a doubtful battle, succeeded in driving out Eugenius and making himself unchallenged ruler of the whole Empire (September, 394). (a)

Subsequent to this victory a meeting is supposed to have taken place between the Emperor and the Senate to discuss the question of the settlement of religion. The accounts of what happened are very differently reported by the Christian Prudentius (b) and the Pagan, Zosimus. The former suggests that the Senators voted in favour of christianity. Such an action we have seen to be unlikely and further, it is

(a) Theod. V, 24.

(b) Prudent. Contra. Sym. I, 545 sqq.

extremely doubtful if the Emperor would trust such an issue to the vote of a body about which he could not feel certain. The other view sounds much more probable :-^(a)

"Having called the Senate which still adhered to the religion of their fathers and which had never joined itself to those who despised the gods, he (Theodosius) made a discourse for them to give up their error, as he called it, and embrace the Christian religion, by which men are washed clean from all their sins and freed from all their crimes. No one being moved by his persuasion and no one wishing to prefer a new establishment to a cult which was as old as the city and which had flourished for twelve hundred years, in order to take up another of which one did not know the fruit, he said that the public was charged with the expenses of sacrifices which he did not wish to make an expense, the subject of which he did not approve, and the funds which it took were necessary to him for war. The Senate replied that the sacrifices could not be kept with the former splendour unless the cost was publicly defrayed. But, in spite of this, they were abolished and all the ancient traditions neglected, which was the cause of the decadence of

(a) Zos. IV, 59.

the Empire, of the invasion of the barbarians, of the desolation of the provinces, of the change over the face of the Empire so deplorable that one could now only recognise the site of a formerly celebrated town".

Knowing well the difficulty of enforcing his laws, Theodosius had sent Cynegius on an expedition to the East in 386 or 387, with orders to close effectually all the temples. Tribute to the thoroughness of this man's work is paid by Pagan and Christian alike. (a) "When he (Theodosius)", writes Zosimus, "sent Cynegius to Egypt with orders to shut the temples and forbid the exercises of religion, he commanded him to erect a statue of Maximus in Alexandria and proclaim him Emperor before all the people. Cynegius executed faithfully the orders which he received, closed the temples of Alexandria and Egypt and the East, forbade sacrifices and all the cult of the religion of our fathers".

The difficult problem of what to do with the temples, which had been closed, now came up for settlement. Some attempts were made to preserve the temples as works of art (b), but many of them were destroyed at

(a) Zos. IV, 37; Lib. Orat. pro. temp; Theod. V, 21.

(b) Cod. Theod. XVI, X, 8, 15-18.

the hands of "zealous" Christians. These actions called forth an Oration on behalf of the Temples from Libanius, who writes :- "I shall, indeed, appear to many to undertake a matter full of danger in pleading with you for the temples, that they may suffer no injury as they now do" . . .

"In the city next to the greatest there are still some temples though they are deprived of their honours; a few, indeed, out of many, but yet it is not quite destitute". (Then follows a short review of the history of the temples since Constantine).

"But these black-garbed people (the monks) who eat more than elephants and demand a large quantity of liquor from the people who send them drink for their chantings, but who hide their luxury by their pale artificial countenances, - these men, O Emperor, even whilst your law is in force, run to the temples, bringing with them wood and stone and iron, and when they have not these, hands and feet. Then follows a Mysian prey, the roofs are uncovered, walls are pulled down, images are carried away and altars are overturned; the priests all the while must be silent on pain of death. When they have destroyed one temple they run to another and

a third and trophies are erected upon trophies: which are all contrary to your law. This is the practice in cities, but especially in the country. And there are many enemies everywhere. After innumerable mischiefs have been done, the scattered multitude unites and comes together and they require of each other an account of what they have done; and he is ashamed who cannot tell of some great injury of which he has been guilty. They therefore spread themselves over the country like torrents, wasting the land together with the temples; for wherever they demolish the temple of a country, at the same time the country itself is blinded, declines and dies. For, O Emperor, the temples are the soul of the country; they have been the first original buildings on the land, and they have subsisted for many ages to this time; and in them are all the husbandmen's hopes, concerning the men and women and children and oxen and the seeds and the plants of the ground; . . . for the husbandmen suppose they shall labour in vain, when they are deprived of the gods who should bless their labours, and the country not being cultivated as usual the tribute is diminished" . . .

