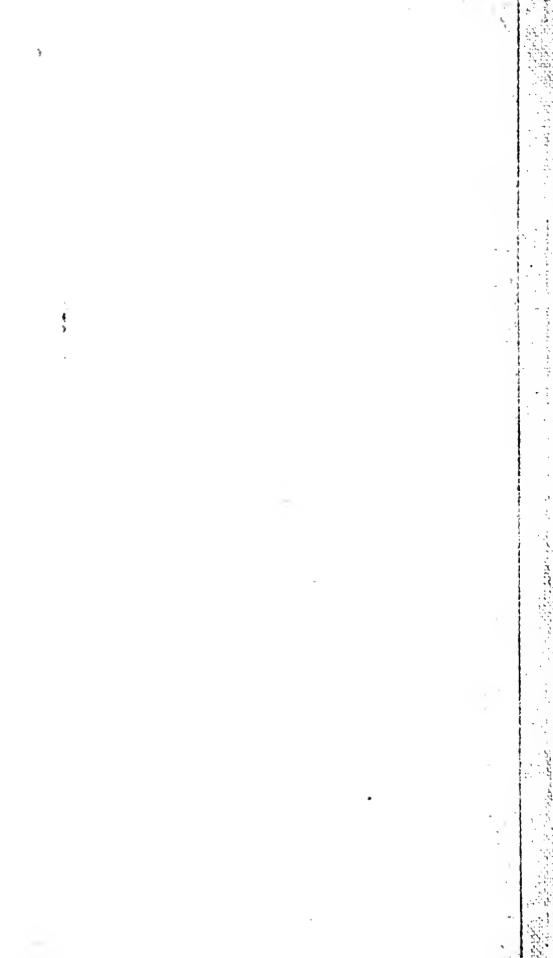


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# STORIES

OF

## THE CHURCH

IN

THE FOURTH CENTURY.



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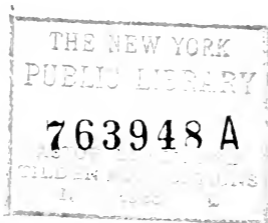
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## INTRODUCTION.

I PRESUME most of my readers have heard people talk about the union of CHURCH AND STATE. I will tell them what this means. When the government makes laws to regulate the affairs of religion, that is called the union of church and state; for example, where the doctrines of the church and the forms of public worship are established by law; where the people are taxed by the government to build churches, and are obliged by law, to pay a certain part of their property to the support of ministers of some particular church, whether they belong to that church or not. What I am going to relate will show the evils which arise from such a union.





# STORIES, &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

*State of the Church, previous to its connexion with the government, under Constantine the Great—Persecution of Dioclesian.*

BEFORE giving an account of the first establishment of Christianity by law, it will be necessary to consider the previous state of the church. Religion had been declining, in all the churches, from the early part of the third century. The influence of Pagan philosophy and superstition had been gradually undermining the simplicity and purity of the gospel. And, as the last forty years of the century was a time of peace and outward prosperity to the church, this declension had been general and rapid.\* It was therefore necessary that the

\* See "*Stories of the Second and Third Centuries.*"  
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church should go through the fire of another persecution, to purify it, and prepare it for the season of great outward prosperity which followed.

At the beginning of the fourth century, Dioclesian was emperor of Rome. He had reigned eighteen years; and during most of that time, had been the friend and protector of Christians. It was, at this time, customary for the emperor to choose a partner to reign with him. Each of the emperors then chose a first officer, called his Cæsar, who was to reign after him, when he died. These officers had so much power that they were often called emperors. The partner of Dioclesian was Maximian. Dioclesian's Cæsar was Galerius, and Maximian's was Constantius. Dioclesian, Maximian, and Galerius, were all monsters of horrible ferocity; but Galerius was more savage than the rest. Constantius was a man of probity and humanity. Dioclesian kept his court in the winter at Nicomedia. Here Galerius met him, in the year 302, and in the nineteenth year of his reign. The mother of Galerius was a very bigoted Pagan, and spent much of her time every day, in sa-

crificing to idols. The Christians, who were in her house, would not partake of her idolatrous feasts, but gave themselves up to fasting and prayer. She was therefore enraged at all Christians, and stirred up her son to seek their destruction. He determined, if possible, to engage the emperor in a violent persecution. After consulting together a whole winter, they agreed to commence operations against Christians.

On the morning of one of the heathen feast days, an officer, with a party of soldiers, was sent to the great church of Nicomedia. They burst open the door, took the Scriptures from the desk and burned them. Another band of soldiers then came to their assistance, and the church was soon levelled to the ground. The next day a law was published, by which Christians were deprived of all offices of honour and dignity, and exposed to torture. Every one was allowed to prosecute them; but all justice was denied to them. Altars were placed in the courts; and no man's cause would be heard, till he had sacrificed to the idols. In this way, Christians were exposed to all manner of insults, without any means of

getting justice. The palace of the emperor was twice set on fire, at the instigation of Galerius. The crime was charged upon Dioclesian's Christian servants, who were burnt to death before his eyes. But no examination was made of the servants of Galerius, who were probably Pagans. The rage of Dioclesian was now kindled against all who bore the Christian name. He obliged his wife and daughter to sacrifice to idols. Ministers and deacons were put to death without ceremony. Officers of great authority in the palace, were slain. Persons of every age and sex were burnt alive. Great fires were made, and large numbers were burned together. Mill-stones were fastened about men's necks, and they were thrown into the sea. All the judges were busily employed in trying to compel men to sacrifice to idols. Letters were sent to Maximian and Constantius, directing them to pursue the same violent measures. Maximian, who governed Italy with savage cruelty, obeyed the order. Constantius, who ruled in France, pulled down the churches, but saved the lives of Christians.

There were some officers of the palace, of

the highest rank, who chose to suffer for Christ, rather than deny him and enjoy worldly grandeur. Peter, one of the emperor's household, was brought before him, and whipped till his bones were bare. Still, he would not sacrifice. Vinegar and salt were then rubbed over his raw flesh. But as he still continued firm, he was burnt to death in a slow fire. Several others, who served in the palace, after suffering a variety of torments, were strangled. Anthimus, the bishop of Nicomedia, with a great multitude of his people, suffered death. In every place, the prisons were filled with the ministers and people of God; and martyrs suffered death in every province. Every method of torture was used, which the ingenuity of Satan could invent. Whole families, men, women, and children, were put to death together. Some of these were burned alive; some were drowned; others, after enduring horrible tortures, were beheaded. Some were nailed to crosses, with their heads downwards, and left to starve to death. Others were torn by the boughs of trees. From ten to a hundred, men and women, with their little ones, were murdered by various torments, every

day. And these terrible scenes continued for some years.

In Egypt, leave was given to all the people to insult and abuse Christians. Some beat them with clubs; others with rods, whips, and ropes. Some were tied, with their hands behind them, to machines, and all their limbs were stretched. Iron nails were driven into every part of their bodies. Others were hung up by one hand, and stretched till all their bones were out of joint. And many other torments, equally cruel, were employed by the barbarous heathen. But the Christians suffered with great faith and patience. They were filled with holy joy and triumph, and employed themselves, to their last breath, in singing psalms and thanksgivings.

Phileas, bishop of Thmutitæ, suffered martyrdom, in Thebais. He was an eminent man in his own country. He was very rich; but he did not keep his riches for himself alone. He gave, with great liberality, to the poor. While he was standing before the governor, he was asked how he was persuaded that Jesus Christ was God. He replied, "He made the blind see, and the deaf

hear, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead." The governor offered to spare his life, if he would worship idols; and added, "thy poor wife looks on thee." Phileas answered, "Jesus Christ is the Saviour of our spirits; he hath called me to the inheritance of his glory, and he may also call her to it." Just before his execution, he said, "My dear children, you that seek God, watch over your hearts. My dear children, hold fast to the precepts of Christ."

A city of Phrygia, inhabited by Christians, was surrounded and set on fire. All the inhabitants, men, women, and children, who would not sacrifice to idols, were burnt up in this horrible manner. In the midst of the flames, they called upon Christ, the God over all.

A Christian named Adautus, who held an office of great importance, suffered martyrdom. In Arabia, they were slain with axes. In Mesopotamia, they were hung up by the feet, over a slow fire. At Alexandria, they were cut in pieces. At Antioch, they were burnt to death in a very gradual manner. In Pontus, sharp sticks were stuck under the

nails of some, and melted lead was poured on the backs of others. The persecutors were at length wearied with continual murder. So they put out the eyes, and cut off one of the legs of Christians; and then praised the clemency of the emperors, for saving their lives! The number of those who suffered in this manner, is beyond calculation.

Romanus, a deacon of the church at Cæsarea, was going into the city of Antioch, just as the officers and soldiers were tearing down the churches. He saw a great many members of the church, men and women, with their children, crowding to the idol temples to offer sacrifices. His heart was grieved at the sight; and he cried out, and rebuked them for their cowardice and perfidy. He was immediately condemned to the flames. The executioners fastened him to the stake, and waited the orders of the emperor, to light the fire. He then asked them, "Where is the fire for me?" Galerius was provoked at his boldness, and ordered his tongue to be cut out. He put out his tongue cheerfully, and it was cut off. Then he was put in prison, with his feet stretched out, so as to give him



great pain. After being kept there some time, he was strangled.

At Cæsarea, six persons went to the judge with their hands bound, and offered themselves for martyrdom. The conduct of these men cannot be justified. It is evident that martyrdom was, at this time, looked upon with superstitious veneration. They probably expected, by this conduct, to merit a great reward in heaven. But the apostle says, "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, [or love,] it shall profit me nothing." Indeed, it is not impossible that persons entirely destitute of true piety, might offer themselves up for martyrdom, under the mistaken belief that for this act, they would merit eternal life. But this would be rejecting the atonement of Christ, and putting martyrdom in its place: I have no doubt that most proud hearted impenitent sinners would give up their lives, if they could be sure of being saved by it, rather than submit themselves to the humbling terms of the gospel.

In France and its neighbourhood, where Constantius ruled, Christians found some shelter. Yet, as he was only an officer under

Maximian, he was compelled to persecute. But his measures were mild, compared with those pursued in other parts of the empire. He tore down the churches, and ordered those employed in his own house, who would not renounce Christianity, to quit his service. But, after the trial, he kept those who continued firm in the faith, and dismissed such as denied Christ. For he wisely judged that those who were unfaithful to their God, would be so to him also.

At Cirta, in Numidia, the Holy Scriptures, and treasures of the church, were given up to the Roman officer, by order of the bishop. Felix, of Tibiura, in Africa, was asked to give up the Scriptures. He answered, "I have them, but will not part with them." Upon this, he was condemned to suffer death. He thanked the Lord, and went cheerfully to execution. Euplius, a martyr in Sicily, was asked why he kept the Scriptures, forbidden by the emperors. He replied, "Because I am a Christian. Life eternal is in them. He that gives them up, loses life eternal." It was evidently the design of the emperors to destroy all the records of Christianity; and

especially, the Holy Scriptures. If they could have done this, they would have accomplished more towards the destruction of the Christian religion, than by tearing down all the churches, and putting to death all the ministers, in the world. Wherever the Bible is, there will be Christians. Without it, the world would soon sink into heathenish darkness. But God preserved his own word from the mad fury of the Pagans; and he has since kept it pure from corruption. Although repeatedly searched out and burned by Pagans, Papists and Infidels, the malice of Satan and of wicked men could not prevail against it. It has outlived the enmity of eighteen centuries, and is now multiplying and spreading far and wide, throughout the whole earth.

Although Dioclesian and Galerius agreed in persecuting the church, yet there was no real friendship between them. Galerius was continually seeking to undermine the authority of the emperors, Dioclesian and Maximian. At last, he compelled them to give up the empire to him. Galerius now ruled in the east, and Constantius in the west. The former appointed Maximin, his nephew, as his

first officer. The eastern part of the empire now included Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. The western comprised part of Africa, Sicily, Italy, Spain, Gaul, (now France,) Germany, and Britain. Maximin was like his uncle in savageness and cruelty. He continued the persecution, in Palestine, where he ruled, with the same rage and fury.

At Cæsarea, Agapius was brought before Maximin, while he was exhibiting the shows of wild beasts in honour of his birth-day. At the same time a slave who had murdered his master, was brought before him. In order to show an act of generosity on his birth-day, he pardoned the murderer, and gave him his liberty. He then turned to Agapius, and promised him liberty, if he would renounce Christianity. Agapius, with great cheerfulness, told him that he was ready to suffer any punishment; not for his crimes, but for piety towards God. He was torn by a bear; but as he still breathed, he was carried to prison. After he had remained there a day, weights were tied to his feet, and he was thrown into the sea. Yet the whole theatre rang with the praises of Maximin's clemency! So little sense had

the heathen of the distinction between right and wrong. Just so the Jews when Christ was condemned to be crucified. They preferred a murderer to the Lord of life and glory.

Urbanus, a judge in Tyre, ordered three Christians to fight with one another. ° They refused to obey him, because they knew it would be disobeying God. He therefore had them lamed in the right foot, and their right eyes put out. In this distressing condition, he sent them to work in the mines. This judge was exceedingly cruel, and tortured the Christians without mercy. But God brought his iniquity upon his own head. He was found guilty of crimes and punished with death, in the same place where he had shed the blood of so many Christians.

Nearly a hundred Christians were sent to Palestine, from Thebais, in Egypt. Firmilian, who was appointed judge in the place of Urbanus, had them lamed in the left foot, and their right eyes put out. They were then sent away to work in the mines. At Gaza, some persons were taken for meeting together to hear the Scriptures read. Each of them

had one limb taken off, and one eye put out. A man, named Paul, was condemned to death. He begged the officers to allow him a short time before he suffered. He then prayed with a loud voice, that God would forgive the sins of Christians, and remove from them the dreadful scourge of persecution. He next prayed for the Jews and Samaritans, that they might receive Christ. He prayed also, for the heathen, that they might be brought to know and serve God and his Son Jesus Christ. Then he prayed for the crowd about him, for the judge who condemned him, and for the executioners, by whose hand he was about to suffer, that this sin might not be laid to their charge. The whole company were affected, and many shed tears. He then calmly offered his neck to the sword, and was beheaded. Soon after this, one hundred and fifty Christians of distinction in Egypt, were punished in the same manner as the hundred from Thebais, already mentioned.

The persecution now ceased for a while, but was soon renewed by Maximin. Towards the end of the seventh year, it again relaxed a little. The multitude of Christians who

had been sent to the mines obtained a little liberty, and built some places for public worship. But, when the president of the province came among them, he informed the emperor of what they had done. Afterwards, the master of the mines divided them into classes, and sent them to different places, so that there were but few of them left together. Four of them he carried before the military commander, to be examined, and they were burnt to death. The same day, Silvanus, a bishop of great piety, John, an Egyptian, and thirty-seven others, were put to death by the order of Maximin. John was blind before he was sent to the mines. He also had one leg burned with a hot iron. He had a strong memory, and would repeat a great many passages of scripture, which he had learned before he became blind. In the east this persecution raged with great fury for eight years. In the west, the sufferings of Christians abated after two years.

Constantine, the son of Constantius, had been for some time with Galerius. His father, who was in Britain, became very ill, and sent for his son. But Galerius would not let Con-

stantine go to his father ; for he thought Constantius would die soon, and if he kept his son, he might put him to death, and secure the whole empire to himself. However, Constantine made his escape, and arrived at York, in England, just before his father died. The army proclaimed him emperor, and he immediately put a stop to the persecution, so far as his power extended, and gave Christians full liberty to worship God according to their own consciences. Rome and Italy were for some time governed by Maxentius, the son of Maximian. He was a base tyrant ; yet he did not persecute Christians.

But at length the Lord returned the malice of Galerius upon his own head. He had exceeded all the emperors that had gone before him in cruelty towards Christians. After a savage reign of five years, he was made to feel in his own body the tortures he had inflicted on them. The Lord smote him suddenly with a dreadful and incurable disease. His food gave him no nourishment. It only became food for worms, which bred in vast multitudes in every part of his body. His very bones and marrow were consumed with



rottenness. He applied to physicians: but they could do him no good. He prayed to the idols whom he had served with so much zeal; but they neither had ears to hear his cries, nor power to remove the heavy hand of God from him. He continued in this dreadful state a whole year, when a dropsy was added to his already almost insupportable torments. Galerius had had frequent opportunities of seeing the power of Christianity, in supporting men under the most dreadful torments. Forsaken as he was, by his gods of wood and stone, he must have been convinced that a superior power upheld the worshippers of Jehovah. He was convinced that it was nothing less than the hand of the Almighty that rested upon him. In the midst of his tortures, he confessed that he was sorry for his cruelties towards Christians. He cried out, that he would rebuild the churches he had torn down, and repair the mischief he had done the innocent Christians. He immediately made a law to put a stop to the persecution. They were encouraged to build churches, and preach the gospel. The prisons were opened, and those that had been banished, were suffered to return

to their homes. In return for this, the emperor asked for the prayers of Christians. His request was no doubt cheerfully granted; for to forgive injuries is one of the first lessons which Christians are taught. In a few days after this edict was published, Galerius died, a monument of God's avenging wrath.

But Maximin would not publish the edict of Galerius. He, however, gave orders to stop the persecution. Sabinus, the commander of the soldiers, made known the will of the emperor, in favour of Christians. The Christians confined in the mines and in prisons, were released; and the roads were full of Christians, singing praises to God, as they returned to their homes. Thus, by a single stroke of his power, the Lord changed the universal gloom which overspread the Christian world into cheerfulness and joy.

But this calm lasted only a few months. Maximin tried to get himself made emperor, in place of Galerius. But he could not; for Galerius, before his death, had appointed Licinius to reign after him. He took possession of Asia Minor; but Syria and Egypt still remained under Maximin. Here he renewed

the persecution. He also stirred up all the Pagans in his dominions, to seek the ruin of Christians. And to excite the multitude still more, persons were employed and paid by the emperor for writing and circulating falsehood and slander against the people of God. Maximin ordered that these writings, which were full of blasphemy and impiety, should be taught in all the schools. Under pretence of clemency, he gave orders to the officers not to take the lives of Christians; but to punish them by tearing out their eyes and cutting off their limbs. A few bishops and persons of distinction were put to death. The rest were harassed by every kind of persecution short of death. Every art was employed to root Christianity out of the mind, and to educate the young in a settled dislike to it.

The laws against Christians were written upon tables of brass, and nailed up in public places in every town. In one of the emperor's laws, which was nailed to a post in Tyre, he praises the heathen gods, as the authors of all good. He also tells the people how well it had been with them since the worship of the gods was restored; they were blessed with

good harvests, had no plagues, earthquakes, or tempests, and enjoyed peace throughout the empire. He tells them also, how different it was with them while Christianity prevailed. This was a dreadful time for the church. The people of God had endured, it would seem, all that nature was capable of enduring; yet the storm that now threatened them appeared still more terrible. But again the Lord stretched forth his Almighty arm, to confound this vain boaster, and to strengthen the faith of his children. Maximin had sent persons into every part of his dominions, with copies of the law that was nailed up in Tyre. But while these messages were on the road, a drought commenced, and a terrible famine followed. After the famine, followed the plague, and the people were afflicted with inflamed ulcers. The sore spread all over the body, but affected the eyes most severely. Many were made blind by it. The Armenians also declared war against Maximin, on account of his persecutions; so that he now had famine, plague, and war, in his dominions, all at once. Great multitudes of those who died of hunger and disease were left unburied; for the

Pagans neglected their own friends. But the love of Christ prevailed in the hearts of Christians, over all their calamities. They were every day employed in taking care of the sick and burying the dead. They also gathered together great numbers of the starving poor and gave them bread. Notwithstanding the declension which the church had experienced, Christians still appeared superior to all others.