"Of such mischievous consequence are the arbitrary proceedings of those persons in the country who

say 'they fight with the temples'".

"But that war is the gain of those who oppress the inhabitants: and robbing these miserable people of their goods, and what they have laid up of the fruits of the earth for their sustenance, they go off as with spoils of those whom they have conquered. Nor are they satisfied with this, for they also seize the lands of some, saying it is sacred, and many are deprived of their paternal inheritance upon a false pretence. Thus these men run riot upon other people's misfortunes, who say they worship God with fasting. And if they who are abused come to the pastor of the city (for so they call a man who is not one of the meekest), complaining of the injustice that has been done them, this pastor commends these, but rejects the others, as if they ought to think themselves happy they have suffered no more!

"Although, O Emperor, these also are your subjects, and so much more profitable than those who injure them as laborious men are than idle: for they are like bees, these like drones. Moreover, if they hear of any land which has anything that can be plundered they say presently : 'Such an one sacrificeth and does abominable things and an army ought to be sent against

him'. And presently the reformers are there: for this is the name they call their depredations, if I have not used too soft a word. Some of these strive to conceal themselves and deny their proceedings; and if you call them robbers you affront them. Others glory and boast. . . How is it, then, that some under your government disturb others under your government and permit them not to enjoy the common benefit of it?"

"But, they say : 'We have only punished those who sacrifice and thereby transgress the law, which forbids sacrifice'. O Emperor, when they say this, they lie. For no one is so audacious, and so ignorant of the proceedings of the courts, as to think himself more powerful than the law. When I say the law, I mean the law against sacrifices. Can it be thought, that they who are not able to bear the sight of a collector's cloak should despise the power of your government?"

"This is what they say for themselves and they have been often alleged to Flavian himself and never have been confuted, no, not yet. For I appeal to the guardians of the law: Who has known any of those whom you have plundered to have sacrificed upon the altars,

so as the law does not permit? What young or old person, what man, what woman? Who of those inhabiting the same country, and not agreeing with the sacrifices in the worship of the gods? Who of their neighbours? For envy and jealousy are common among neighbours When then is the truth of these charges when they accuse men of sacrificing against the law?"

"But this shall not suffice as an excuse to the Emperor. Someone therefore may say: 'They have not sacrificed. Let it be granted. But oxen have been killed at feasts and entertainments and merry meetings'. Still is no altar to receive the blood, nor a part burned, nor do salt cakes precede, nor libations follow. But if some persons meeting together in some pleasant field kill a calf, or a sheep, or both, and roasting part and broiling the rest, have eaten it under a shade upon the ground, I do not know that they have acted contrary to the laws. For neither have you, O Emperor, forbidden these things by your law; but mentioning one thing that ought not to be done, you have permitted everything else. So that though they should have feasted together with all sorts of incense, they have not transgressed the law, even though in the feast they should all have sung and invoked the gods. Unless you think it fit to accuse even their

private method of eating, by which it has been customary for the inhabitants of several places in the country to assemble together in those places which are the more considerable on holidays, and having sacrificed to feast together. This they did while the law permitted them. Since that, the liberty has continued for all the rest except sacrificing. When, therefore, a festival day invites them, they accept the invitation and with those things that might be done without offence or danger, they have honoured both the day and the place. But that they have offered sacrifice, no one has said, nor heard, nor proved, nor been credited, nor have any of their enemies pretended to affirm it upon the ground of his own sight, nor any credible account he has received of it".

"They will further say :- 'By this means some have been converted and brought to embrace the same religious sentiments with themselves'. Be not deceived by what they say; they only pretend it, but are not convinced: for they are adverse to nothing more than this, though they say the contrary. For the truth is, they have not changed the objects of their worship, but only appear to have done so. But what advantage have they by this, when the profession only is the same with

theirs, but a real agreement is lacking? For these are things to which many ought to be persuaded, not compelled. It is said that this is not permitted by their own laws, which commend persuasion and condemn compulsion. Why then do you run mad against the temples? When you can persuade you use force. In this you evidently transgress your own laws!

"But they say :- 'It is for the good of the world and the men in it, that there should be no temples'. Here, O Emperor, I need freedom of speech. Let any one of them tell me what rites the Romans followed, who arose from small and mean beginnings and went on prevailing and growing great; theirs, or these, whose are the temples and the altars from whom they knew by the soothsayers, what they ought to do, or not to do?"