The Lord also afflicted Dioclesian, towards the close of his days, in return for the cruelty he had exercised towards Christians. He had reigned twenty years in great prosperity. Towards the close of this time he commenced this terrible persecution. After giving up his authority to Galerius, he lived seven years in private life. His daughter Valeria, the widow of Galerius, and his wife Prisca, the mother of Valeria, were treated with great injustice by Maximin and Licinius. He tried in vain to have them released from imprisonment. At length, worn out with grief and vexation, he died in the year 312.

Maximin and Licinius contended for the complete sovereignty of the east. In the year 313, a war broke out between them. Before

engaging in battle, Maximin made a solemn promise to the god he worshipped, that, if he obtained the victory, he would destroy the Christian name. But Licinius, with his soldiers, engaged in solemn prayer to the supreme God, on the field of battle. Licinius obtained the victory. In consequence of this, Maximin published a law, forbidding the persecution of Christians. But he did not allow them to meet for public worship. He was, however, filled with rage and disappointment. He put to death many of the prophets and priests of his gods, who had encouraged him in the hope of obtaining the whole empire of the east. Finding that his first law gained him no friends among the Christians, he published another in their favour, giving them perfect liberty to worship God according to the gospel of his Son. Still the Lord saw fit to return upon his own head, the miseries he had brought upon the church. He struck him suddenly with a terrible disease, all over his body. He pined away with hunger, and fell down from his bed. His flesh was wasted away by a secret fire, and dropped off from his bones. His eyes started from his head. He was

scorched with a continual fever; and in the midst of his torments, he thought he saw God passing judgment upon him. He cried out, in great agony, "It was not I, but others, who did it." But, as his torments increased, he owned his guilt, and prayed Christ to have mercy upon him. He confessed himself conquered, and miserably died.

Thus ended the most dreadful persecution which the church of Christ had yet experienced. Satan doubtless saw that his time was short; and therefore stirred up the children of darkness, with great fury, against the people of God. But the Lord had designs of mercy towards his church, even in this sore trial. And here he verified the saying of the Lord Jesus, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. His professed people had corrupted their ways before him. He saw that this trial was necessary to purify the church from false professors, and to revive the hearts of real Christians. To these he gave grace sufficient to support them in manfully suffering for his name. He imparted his Holy Spirit to them, and revived in their hearts the dispositions of the first Christians. But hypocrites

he left to themselves, to deny Christ and return to the darkness of heathenism. When this was accomplished, the rage of the enemies of the church could go no farther. He restrained their wrath, and made them drink of the cup of his indignation.

QUESTIONS.—What was the state of religion in the church, in the beginning of the fourth century? How did Dioclesian treat Christians in the first part of his reign? What were the characters of Dioclesian, Maximian, and Galerius? Who was the means of stirring up the persecution, in the latter part of Dioclesian's reign? How were Christians generally treated in this persecution? How were they treated in France, where Constantius ruled? What circumstance do you recollect respecting Constantius' Christian servants? What change took place in the government at this time? What provinces were included in the western, and what in the eastern division of the empire? What happened to Urbanus, the judge? What did Paul do before he was led to execution? What is said of Constantius and Constantine at this time? What happened to Firmilian, the judge? What dread-



ful punishment did God bring upon Galerius? How did Maximin treat Christians, after the death of Galerius? Who made war upon Maximin? How did he treat Christians after his defeat? What awful judgment did God bring upon Maximin? What effect had this persecution upon the church?

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## CHAPTER II.

*Connexion of Religion with the Government,  
under Constantine the Great.*

IN almost every nation that ever existed, except the United States, some kind of religion has been established by law. We have seen that it was so under the Roman government, before the time of Constantine. The idolatrous religion of the Pagans was established by law, and people were not allowed to worship the true God. All false religions need the aid of civil authority to support them. But the Christian religion is upheld by the power of the Almighty; it does not, therefore,

require the support of human laws. During the first three centuries it spread far and wide, over almost the whole world, and triumphed over the opposition of the most powerful nation that ever existed. The history of the church, from this time, will show more clearly the great evils that arise from uniting the concerns of the church with those of the government.

Constantine the Great, from early life, was favourable to Christianity. His father, Constantius, favoured the cause, though he never embraced it himself. He, however, condemned the absurd worship of the heathen, and had Christian ministers in his palace, who openly prayed for the emperors. But Constantine does not appear to have embraced the Christian religion till some time after he was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. One of his first acts was, to restore Christians to the full enjoyment of the rights of conscience. While, with Galerius, he had many opportunities of seeing the superiority of the Christian religion manifested in the conduct of its persecuted followers, he was doubtless convinced that they were an innocent and injured people.

This may account for his first acts in their favour.

The tyrant, Maxentius, ruled in Rome and Italy. Constantine marched from France, to deliver his country from oppression, and to obtain the whole western empire for himself. The reader will bear in mind continually, that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men;”\* and that he controls all things, sets up one and puts down another, for the accomplishment of his purposes. War is contrary to the spirit of the gospel, which breathes “peace on earth, and good will to men.” But the Lord suffers people to fight one another, for the punishment of their sins. He is, however, called in Scripture the God of battles; because he controls the rage of men, and gives the victory to whom he pleases. But let not the reader think that he always approves the conduct of the victorious party, or that he looks with delight upon war and bloodshed. He makes use of wicked men, as instruments to accomplish his gracious designs towards his church. He also often makes use

\* Daniel iv. 17

of one wicked man to punish others; and while this man is executing His wrath upon his enemies, he prospers him, and gives him success.

We have little reason to think that Constantine had any other object in view in this expedition, than the gratification of his own ambition. He might, however, have desired the good of his country, which was oppressed by a tyrant; for unrenewed men often love their families and their country, while they hate God. However this may be, he knew that all his future prospects depended upon his success against Maxentius. He felt his need of the assistance and protection of some God. He had little confidence in the heathen gods, and was inclined to seek the God of the Christians, although he did not seem to be fully convinced of his existence and power. He prayed with much earnestness that God would show him his power, by giving success to his arms. He also had a cross carried in his army, instead of a flag. God gave him the victory over Maxentius, and he became convinced of the truth of Christianity. He was probably sincere in this belief; though we

have little, if any, reason to believe that he was a true Christian.

As soon as he became master of Rome, he established the Christian religion by law. He built churches, supported ministers, and gave a great deal to the poor. He met with the bishops in their synods, and continually employed himself in bestowing upon the church riches and worldly grandeur. But in the east things were far different. Although Licinius had seen the power of God displayed against Maximin, in answer to his prayers, yet he hardened himself. The depravity of his heart was not taken away. When he became master of the whole eastern empire, he grew proud, forgot his dependence upon God, and began to persecute his people. He would not let ministers meet as they wished. He sent all the Christians away from his palace. He dismissed from his army all the soldiers who refused to worship the heathen gods. He murdered ministers, and tore down churches.

This conduct offended Constantine, who was now devoted, at least to the temporal interests of the church. A war commenced be-

tween the two emperors. Licinius agreed to try the truth or falsehood of Christianity upon the event of the war. God answered him in his own way. He was killed in the battle. Constantine obtained a complete victory, and became sole emperor of the east and west.

Constantine now restored to the church every thing that had been taken away. He paid those who had suffered, for the loss of their property. He gave great honours to the ministers, recommended to the governors of the provinces to promote the gospel, and forbade their sacrificing to idols. He built splendid churches, ornamented at great expense. His mother, Helena, travelled from place to place, building churches, and giving money for the support of religion. Constantine wrote to Sapor, king of Persia, urging him to favour Christians in his country. He tore down the idol temples, and put a stop to impious Pagan rites. He furnished copies of the Holy Scriptures for the use of the churches, and had reading of the Scriptures and prayers in his own court. He ordered feasts to be celebrated in honour of the martyrs. He commanded

the keeping of the Holy Sabbath, and Friday also, as the day of our Lord's crucifixion. He also taught his soldiers to pray, by a short form made for their use.

To a worldly mind, the church appears, at this time, to have been in the highest state of prosperity. But, in the midst of all this grandeur, religion was really declining. Neither in Constantine nor his favourite bishops, was there much appearance of vital piety. The true spirit of Christian simplicity appears to have been lost in vain show, unmeaning superstitions, and empty forms of worship. Constantine might have done all that he did, and much more, without being a Christian. He probably trusted in these things for salvation, instead of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the midst of all this pomp and show, the attachment of the church to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel was weakening. Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, was the emperor's favourite. His opinions of the divinity of Christ were not sound; and he appears to have had very imperfect views of the gospel. It is not likely that the emperor's principles would be more perfect than those of his instructor. But

errors of doctrine were not the only evils that prevailed. Outward piety flourished; and men grew more fond of practising religious austerities. But the real fruits of the spirit were but little manifest. The doctrine of true conversion was almost entirely lost; that of justification by faith in Christ alone, was little taught. Faith, love, and heavenly-mindedness were very little manifest. Professors of religion became worldly-minded and full of ambition. There was probably much real piety among the poor people; but we hear little of it. The clergy who were most in favour with the emperor, were corrupt and worldly. As he grew older, he became oppressive in his family, and government, and more fond of pomp and grandeur. The humble spirit of the gospel does not appear to have found its way to his heart. Here we see the beginning of the evils produced by the union of church and state. As we proceed in this history of the church, these evils will be still more conspicuous.

QUESTIONS.—What law did Constantine make, in relation to Christians, when he first began to reign? What did Constantine do



when he was marching against Maxentius? What did he do, as soon as he became master of Rome? What did Licinius do, after this? How was Constantine affected by this? What followed? What did Constantine then do for the church? What did his mother do? What effect had this worldly prosperity upon the church?

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *The Donatists.*

ABOUT the year 311, arose the sect of the Donatists, in Africa. Upon the death of Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, the greatest part of the clergy and people chose Cæcilian in his place. By the management of two of the ministers of Carthage, who wanted to be bishop, the council which was called to ordain Cæcilian, was not as full as was common on such occasions. The Numidian bishops were offended, because they were not called to the

council. The two disappointed ministers, who had desired the office of bishop, took advantage of this feeling among the bishops of Numidia, to create a disturbance. Lucilla, a rich lady, who had been reproved by Cæcilian, for some superstitious practices, also joined them. Donatus, a man of a contentious spirit, who had before caused a division in the church, offered himself as the head of a party against Cæcilian. They called a council of seventy Numidian bishops, who sent for Cæcilian to come before them, and give an account of his conduct. But he could not acknowledge their authority to call him before them, and therefore did not go. Lucilla gave them large sums of money to favour her interests. Although they could not prove any crime against Cæcilian, yet they condemned him, and appointed Majorinus, a servant of the rich lady, in his place. From this conduct of the Numidian bishops, it is evident that, notwithstanding the dreadful scourge of the Dioclesian persecution, which they had just experienced, the church of Africa was exceedingly corrupt. Many of these bishops, however, in the time of that persecution, had

given up the Scriptures, and other property of their churches, to save their lives.