"But what is the most considerable of all, they who seemed to despise this way of worship have honoured it against their will. Who are they? They who have not ventured to forbid sacrifices in Rome. But if all this affair of sacrifices be a vain thing, why has not this vain thing been prohibited? And if it be hurtful likewise, why not much more? But if in the sacrifices there performed consists the stability of the Empire, it

ought to be reckoned beneficial to sacrifice everywhere.... But neither is it in the city of Rome alone that the liberty of sacrifice remains, but also in the city of Serapis, the great popular city which has a multitude of temples, by which it renders the plenty of Egypt common to all men".

Later in the same oration he endeavours to obtain his request by trying to show the financial gain that might accrue from the taxation of temples :-
 "But I think tribute to be of importance to the treasury. Do we think it a cruel thing to cut off a man's hand, and a small matter to pluck out the eyes of cities? Are not the temples the possession of the Emperors as well as other things? Is it the part of wise men to sink their own goods? . . What reason is there for destroying that, the use of which may be charged?".

Referring to the destruction of some temple he continues :- "Nevertheless, if it be rightly considered, this work is not yours, but the work of a man who deceived you (Cynegius) - a profane wretch, an enemy of the gods - a slave to his wife gratifying her in everything, and esteeming her all things, in perfect

subjection to them (the monks) who direct these things, whose only virtue lies in wearing the habit of mourning. This workhouse (monastery) deluded, imposed upon him, misled him; for they gave out 'that the priests sacrificed and so near them that the smoke reached their noses'".

The truth of these accounts of the fury of the monks is fully attested by the statements of the Christian authors of the fourth and fifth centuries. (a)

Theodoret gives detailed narratives of the support given to Cynegius in the East, describing how Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea, began the work in his city and concludes the narrative of the destruction of the shrine of Jupiter with the statement :- "Others shrines were destroyed in like manner" (b). In his next chapter he gives exact details of the way in which Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, treated the idols during the destruction of the Temple of Serapis which Libanius had thought secure.

Sulpicius Severus (in his Life of St. Martin) furnishes us with many examples of similar incidents in the West. "Martin", he writes, "has just destroyed

(a) Soz. VII, 15; Soc. V, 16; Jerome Ep. 107, Augustine Ep. 50; Theod. V, 21-24.

(b) Theod. V. 21.

in a town a very ancient temple and attacks a sacred pine near by". Such notices appear frequently throughout the work. (a)

Before analysing the evidence given above there yet remains to be stated one more attack on the monks and Christianity by a pagan writer. This is the poem of Rutilius Claudius Namatianus describing his return to Rome in 416 after a lengthy exile in Gaul :-

"Now as we move Capraria lifts itself
 Out of the sea; squalid the isle and filled
 With men who shun the light; they dub themselves
 'Monks' with a Grecian name; because they wish
 To dwell alone, observed by none. They dread
 The gifts of fortune, while her ills they fear
 Who to shirk pain would choose a life of pain?
 What madness of a brain diseased so fond
 As, fearing evil, to refuse all good,
 Whether as convicts for their evil deeds
 They claim the punishments that are their due,
 Or with black bile their gloomy hearts are swollen,
 Thus to the malady of too much bile

(a) Sulp. Sev. Vita Mart. V, 13, 14, 15, etc.

Did Homer trace Bellerophon's despairs
 Mankind mere hateful to the outraged youth
 After his cruel sorrows wound". (a)

Another passage from the same poem is of great importance, for it reveals the position of the city of Rome with regard to Paganism :-

"Hear, loviest Queen of all the world, thy world
 O Rome, translated to the starry skies!
 Hear, Mother of men and Mother of the Gods!
 We, through thy temples, dwell not far from heaven.
 Thee sing we, and, long as Fate allows, will sing;
 None can forget thee while he lives and breathes.

 Thy glittering temples daze the wandering eyes;
 I could believe the Gods themselves so housed". (b)

A close examination of the fairly full account of the Oration of Libanius, with the help of the other quotations given above, will show the order of events in the last few years of the reign of Theodosius. The

(a) Keene's translation, I 439-452.