This controversy soon spread all over Numidia and the provinces of Africa; so that, in most of the cities the church was divided, and each party had its bishop. Those who followed Majorinus, were called Donatists, from Donatus, their leader. They carried the matter before Constantine. In the year 313, he appointed a council of bishops at Rome, to examine it. This council cleared Cæcilian of all the charges brought against him. But the Donatists were not satisfied with this decision, and complained that the number of bishops composing the council was too small. In order to give them a fair trial, the emperor called a more numerous council, composed of bishops from Italy, Gaul, Germany, and Spain. They, also, decided in favour of Cæcilian. From this decision, they appealed to the emperor himself. He examined the affair at Milan, in presence of both parties. Here, also, they lost their case. They were now quite angry with the emperor and abused him very much. Constantine was at last wearied with their turbulent spirit. He took

away their churches in Africa, put to death some of their most violent bishops, and banished others. Although the conduct of the Donatists made them unworthy of the Christian name, yet the treatment they received from Constantine was unjustifiable. It was contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and the rights of religious liberty. The party of the Donatists was very powerful in Africa, and these measures gave rise to violent commotions and tumults among the people. The emperor tried a great many means to quiet these disturbances; but without effect. Finding, at last, all other efforts fail, he repealed the laws against the Donatists, and allowed the people, as he ought to have done at first, full liberty to join the party they liked best. It is true, however, that the conduct of the Donatists was calculated to weary the patience of the emperor. They treated him with great bitterness, and stirred up the magistrates to deprive the Christian pastors of their churches. They were also guilty of many evil practices. Silvanus, one of the bishops banished by the emperor, had been guilty of giving up the vessels of the church, and getting himself ordained

bishop for money. Such is the depravity of human nature! The church now enjoyed outward peace and prosperity. But, instead of manifesting their gratitude to God for his goodness, his professing people were engaged in contention and strife. The most unworthy spirit of covetousness and ambition prevailed. But let not the reader lay these wicked proceedings to the charge of Christianity. It should be remembered that, at all times, a great many members of the church are not real Christians. At this season of general prosperity, it is probable that but a very small proportion of those who professed the Christian name, knew any thing of vital piety. To judge of the true character of Christianity, from its professors, we must look to those times when the Christian name was despised, and its followers persecuted. In the first and second centuries, the divine excellence of the gospel shone with glorious brightness in the lives of its professors.

QUESTIONS.—Can you give an account of the origin of the Donatists? How far did the controversy spread? By whom was their conduct condemned? What did they do, when the

emperor decided against them? How did Constantine then treat them? What did he do afterwards? What was the state of the church at this time? Are all professors real Christians?

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *Arianism.*

THE general declension which now prevailed throughout all the church, prepared the way for all manner of divisions and heresies. For it can hardly be expected that purity of doctrine will be maintained, while a large majority of the church, both ministers and people, are destitute of vital piety. The period of the church of which we are speaking, was particularly distinguished for the Arian controversy.

The persecution of Dioclesian was a time of severe trial to the church. Many false-hearted professors gave up their religion to save their lives. Among these, was Meletius,

an Egyptian bishop. He was a man of a contentious and turbulent spirit; and Peter, bishop of Alexandria, took from him his office. But Meletius would not submit to the authority of Peter. He separated himself from the church, set up a party of his own, and ordained other bishops. Arius, a member of the church at Alexandria, joined the Meletian party. He was a promising character, and a man of talents. Afterwards, however, he became reconciled to Peter, returned to the church, and was ordained a deacon. But he soon manifested a restless and contentious spirit, and was turned out of the church. Peter was then called to suffer martyrdom.

After this, Achillas was made bishop. Arius obtained favour of him, and was again restored to the church. Arius was an artful man, well calculated to deceive. He was grave in his appearance, and severe in his manner of life. He was a man of learning, and agreeable and captivating in his manners and conversation. The bishop afterwards ordained him presbyter or minister. Arius asserted that there was a time when the Son of God was not. He also declared that he was a creature, capable of

sinning as well as others. As Alexander the bishop, was slow and cautious in his proceedings, the party of Arius gained strength continually. He tried to convince them of their errors, by fair arguments ; and made use of every mild measure in his power, to restrain them. Finding all these measures fail, he called a synod of bishops, who met at Alexandria. They condemned the doctrine of Arius, and turned him out of the church, with nine of the leaders of his party.

The Arians denied that Jesus Christ was God. They maintained that the Son of God was totally and essentially distinct from the Father ; that he was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created ; the instrument by whose subordinate operation he formed the universe, and therefore inferior to the Father, both in nature and dignity. They believed that the Son was the Word, but denied that Word to have been eternal. They held that Christ had nothing of man in him but the flesh, to which the Word or *Logos* was joined, the same as the soul is joined to the body. The modern use of the term Arian embraces several modifications of the ancient Arian



faith, but our object does not make it necessary to consider them. Enough has been said to show that their error was vital and radical.

That portion of the church who held the truth on this subject, were doubtless right in opposing this error, and using all proper means to purify the church from it. But there was so little real piety among those who held the truth, that this controversy was carried on with an unchristian spirit. The heresy spread, and the Christian world was filled with contention and strife. The heathen rejoiced at this, and ridiculed the contentions of Christians in the theatre. The people of the world, who hate the gospel, will always rejoice over the sins of professors of religion; and when they see them engaged in warm disputes about doctrines, they think there is so much contradiction and mystery in the Christian religion that it is impossible to know what the truth is. But all this difficulty arises from a want of humility; for if we would submit our reason to the Scriptures, and be willing to believe just what is written there, we should find no trouble in finding the truth. All the essential doctrines of the Christian religion

are so simple that a child can understand them. A second synod, of nearly one hundred bishops was held at Alexandria, which condemned Arius and his doctrine. He was now obliged to leave that place. He went, therefore, into other parts of the empire, to spread abroad his errors.

In the year 324 the attention of the emperor was called to this contention. He determined to submit the matter to the decision of the whole church. The bishops, from all parts of the Christian world, met at *Nice*, in Bithynia. The number of the bishops in this council was more than three hundred; and there were nearly the same number of presbyters also. The whole assembly was probably not less than six hundred. They were taken to *Nice* in public carriages, at the emperor's expense, and supported by him while there.

After they had assembled, some heathen philosophers came among them. Some of them wanted to gratify their own curiosity, and others came to puzzle the ministers of Christ with curious questions. One of them, in a proud and pompous manner, declared his

pretensions to wisdom, and ridiculed the clergy as ignorant and unlearned men. An old Christian, who had suffered much from persecution, but who had not much learning, rose up to answer this vain boaster. The philosophers laughed at the old man, and the Christians were distressed, because they were afraid he could not maintain an argument against the philosopher. But the venerable old man trusted in the power of divine truth, and addressed him as follows: "Hear, philosopher, in the name of Jesus Christ. There is one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and all things visible and invisible. He made all these things by the power of his word, and confirmed them by the holiness of his Spirit. This Word had compassion upon the children of men, who were sunk in error and wickedness. He chose to be born, to converse with men, and to die for them; and he will come again to judge men for all things which they have done in the body. We believe in simplicity that these things are so. Do not then labour in vain to disprove things which ought to be received by faith. Do not try to search out the way in which these things may or may not be. But

if thou believest, answer me, now that I ask thee." The philosopher was struck with this plain authoritative address, and said, "I do believe." He owned himself conquered, and confessed that he embraced the same sentiments which the old man had expressed. He said that his mind was changed by a divine influence, and his heart was moved by an energy which he could not explain. He then advised the rest of the philosophers to embrace Christianity. This account may seem marvellous; but it is not more so than many similar circumstances, that in every age of the church, occurred.

Constantine came into the council, and took his place at its head, as president. He exhorted them to peace and union. A number of accusations were presented to him, by each side against the other. But he threw them all into the fire, and charged them to forbear and forgive one another. He then gave them leave to proceed directly to the business of the synod. They examined the doctrines of Arius, contained in his writings, and argued the subject. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, wrote a letter to the council, in favour of Arianism;

and the whole Arian party presented their confession of faith. Both that and the letter of Eusebius were condemned as heretical; there being only twenty-two bishops in the whole council in favour of Arianism. They collected together all the passages of Scripture which represent the divinity of Christ, and observed that, taken together, they proved that he was **THE SAME IN SUBSTANCE WITH THE FATHER.**—They then appointed Hosius, the venerable bishop of Corduba, to express their belief in the form of a confession of faith; which he did, and its creed embraced the great fundamental truths of Christianity, as they are held by the great body of Evangelical Christians of the present day, now found in the prayer book of the Episcopal church. It was approved by the council; and Constantine declared that all who refused to abide by the decision of the council, should be banished.

Arius was cast out of the church, and forbidden to enter Alexandria. Twenty, out of the twenty-two bishops who favoured Arianism, submitted to the decree of the council, and signed the confession. The rest were banish-

ed, with Arius, into Illyricum. Many of the fathers assembled at Nice bore on their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. Paul, bishop of Neocæsarea, had been tortured by having hot irons applied to both his hands. Others appeared in council who had lost their right eyes, or their legs. The emperor, at this time, was not biassed towards either side. He desired peace, and was willing to adopt the confession of the majority. Such a crowd of martyrs would have been very likely to have followed the plain sense of Scripture; and they must have been acquainted with the doctrines received in the church, from the days of the apostles. But the measures which the emperor took to enforce the decision of the council, were a violation of the rights of conscience. We may use all the powers of argument to persuade people to embrace the truth; and we may warn them of the consequences of rejecting it. But government has no right to interfere in matters of religious belief. They may punish evil practices; but they must leave error of opinion to be punished by the searcher of hearts.

Five months after returning from this coun-

cil, Alexander died. He desired that Athanasius might be appointed bishop of Alexandria, after his death. The church were also in favour of him ; for he was a pious man, of great abilities. But, from modesty, he refused, for a considerable time, to accept the office. He was at length ordained, to the general satisfaction of the church. He was but twenty-eight years old when he was appointed to this office, and he held it forty-six years. All this time he was exposed to persecution, on account of his zeal against Arianism.

After the death of his mother, Constantine showed particular kindness to his sister Constantia. She was influenced by a minister, who was secretly in favour of Arianism. He persuaded her that Arius and his friends were unjustly condemned. On her death-bed, she prevailed upon the emperor, by her entreaties, to recal them from banishment. He was also imposed upon by the craft of Arius and his friend Euzoios, and persuaded to write to the churches in their favour. Eusebius and Theognis owned the creed of the council, and were allowed to return to their churches. Eusebius wrote to Athanasius, desiring him to receive

Arius into communion. But Athanasius could not be prevailed upon to violate his obligations, or to dishonour his Saviour. The Nicene creed, as it was called, was now the established doctrine of the church, and supported by the authority of the state. The leaders of the Arian party had been restored to the church, on a profession of a belief in that creed. They tried to remove out of their way their most zealous and powerful opposers. They united with the Meletians, and gained them over to support their doctrine and interest, and determined, if possible, to ruin Athanasius. Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, was a learned and eloquent man, and a stern opposer of their doctrines. By their artifices, they got him unjustly removed from his office. He, with several of his ministers and deacons, was banished. Before he left his people, he exhorted them to remain steadfast in the truth, which they did. The good man bore this trial with meekness and patience, and died in exile at Philippi. The bishops of Gaza and Adrianople were also driven from their churches. Thus, while the truth was received in form, and established by



law, its friends were persecuted, and its enemies triumphed.

Athanasius, being a warm and zealous supporter of the truth, was an object of constant attention. His enemies at length prevailed upon the emperor to call a council at Tyre, for the purpose of examining certain charges made against him. In the year 335, the synod met, under the direction of Eusebius, of Cæsarea, the historian, and some other bishops. Athanasius was charged with the worst of crimes. Among other things, he was accused of murdering Arsenius, a Meletian bishop. For proof of this charge, his accusers produced a box, containing a dead man's hand. 'This, they said, was the hand of Arsenius, which Athanasius had preserved for magical purposes. The Meletians charged Arsenius to conceal himself till they had accomplished their purposes. The party of Eusebius, of Nicomedia, spread the report throughout the Christian world, that Arsenius had been privately murdered by the bishop of Alexandria. Constantine was finally prevailed upon to order an inquiry to be made into the truth of the report.

Though Arsenius was directed to keep alone, yet he went privately to Tyre, intending to conceal himself during the sitting of the synod. But some of the governor's servants heard that Arsenius was in town. They informed him, and he found him out, took him, and sent word to Athanasius. This wretched man at first denied that he was Arsenius. But Paul, bishop of Tyre, knew him. When the day of trial came, the enemies of Athanasius, full of the malice of Satan, boastingly produced the dead man's hand, as certain evidence of the guilt of Athanasius. A shout of victory rung through the house. Athanasius then asked the judges if any of them knew Arsenius. Several of them answered that they did. He then had Arsenius brought into the court, and asked them if this was the man he had murdered, and whose hand he had cut off. Thus the Lord delivered this good man from the snare of his enemies, and put them to shame. The reader will judge from this the character of the other charges.

Yet, notwithstanding the clearest proof of his innocence, persons were sent into Egypt, to examine the matters of which Athanasius

was accused. They brought persons before them, and threatened them with drawn swords, whips, and clubs, and treated them with great cruelty, to force them to give testimony against Athanasius. The commissioners returned to Tyre, with evidence which they had forced from weak minded persons, at Alexandria, against Athanasius. The council passed sentence against him, and took from him his office. But in this the synod were not entirely agreed. Paphnutius, a venerable and holy man, who had suffered much for the gospel, and had distinguished himself in the council of Nice, took Maximus, bishop of Jerusalem, by the hand and said, "Let us be gone; it becomes not those who have lost their limbs for religion, to go along with such vile company."

Athanasius then went to Constantinople, and sought justice from the emperor. Constantine ordered the bishops who composed the council to come before him, and give an account of what they had done. Most of them, however, went home. But Eusebius, of Nicomedia, was still determined upon the destruction of Athanasius. He gave up the old charges

against him ; and, with a few others, accused him of threatening to stop the ships that brought corn from Alexandria to Constantinople. The artifices of the Arians prevailed with Constantine, and he banished Athanasius to Gaul.

Having driven from Alexandria the man whose opposition he most dreaded, Arius returned to that city, and began to build up his party anew. As the city was torn by these divisions, the emperor ordered him to Constantinople, to give an account of himself. Constantinople now became the chief seat of the contention. Alexander, a man of great piety and integrity, was bishop of that city. Eusebius threatened to get him banished, as he had Athanasius, unless he should receive Arius into the church. Alexander knew too well the power of the Arians. The opposers of Arius had prevailed, in the face of the whole world, with the council of Nice, and they had the emperor on their side. Yet the Arians were so much superior to them in artifice, and so ready to resort to unfair measures, that they prevailed at the emperor's court, and their opposers were continually harassed, per-

secuted, and oppressed. Yet Alexander could not consent to receive into the church a man he knew would be continually poisoning the minds of his people with error, and bringing destruction upon the souls of men. But he knew where to look for aid. He knew that God had promised to answer the prayers of his people. He knew that the honour of Christ was concerned. He therefore spent several days and nights in prayer, alone, in the church. His people followed his example, and prayer was made by the church, without ceasing, that God would appear to deliver them from this trial. They did not undertake to maintain their cause by disputing; but sincerely committed to God the cause of his truth; and he heard their prayer.

Constantine sent for Arius, and asked him plainly whether he agreed to the decrees of the council of Nice. Arius told him that he did; signed his name to them, and swore to their truth. The emperor then ordered Alexander to receive him into the church the next day. The bishop had given himself to fasting and prayer. That day he and Macarius, a minister of Alexandria, fell down before God,

in the church, and prayed with great earnestness. He begged that, if Arius was right, he himself might not live to see the day of trial. But, if the Nicene faith was true, he prayed that Arius, who had brought all these evils upon the church, might suffer the punishment which he deserved. The next day, the party paraded the streets of the city in triumph, with Arius at their head. When they came near the palace of the emperor, a sudden terror, with a disorder of the bowels, came upon Arius, and he shortly after died.

QUESTIONS.—What was the consequence of the general declension that now prevailed in the church? For what is this period particularly distinguished? Can you give an account of the origin of Arianism? What gave rise to the council of Nice? How many bishops and other ministers were there? What remarkable circumstance took place just after the council assembled? What was the judgment of the council about Arianism? What truths are contained in the creed they adopted? What did the emperor do to Arius and the leaders of his party? Did he do right in banishing these bishops? What was the cha-

racter of the bishops who composed this council? What happened three months after this? Who persuaded Constantine to recal the Arian bishops whom he had banished? How did the Arians treat their opposers after this? What was done, through their influence, to Eustathius, bishop of Antioch? What plot was formed against Athanasius? Who finally procured his banishment? When the emperor ordered the bishop of Constantinople to receive Arius into the church, what did he and his church do? What happened to Arius the day that he was to have been received into the church?

## CHAPTER V.

*Arianism under Constantius.*

AFTER Constantine died, the empire was divided among his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans? The first ruled in Spain and Gaul, the second in the east, the third in Italy and Africa. The other relations of Constantine were put to death by the soldiers, except Gallus and Julian, two of his nephews. These were brought up privately, placed among the clergy, and appointed readers in the church.

We have but little knowledge of Constantine, the eldest of the new emperors. One of his first acts was to send back Athanasius to his church. He declared that his father had intended to do so, but was prevented by his death. A number of other bishops, who had been banished by the Arians, were also sent back to their churches. Constantine was firmly attached to the Nicene creed; but we have not sufficient information respecting him,



to judge whether he was a real Christian. He was killed by the soldiers of his brother Constantians.

Constantius and his wife were both Arians. During the whole of his reign, which lasted twenty-four years, a violent controversy was carried on between the church and the heretics. The arms of the church were prayer, writing, and preaching. Those of the heretics were policy, intrigue, persecution, and the friendship of the great.

In the year 340, the famous Eusebius, of Cæsarea, died. He was the most learned man in the whole Christian world, at his day. He wrote a history of the church, in which much valuable information has been preserved. But his Christian character is very doubtful. He was fond of pomp and show in matters of religion. He favoured Arianism, although he did not openly support it. He frequented the court of the emperor, kept company with Arius, and joined in the condemnation of Athanasius. At the same time died Alexander, the venerable and pious bishop of Constantinople. He was ninety-eight years old, and had been bishop twenty-three years. When

he was dying, his clergy asked him whom he would recommend to fill his place. He told them if they wanted a man of good character, who was capable of instructing them, they ought to appoint Paul. But if they wanted one of worldly skill, who knew how to get in favour with the great, and keep up an appearance of religion, they should choose Macedonius. The Arian party tried to have Macedonius chosen; but the great body of the church loved the interests of vital piety too well, and Paul was elected. Constantius arrived soon after. He was offended at the election, called an Arian council, and directed its proceedings. By this council, Eusebius, of Nicomedia, was appointed bishop of Constantinople. This man was one of the most wicked and depraved men in the whole church. He became a zealous supporter of Arianism, at its first appearance; and he was the mover of most of the intrigues and artifices by which the heretics had so long harassed the most pious and faithful ministers of that day. He was base enough to resort to any measure to accomplish his purposes. Before this, the bishops had always been chosen by the people. But the church was now united

with the state; and the emperors thought they had a right to change its customs and laws at their pleasure. A council of a hundred bishops, with Athanasius at their head, met in Egypt, and protested against these proceedings, to the whole church.