(b) I, 43-48; 95 and 96.

pagans had interpreted the early laws against sacrifices as only forbidding the sacrifice of victims on the public altars, especially when the oblation was for the purpose of divination. So they continued to pay all the other honours to the gods in the usual way. They met in the open air to keep their festivals and carried out all the rites they possibly dared, e.g. the offering of incense. In those districts where they found themselves strong enough they continued to practise the ancient cult in its fullness. Consequently Theodosius was forced to issue the edict of 392, which gave no possible opportunity of evasion. This, however, only applied to the East, for at that time the pagans had regained full liberty in the West under Eugenius.

Theodosius succeeded in over-throwing the usurper and in making himself ruler of the West as well. He, then, began to enforce his edicts throughout the whole Roman World. But it is quite evident, from what we have seen above and from the evidence collected by M. Beugnot (a), that the extent to which these laws were carried out depended greatly on the religion of the people of the district, and the attitude of the local

(a) *La Destruction du Paganisme.*

praefect or governor. In those parts where monasticism was strong, such as Egypt and around Tours, the remains of heathen worship would quickly disappear; in those where the pagans still had a formidable following, such as Rome and parts of Gaul, and the governor was either sympathetic or indifferent, the sacrifices would still be offered to the ancient gods. Furthermore, it should be remembered that freedom of speech and writing was not curtailed. This accounts for the fairly large number of pagan works which have endured in spite of the destruction of manuscripts by the monks and later, in the East, by the Turks.

However, most of the pagan writers agree in attributing the decay of the ancient religion, not so much to the laws against sacrifices as to the withdrawal of state aid. This formed the essential part of the memorial of Symmachus; and Zosimus complained bitterly that after having triumphed over the tyranny of Eugenius, Theodosius the Elder came to stir up all the citizens against holy things and to take away the endowment given by the public to pay for the sacrifices. The priests were turned out and the temples fell to ruins

deprived of sacrifices (a). Even if the removal of this financial support made it necessary to do away with priests and vestal virgins and the ritual accompanying sacrifices, it would not prevent the invocation of the ancient gods and the endurance of former beliefs. Then the death of Theodosius in 395 left the Empire to two incapable youths destined to see both church and Empire enter on an epoch of gloom, depravity, and peril.

(a) Zos. V, 38.

CONCLUSION.

We have now traced the history of the church in its relation with the State and Paganism during the Fourth Century. There yet remains the task of enumerating the results of this era of conflict.

In the early days of its expansion Christianity had founded a local church in each city. As it grew, certain cities stood out prominent - the leaders in ecclesiastical affairs. The local bodies were gradually united into a great society which compelled the official interference of the Emperor. This interference first came in the form of persecution. Later Constantine, brought up a monotheist, began to dream of using this society as a nucleus for a Monotheistic Church, which was to be the Church of the Empire and to include all, heathen or Christian, who worshipped the 'One Supreme God'. When he found that this was doomed to failure, he determined to make Christianity the official religion of the State, though for a time the idea of a national

religion was destroyed by the issue of the Edict of Milan.

This determination to establish Christianity made it expedient, if not absolutely necessary, to get unity inside the Church. The Donatists and the Arians drew the Emperor into theological disputes and forced him to side with some division for the sake of peace. The rapid change in its position and the apparent desire of the prince to support the Orthodox party against heretics, led the Church to permit imperial interference in a way which otherwise it would never have allowed. So Constantine, though unbaptized, summoned councils to prevent the evil of schism and heresy from becoming irreparable. At the same time he created an instrument, of which he had great need, by giving to these Ecclesiastical Parliaments, convened to discuss controversial points, the authority of State institutions whose decisions would have the force of law. So in her desire to suppress internal dissensions the Church surrendered her freedom. The extent to which this state Orthodoxy had been established was soon revealed when an Arian Emperor changed the official religion on

his accession.

This nationalization of Christianity (if such a term can be used) led to the 'conversion' of a large number of place-seekers and a consequent lowering of the spiritual and moral standard. (a) Some merely exchanged the symbols of Serapis for those of the Cross. (b) Eusebius mentions the 'unspeakable' hypocrisy of such converts. (c) These men brought their old ideas into the Church and an attempt was made, though unconsciously, to incorporate many of their customs and doctrines. It was this that caused Bishop Westcott to write :- "The world got into the Church in the fourth Century and we have never since been able to get it out". Many of the clergy, especially those at Rome, became so engrossed in worldly affairs and riches that they forgot their true mission and called forth rebukes from Pagan and Christian alike.