An Arian council was then called at Antioch, at which the emperor was present. They took away the office of bishop from Athanasius, and ordained Gregory, of Cappadocia, in his place. The honesty, piety, and wisdom of Athanasius, had gained the affections of the people in Egypt. While the bishops were chosen by the people, it would have been impossible to remove him from his office. The emperor therefore directed the governor of Egypt to support the proceedings of the council by an armed force.

The governor of Egypt proceeded, with great vigour, to support the views of the Arians, and the pretensions of Gregory. The governor and Gregory entered the church together, in company with some Pagans, and had a number of the friends of Athanasius whipped and put in prison. Jews and Pagans were now encouraged to murder Christians.

Athanasius fled to Rome. This took place in the year 342. Great numbers of the Christians at Alexandria, refused to own the Arian bishop. Gregory would not suffer them to pray in their own houses. The decrees of the council of Nice had never been changed, and were still established by law. Yet, those bishops who had been zealous in supporting these decrees, were treated with great severity.

Athanasius published an epistle to the Christian world, exhorting the bishops to unite in maintaining the truth. He told them that they were not called upon to support a new faith, but to preserve that which was delivered to the church from the Lord Jesus, by his disciples. He told them that this faith had been so long preserved in the church, and that they ought to consider themselves stewards of the mysteries of God, who would be called to account, if they suffered them to be taken away by strangers. He then informed them what the Arians had done. "If there had been any complaint against me," said he, "the people should have been assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; all things should have been examined regularly, and in

the presence of the clergy and people; a stranger should not have been forced upon the people, by the civil authority, without their consent." He told the bishops not to receive the letters of Gregory, but to tear them, and treat those who carried them with disdain, as ministers of iniquity. The cause of Athanasius was just; yet, in this last advice to the bishops, he manifests a wrong spirit. He ought to have endured these things in a spirit of meekness. Still, even this bore no comparison to the violent measures of the enemies of the truth. It was not Athanasius and his friends that they persecuted. It was Christ, and the truths of the gospel manifested in them, that the Arians hated. But the true spirit of vital godliness had, at this time, greatly departed, even from those who held the truth. Athanasius remained at Rome eighteen months, under the protection of the bishop of that city.

Soon after this, Eusebius, bishop of Constantinople, died. No man was ever better entitled to the character of a hypocrite than he. He was an enemy of the truth, and a ringleader of iniquity. But he had the favour

of the great, which supported him in his wickedness, at the head of one of the principal churches in the world. After his death, the Arians chose Macedonius, and the Trinitarians elected Paul. The emperor banished Paul. Some of his friends forgot the character of Christians, and killed the officer who took him. But Paul had left the city before this crime was committed; so that he cannot be charged with being concerned in it. He was a holy man, and could not approve such an act. He doubtless had friends who were not Christians; and they might have been animated by a false zeal for the truth, to commit this outrage. At Rome, Julius called a council of western bishops, who justified Athanasius, and his fellow sufferers.

Constans, who ruled in Italy and Africa, was a zealous supporter of the Nicene faith. In the year 347, the two emperors called a council at Sardica, in Illyria, intending to unite the two parties. But, as oil and water cannot mingle, so truth cannot mix with error. The Arians found that it would be a free council, and that they could not support their views by force. They therefore went away

and left the western bishops to settle matters as they pleased. Hosius, bishop of Corduba, the venerable president of the council of Nice, was also at the head of this synod. The council decided in favour of Athanasius. They also made some canons or laws against removing bishops from one church to another. The reason given for this was, that it encouraged avarice and ambition among the ministers of the gospel. They met at Philippopolis, in Thrace, and excommunicated, or cast out of the church, the western bishops. The two parties remained some time in this situation. In Asia and Egypt, the friends of the Nicene faith were treated with great cruelty. In Eurῶpe men were more simple, and followed the faith of the first Christians in quietness and peace.

Stephen, the Arian bishop of Antioch, was a corrupt and profligate man. His own party took from him his office, and appointed Leontius in his place. He was an Arian, but of a milder temper than the rest of his party. Diodorus and Flavian, were zealous for the truth, and for vital piety. They stirred up the people, and passed whole nights with the faithful at

the tombs of the martyrs. Leontius found that they had gained the affections of the people, and desired them to perform this service in the church.

In the year 349, Gregcry, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, died. Constantius was now intimidated by the threats of his brother Constans. He therefore wrote repeatedly to Athanasius, requesting him to return to the east, and assuring him of his favour and protection. He could not easily credit the emperor's sincerity, but at length complied. He first visited Julius, of Rome, who sent a letter full of tenderness to the church at Alexandria, in favour of Athanasius. He then went to Antioch, where Constantius was. He was graciously received by the emperor. He told him to forget the past, and promised him, with oaths, that he would receive no false charges against him, in future. At Antioch, Athanasius partook of the sacrament with the followers of Eustathius, the bishop who had been banished by the Arians. These Christians held secret meetings there, with Flavian at their head. He was the first who introduced the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the



Holy Ghost." This was sung in his meeting. The Arians also introduced the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Ghost." But the members of the church of Leontius, who believed the Nicene faith, sung Flavian's doxology. Leontius knew that he held his office in opposition to the wishes of the people, and he durst not oppose these hymns.

The return of Athanasius was hailed by his church as a triumph to the cause of truth. There was general rejoicing, and almost every house seemed to be a house of prayer. A number of his enemies recanted, and justified him, in the most honourable manner. Some other bishops, who had been banished with Athanasius, were now restored to the church. Controversies now arose between the Arians and Sabellians. Both of these sects erred, from the exercise of the same self-confident disposition to search into the hidden mysteries of God, and reconcile to the weak capacities of man, things altogether above human reason. The Sabellians held that the Word and the Spirit are only virtues or functions of the Deity.

It would save us from many errors if we would take the Bible as God has given it to us, and believe what God has revealed, just as a child, with simple confidence, believes what his father tells him. This is the spirit of all true Christians. The Lord Jesus says that we must become like little children. By this he means that we must exercise the same disposition towards God that little children do towards their parents. Now, my readers all know, that a little child, who has never been deceived by his parent, will believe, in simplicity, every thing his father tells him, whether he can understand it or not. He will, also, obey his father, when he tells him to do any thing, without answering again, or objecting, because he does not know *why* his father wishes him to do it. He has so much confidence in his father, that he believes he will never tell him what is not true, or ask him to do any thing wrong.

But Constans died, and left Constantius master of the whole empire. He therefore revived the persecution, and followed in the footsteps of his Pagan predecessors. There was no real difference in their characters. It

is true, he called himself a Christian ; but he had no claim to the title. He hated God, his truth, and his real people, as much as the heathen emperors did. About the year 351, Paul, of Constantinople, was sent into Mesopotamia, loaded with irons. After suffering cruel hardships, he was finally strangled. Macedonius was put in possession of the church, at Constantinople, by an armed force. Much blood was shed on this occasion.

Notwithstanding his solemn oaths, Constantius again listened to the malicious falsehoods of the enemies of Athanasius. In the year 355, a council was called at Milan. The emperor was present, and proposed to them to adopt an Arian creed. He told them that God had declared in favour of Arianism by his victories. Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari, and Eusebius, bishop of Vercellæ, in Italy, answered, that the Nicene creed had always been the faith of the church. The emperor told them that he did not ask their advice, and that they should not hinder him from following Arius. The emperor's creed was read in the church, but the people rejected it, and it was not urged any farther. They were more sincere and

simple than the great, and believed the doctrine of the Trinity because they read it in their bibles. But Constantius insisted on the condemnation of Athanasius. Dionysius, bishop of Milan, and the two bishops just mentioned, were required to agree to it. "Obey, or be banished," said the emperor. The bishops lifted up their hands to heaven, and told him that the empire was not his, but God's. They also reminded him of the day of judgment. He drew his sword, in great rage, and then ordered them to be banished. Hilary, the deacon, was stripped and scourged, and ridiculed by Ursatius and Valens, who had recanted upon the return of Athanasius. Hilary blessed God, and bore his sufferings *with meekness*. Others refused also to sign the condemnation of Athanasius. Maximus, bishop of Naples, was tortured, to make him submit. He refused, and was afterwards banished. He died in exile.

Liberius, bishop of Rome, was brought before the emperor at Milan. Eusebius, the first officer of the emperor, who had from the beginning influenced him in favour of Arianism, assisted him in opposing Liberius. The bishop

told Eusebius that the faith would not fail, if he were the only one who supported it. There was a time when there were only three men found, who refused to obey a wicked law. Eusebius understood that he meant the three men who were thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship the golden image. "Do you make the emperor a Nebuchadnezzar?" said he. "No," said the bishop; "but you are not less unreasonable than he, for desiring to condemn a man unheard." Liberius was banished into Thrace. The venerable bishop of Corduba, in Spain, was the next object of attack. He was now a hundred years old. He was considered the most eminent bishop then living. He had suffered in the persecution under Dioclesian. He had been a bishop sixty years. He had been president of the council of Nice. His advice was sought in difficult cases, and he was held in great respect. Constantius and the Arian party used every means in their power to condemn Athanasius. They flattered and threatened him to no purpose. In answer to a letter of the emperor, he says, "I confessed the first time under Maximian, your great grandfather.

If you likewise desire to persecute me, I am ready still to suffer any thing rather than betray the truth. It is not so much a personal malice against Athanasius, as the love of heresy, which influences these men. I myself invited them to come to me, and declare at the council of Sardica, what they knew against him. They dared not; they all refused. Athanasius came afterwards to your court at Antioch; he desired that his enemies might be sent for, that they might make good their accusations. Why do you still hearken to them, who refused such fair proposals? How can you endure Ursatius and Valens, after they have recanted, and acknowledged their calumny in writing? Remember you are a mortal man; be afraid of the day of judgment. God hath given you the empire, and hath committed the church to our care. I write thus through my concern for your welfare; but I cannot agree with Arius, nor write against Athanasius. You act for his enemies; but in the day of judgment you must defend yourself alone." Constantius had no respect to his age and infirmity, but kept him a year at Sirmium. The emperor sent orders to all

the bishops to condemn Athanasius, and to communicate with Arians; and threatened to banish those who should refuse. The judges were directed to see these orders executed, and Ursatius and Valens informed against those who did not obey them. Zealous Arians were forced upon the churches from which the bishops had been banished.