This decline in the general standard of morality among believers, which according to St. Augustine prevented many pagans from deserting their old religion,

(a) Soc. V, 16.

(b) Theod. IV, 15.

(c) Eus. V. c. IV, 54.

brought about the adoption of celibacy by the clergy, first as an ideal and later as a rule. But, though the Church lowered her early standard, the world gained much from the leavening influence of her teaching which was superior to that of the old cults. Its effect was soon apparent in the more humane tone of Roman Law.

A second, and perhaps, a far worse, result of the Establishment of Christianity was the desertion of the policy of toleration for that of persecution. This change began with the issue of the laws against Donatists by Constantine. Probably, however, the first definite statement of the doctrine of forcible conversion is found in the work of Firmicus Maternus, 'De errore Profanorum Religionum'. Böllinger shows that St. Augustine must be regarded as the most influential advocate of this doctrine. This confessor gives as his reason for deserting tolerant methods, the success of the laws against the Donatists (a), though he uses scriptural texts, especially the famous 'compelle intrare' to justify his views. (b)

Another result, much more difficult to appreciate, was the spread of monasticism. The cessation

(a) Pp. 93; In Johan. Ev. (b) Ppp. 93 and 185.

of persecution and the lowering of the general standard of morality forced those, who still valued the merit of suffering or longed for a life of more than average virtue, to seek their ideal in the solitude of the desert or the seclusion of the cell. The congregation of a number of 'monks' in one district, perhaps around some great leader, led to the foundation of monasteries and called forth from the heathen poet Palladius the following epigram :- "If solitaries, why so many? So many, how solitaries?" (a) These monks gave an example of what part their system was going to play in the history of the world, when they made themselves the main instruments in the destruction of the temples.

Further, the church, we have seen, admitted a large number of adherents of various cults and philosophies without demanding of them full conversion. Whatever its demands might have been, it must have absorbed many non-Christian elements during such a process. Much discussion has taken place as to the extent to which the church borrowed dogma and ritual; but enough evidence has been collected in this thesis for certain

(a) Anth. P. XI, 384.

conclusions to be reached with some degree of accuracy.

It has been noticed that the laws concerning the temples were modified on account of the association of the 'games' with these buildings. Ibanius mentioned the continuance of the festivals in the open air after sacrifices had been forbidden. So it is obvious that Christianity was forced to permit such festivities if it were going to win the people. It did more than this. It associated them with the commemoration of Christian events. The observance of Christmas replaced the Saturnalia and the 'Natalis Solis Invicti' - the anniversary festival of Sun Worshippers; the Purification was observed at the same time as the ancient Iupercalia; Rogation Days supplanted the Ambarvalia. This does not imply that these Christian Feasts were the outcome of the old Pagan celebrations, but that the Bishops deemed it advisable to remove as far as possible the heathen associations.

Again, it would have proved impossible to wrench the uneducated people away from their local demi-gods without substituting something else in their place. This need was satisfied by the development of Saint-

worship. "The Lord", writes Theodoret (a), "had raised the martyrs to the place of heathen gods".

The Church of the Fourth Century was brought face to face with a difficulty of a far different character from any of these. Three ideas had to be reconciled if she was to fulfil her Catholic mission:- the ideas of the Hebrew Messiah, a human personage to restore Israel; the Greek Logos, an abstract force; Jesus Christ, the personal Incarnate Word. Thus the chief work of the doctors and councils of the time was to guard the Divinity of Christ, without surrendering the monotheistic basis of their religion. These same people, especially St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome, helped to expand and explain the creed of the church which seems to have been first definitely formulated at Nicaea. In this way it came about that more attention was paid to the philosophical aspect of religion than to its precepts about conduct. So there arose the large number of heresies, especially in the East where the minds of the people were more adapted to the subtle distinctions concerning the relation of the three persons of the Trinity.

(a) Pat. Graec. IXXXIII, 1033.

Finally, the Church had accepted the political organisation of the Empire as the basis of her own. Therefore, when the Teutonic invasion seemed to overwhelm the ancient civilisation, this great ecclesiastical society "was strong enough to sustain itself among the wreck of all things, and was able to teach the barbarian conquerors to assimilate much of the culture, many of the laws and institutions of the conquered, and in the end to rear a new and Holy Roman Empire on the ruins of the old". (a)

(a) Rev. T. Lindsay in Camb. Med. Hist. Vol. I, pg. 117.

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