Syrianus, an officer of the government, went to the church at Alexandria, at night, when Athanasius and the people were engaged in public worship. Some of the people were murdered, and others insulted and beaten. The bishop sat still in his chair, and directed the deacon to sing the 136th Psalm, the people repeating, "For his mercy endureth for ever." When this was finished, he told the people to go home. As the soldiers came towards him, his clergy and people begged him to make his escape. But he would not, because he thought it his duty to stay till all the people had left the house. He was then forced out by the clergy and monks, and carried away safely from the guards. The people protested in vain against these violent proceedings. Athanasius was then kept for some time, with

great care and fidelity, in the house of a pious woman.

The heathen rejoiced, and said the Arians had embraced their religion. They were right in this opinion; for they both embraced the religion of the carnal heart, which is hatred towards God and his people. George, of Cappadocia, was appointed bishop of Alexandria, in the year 356. He persecuted the friends of the Nicene faith. They were cruelly beaten, and some died under it. A deacon was severely whipped and sent to the mines. He was not allowed to dress his wounds, and died on the road. Aged and venerable bishops were sent into the deserts in Egypt. The office of bishop was sold to unworthy men. No other qualification was required than belonging to the Arian party. The people of Alexandria could not endure the cruelties of George, and they drove him out of the city. But he returned, with a military force, to maintain his power.

Athanasius fled to the deserts, and lived with the monks. They were his most faithful friends. They would not tell his persecutors where he was; but showed themselves ready



to die in defence of him and the Nicene faith. While there, he wrote a defence of the truth, addressed to the emperor.

Eusebius, of Vercellæ, had been banished to Palestine, where he suffered severely. He was one of the most honest and pious bishops of the age. In Gaul the simple faith of the gospel was preserved in great purity. But the Arian persecution reached there also, and disturbed the peace of God's people. Macedonius, the bishop of Constantinople, carried on a dreadful persecution. This drove the Novatians and the general church nearer together; for they were both forced to communicate with Arians, or suffer punishment. The Spirit of the Lord was still with the followers of Novatian. They maintained the truth in its purity, and were permitted to suffer for it. Some of them were even tortured to death. They had three churches in Constantinople. One of them was thrown down by the emperor's orders. But they carried the materials to the other side of the sea.\* All the people,

\* If the reader will look on the map, he will see that the sea is very narrow at Constantinople.

men, women, and children, went to work, and rebuilt the church. An attempt was now made to re-unite the Novatians to the general church. But their narrow-minded bigotry prevented it.

The venerable Hosius, who had been confined a year at Sirmium, was now whipped and tortured. His relations were also persecuted. In the weakness of his old age, he consented to sign an Arian creed; but would not justify the condemnation of Athanasius. He was finally allowed to return to Spain. Here he protested against the violence with which he had been treated, and with his dying breath exhorted all men to reject the heresy of Arius. Thus we see the weakness of the human heart, when left to itself. Hosius, while supported by the grace of God, had endured severe persecutions under the heathen emperors. But now, in his old age, while trusting in his own strength, he was left to dishonour Christ. This should be a warning to all Christians, not to trust their own hearts; but look continually to Christ, in whom their strength lies. Yet, the Lord Jesus was with him in his last hours, and he died in peace.

Although the cruelty of the Arians tried

men's hearts, and multitudes were forced to embrace the heresy, yet, the grace of God preserved a remnant, who faithfully maintained the truth. Athanasius, who seemed to be the great object of Satan's rage, was kept through a long course of afflictions. The Arians were now generally victorious; but there was no principle but power to hold them together, and they began to divide into parties. Macedonius was removed from the office of bishop of Constantinople, and Eudoxias, bishop of Antioch, appointed in his place. Macedonius then formed a new party, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. This sect made considerable progress in the Christian world, which was now very corrupt.

Meletius, of Sebasta, a man of great meekness and piety, was chosen bishop of Antioch. The Arians supposed him to belong to their party. But the emperor ordered him to preach before him, on the subject of the Trinity. Meletius feared God, and preached the truth. He rebuked the rashness of men, who tried to comprehend the divine nature. He exhorted his hearers to maintain the simplicity

of the faith. Constantius could not endure sound doctrine. He therefore banished him, and appointed Euzoius, the old friend of Arius, in his place. The friends of Meletius therefore separated from the Arians, and worshipped by themselves. In the year 361, Constantius died. A little before he died, he was baptized by Euzoius. The practice of delaying baptism till just before death, had now become frequent in the church. The reason was, that, in the corruptions of Christian doctrine which now prevailed in the church, baptism was put in the place of conversion. People thought that all their sins were pardoned when they were baptized; so they would not receive that ordinance till just before they died! How easy it is for men to be persuaded to trust in any thing but the blood of Christ for the pardon of their sins.

From what we have related of Arianism, we learn two important principles. 1. Error in doctrine leads to bad conduct. The Arians rejected one of the great truths which form the foundation of the Christian religion. There is no evidence that they had any correct ideas

of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, or of real conversion. They made a great show of public worship. Their churches were decorated in the most costly manner, with curtains and carpets of gold tissue, adorned with precious stones; and furnished with golden vessels. But they had not the soul of religion. They knew nothing of that holiness of heart, and spirituality of mind and feeling, which are the fruits of true conversion. Such were the fruits of sentiments so dishonouring to Christ. And the persecuting spirit which the Arians manifested, may easily be accounted for. Formal professors of religion, who knew nothing of the power of vital godliness upon the heart, always persecute those who maintain a spiritual and holy life. Although true piety was very low among those who held the truth, yet what there was, they hated.

2. In this account, the evil consequences of the union of church and state are most strikingly exemplified. When this union first took place, it was the true faith that was established by law. Here we see how soon the rulers departed from that faith, and perse-

cuted the true followers of Christ. This has been the case, in almost every instance, where religion has been established by law.

QUESTIONS.—How was the empire divided after the death of Constantine the Great? What did young Constantine do, when he first began to reign? What happened in the year 340? When the church of Constantinople chose Paul, as their bishop, what did Constantius do? What was the character of Eusebius, of Nicomedia? What was done by the Arian council, at Antioch? What did Gregory and the governor of Egypt do at Alexandria? What did Athanasius do? What happened after the death of Eusebius, bishop of Constantinople? What did Julius do at Rome? What was the character of Constans? What did the two emperors do, in the year 347? What did the Arians do? What did the rest of the council do? What happened at Alexandria, in the year 349? What did Constantius do, after Constans died? What happened at Milan, in the year 355? How were Liberius of Rome, and Hosius of Corduba, treated? What was now done at Alexandria? How did

the heathen feel, when they saw this? Who was appointed bishop of Alexandria, by the Arians? How did he treat true Christians? Where did Athanasius go? What did Macedonius do at Constantinople? How did Constantius treat Hosius, at this time? How did Constantius treat Meletius? What idea now prevailed respecting baptism? What important principles do we learn from the facts related in this chapter?

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Spread of the Gospel from the beginning of the fourth century, to the death of Constantius—Decline of Idolatry.*

THERE are a few interesting particulars respecting the progress of the gospel from the beginning of the century to the death of Constantius, which I shall relate in this place.

A philosopher of Tyre travelled into Abyn-

sinia, to gratify his curiosity, and to gain information respecting the country. Among those who went with him were two boys, whose names were Frumentius and Ædesius. But almost as soon as they had landed, the natives murdered the whole company except the two boys. These were given to the king. They found favour with him, and were promoted in his court. When the king died, the queen employed them to manage the affairs of the government, and to educate the young king. Frumentius was made the first officer of the government. He asked some Roman merchants, who traded there, whether they found any Christians in the country. By their means, he discovered some, built them a church, and encouraged them to meet for public worship. Some natives were also instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, and converted. When the king grew up, and took the government into his own hands, they desired to return to their own country. The king and queen were both unwilling to let them go. However, they consented, and Frumentius and Ædesius left the country. Ædesius returned to his relations in Tyre.



But Frumentius went to Alexandria, and informed Athanasius of what had happened to him. He told the bishop, also, that a door was open for introducing the gospel into Abyssinia, and requested that missionaries might be sent there. Athanasius told Frumentius that no person was as fit for the office as himself. He therefore ordained him first bishop of Abyssinia. Frumentius returned, preached the gospel with much success, and built many churches. Though we have little information respecting it, yet, it is probable that many of the natives were truly converted to God. It is certain, however, that the Christian religion was established by law, as the religion of the country. Abyssinia is situated on the south-western shore of the Red Sea, in Africa. It is surrounded by mountains and a desert country, so that it is almost impossible for an armed force to get into it. The situation of the country has preserved the form of Christianity among them to the present day. Constantius tried to put down Frumentius, and have an Arian bishop appointed in his place; but his power could not reach him. The Roman Catholics could not

get their corrupt religion established there; and the Mahommedans, who established their religion in all the countries around, by force of arms, could not get into Abyssinia. Some travellers and missionaries, who have lately visited that country, state that a corrupt Christianity still prevails there, although the people are sunk in the deepest ignorance and vice.

It is not known at what time the gospel was first preached in Britain. But Christianity prevailed there in the time of Constantius, in much of its original purity. At the council of Arminium, held on account of Arianism, Constantius gave orders to pay the expenses of the bishops out of the public treasury. But the bishops of Gaul and Britain thought it inconsistent with the character of ministers of the gospel to receive support from the government. All, except three of them, bore their own expenses. These were too poor to maintain themselves. The rest offered to supply them; but they thought it better to accept the emperor's offer than to burden their brethren. From this circumstance, it is probable that the ambitious and worldly spirit, which now corrupted the clergy of almost all the Chris-

tian world, had not yet reached Britain and France.

In Armenia, the gospel had been preached long before this period; but the people were not generally converted. In the commencement of the fourth century, Gregory, called the enlightener, was appointed bishop of Armenia, and preached the gospel there. By his means, the king and all his nobles embraced Christianity. Armenia is situated on the south-east coast of the Black Sea. A corrupt Christianity still prevails there, distinct from the Roman Catholic and Greek churches. The Armenians, who traded in Persia, carried the gospel there, and many embraced it. But they suffered a dreadful persecution, in the time of Constantine, under Sapor, their king. The idolatrous priests, who worshipped the sun, joined with the Jews, in this persecution. Thousands of Christians suffered there for the name of Christ, rather than worship any other than the true God.

The gospel triumphed wonderfully, during the first two centuries, over the idolatry of the heathen, and against the arm of the civil government. This is a strong evidence of the

truth of the Christian religion. It is impossible to account for it upon any other supposition, than that the gospel is accompanied by a divine power. Yet, we have seen that, in all those countries where Christianity was supported by law, it soon became corrupt, and very little of the vital power of godliness was manifested.

Towards the end of the second century, idolatry began sensibly to decline throughout the Roman empire. At that time Satan saw that his kingdom was falling, and he devised a plan for uniting it with the kingdom of Christ. The new sect of philosophers, called "ECLECTICS,"\* which arose in Alexandria, undertook to unite the Pagan philosophy with Christianity. A great many Christian ministers followed their example, and deep-rooted corruptions of Christian doctrine began to grow in the church.

When Constantine became emperor, one of his first acts was to give Christianity the same favour with the laws, which was enjoyed by Paganism. After this, he gradually preferred

\* See Stories of the Second and Third Centuries.

the interests of the church to that of idolatry. He abolished the punishment of crucifixion; he forbade many superstitious practices among the Pagans; he established, by law, the Christian Sabbath. He declared publicly that he would not force men to become Christians. But the Pagans were very obstinate in preserving their superstitions. The emperor, therefore, exposed the mysteries of their religion, which had always before been kept secret. He melted the golden images that the heathen worshipped, and had the brass ones drawn by ropes through the city of Constantinople. This he did to show the people that their gods, who had no power to defend themselves, could not save their worshippers. He also destroyed some of the temples, where great wickedness had been practised.

In Egypt, the instrument by which the idolatrous priests measured the Nile, was kept in the temple of Serapis. That country is watered by the river Nile, which overflows its banks at certain seasons of the year. This instrument, which was called a cubit, Constantine ordered to be taken from the temple, and kept in the church at Alexandria. The

Pagans were very angry at this, and said that the Nile would not overflow its banks any more. But the next year, the river overflowed the country much more than it commonly did. So the people lost their confidence in their idols. The sons of Constantine followed his example, in abolishing Pagan superstitions. Yet there were a great many Pagans; and they rejoiced very much when they saw the scandal brought upon the church by the Arians. But Paganism was yet suffered to make one more desperate struggle for existence. And the Lord made use of the terrible wrath of Satan, on this occasion, once more to chastise his backsliding people, and give them another opportunity of returning to him, before he took from them his Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS.—Can you give an account of the first introduction of the gospel into Abyssinia? What is said of Christianity in Armenia, in the fourth century? When did idolatry, in the Roman empire, begin to decline? What measures did Constantine the Great take for the destruction of idolatry?

## CHAPTER VII.

*Julian, the Apostate.*

ON the death of Constantius, Julian was made emperor. He was one of the two sons of Julius, Constantine's brother, who were saved and brought up among the clergy, as already mentioned. He is called the *Apostate*, because he was once a professor of religion, and afterwards went back to the worship of idols. Constantius, from a mean spirit of jealousy, very common among kings and emperors, had put to death the relations of Julian. This undoubtedly prejudiced his mind against Christianity. When he was a young man, he was made a public reader in the church of Nicomedia. He pretended to be a very zealous Christian. If he had made the Bible his study, he would have learned that the cruelty of Constantine was owing to the depravity of the human heart, instead of the doctrines of Christianity, of which he was a most unwor-

thy professor. But the heathen philosophers took advantage of the injuries Julian had received from the Constantine family, to instill into his mind a hatred of Christianity. While very young, he made up his mind in favour of Paganism. But he did not come out openly. He pursued a continued course of hypocrisy and deception during the life of Constantius. He would pray in the church in the day time, and rise at midnight to worship the heathen gods. He was a man of uncommon abilities; and he exerted them with dexterity against the Christian religion.

Julian began to reign in the year 361. He immediately ordered the opening, repairing, and rebuilding of the idol temples. He fined those who had made use of the materials of the temples which had been destroyed. The money collected in this way was employed in building new ones. The idolatrous worship of the heathen was restored. The emperor's own palace had its temples and altars. The first thing he did in the morning was to sacrifice to his gods. He encouraged the profession of heathenism, and Christians were every



where insulted. He repealed the laws made against idolatry by former emperors, and restored its ancient honours and privileges.

Julian undertook to reform Paganism, by introducing into it many of the Christian principles which he had learned in his youth. He exhorted the magistrates to correct the vices of men, and relieve their miseries. He told them that the gods would reward men for the good they do their fellow-creatures; and that it was their duty to do good to all, even to their worst enemies. He said the priests should live so as to be a pattern of good works to others; and that those whose lives were dissolute and wicked should be turned out of office. He directed them not to read idle books, nor go to the theatre; but to give themselves to serious study. He told them to learn sacred hymns, and pray two or three times every day. He directed the magistrates to ordain the most pious and virtuous persons, in every city, as priests. He told them that the Christians, whom he called impious Galileans, had strengthened their party by their singular benevolence; but that Paganism had suffered by the vices of its professors. In

imitation of Christians, also, he established schools for the education of youth; public preaching and prayers; monasteries for devout persons; hospitals for the sick; and almshouses for the poor. These things he particularly recommended, in a letter to the chief priest of Galatia. He told them that it was the kindness of Christians to strangers, their care in burying the dead, and their gravity of manners, that advanced their religion. "The Galileans," he says, "relieve both their own poor and ours." Here we have an additional testimony to the superiority of the manners and conduct of Christians, from their most determined enemy.

The emperor had the wisdom not to punish Christians, as such. But the arts he used against them were much more destructive than open force. One of his principal weapons was ridicule, which is very powerful in its influence upon the minds of the multitude.

He required Christians, who held public offices, to sacrifice to heathen gods, or give up their places. Those who had been engaged under the former emperors, in destroying the monuments of idolatry, were put to death on

the most frivolous accusations. He took away the property of wealthy Christians, because some of them had, under the other emperors, received portions from the money belonging to the heathen temples. He took away the property of the Arian church at Edessa, and told them that, according to their own religion, being made poor here, they might be rich hereafter. He encouraged heretics and sectarians, and artfully disturbed the Christian world with contention and strife. Although he did not openly persecute, yet he allowed others to do it; and many suffered martyrdom, by false accusations, during his reign. He boasted of his mildness, and compared himself with Galerius, and other persecutors. At the same time he was making use of all his abilities to contrive how to vex Christians, and overturn their religion. He took away the incomes of the ministers, and forced upon them civil offices and burdens, to prevent them from attending to their pastoral duties. By this means he thought to deprive the people of instruction. At Antioch and Cyzicus, he took the property of the church, obliged the ministers to flee, and shut up the churches.

As the Jews were determined enemies of Christianity, he encouraged and supported them. While he professed to be a Christian, he learned from the Scriptures the prophecy of Christ respecting the destruction of the temple and the holy city. He therefore sent for the chief men among them, and encouraged them to rebuild the temple, and restore their worship. He offered to pay the expenses of the building out of the treasury of the Roman empire. He thought if he could build again the temple and city, he would prove these words of the Saviour to be false. But the Lord would not suffer his word to be contradicted by the artifices of this apostate. While the workmen were employed in removing the rubbish from the spot where the old temple stood, balls of fire came up out of the ground, destroyed their works, killed many of their workmen, and scorched and drove away the rest. Dreadful earthquakes also filled them with terror. After repeated attempts, they were obliged to abandon the work.

He discouraged learning among Christians, and hired philosophers to write against Christianity. The Roman emperors used to set up

images of themselves in the cities, and made the people bow to them as they passed. In order to ensnare Christians, Julian placed images of the heathen gods near his own images, so that, when they bowed to his statues, they might seem to worship idols. If they refused to bow at all, he punished them for treason.

When the emperor paid his soldiers, he had an altar built by his side, with burning coals upon it, and incense on a table. Before he gave them their money, he made them throw some incense into the fire. But very few of the Christian soldiers understood what it meant. Some of those who did, pretended to be sick. Others, through fear or love of money, complied. But most of them were deceived, and threw the incense into the fire, without knowing that they were worshipping idols. Some of these, when they went to their meals, asked a blessing, as they had been used to do. One of their heathen companions, with surprise, asked them what they meant by calling on Christ, after they had renounced him. They were astonished, and asked him what he meant. He told them that they had thrown incense

into the fire. When they heard this, they rose up hastily, and ran before the emperor, crying out, "We declare, before all the world, that we are Christians. We declare it before God, to whom we live, and for whom we are ready to die. We have not betrayed thee, Jesus, our Saviour. If our hands have offended, our hearts consented not. The emperor has deceived us; we renounce the impiety, and our blood shall answer for it." They then threw the money at Julian's feet, and told him to sacrifice them to Jesus Christ, and give his gold to those who would receive it. In his rage, he ordered them to be put to death; but, afterwards recollecting that it was contrary to his policy to punish Christians with death, he banished them to distant parts of the empire, and would not let them live in cities.

As it was Julian's policy to encourage divisions in the church, he allowed the bishops who had been banished to return. This proved favourable to the interests of truth and piety, for most of them had been banished on account of their opposition to Arianism. Meletius, of Antioch; Lucifer, of Cagliari; and Eusebius,

of Vercellæ, returned to their churches. But Athanasius did not venture from his concealment, because he feared the power of George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria.

The emperor would not allow Christians to teach classical learning, unless they would first sacrifice to idols. In consequence of this, most of the public teachers, who professed Christianity, quit their employment. The object of this, and the oppression he exercised towards the clergy, was to keep Christians in ignorance. But the conduct of these teachers shows that there was still much real piety in the church. Præresius, of Athens, had been the teacher of Julian. On this account he excepted him from this law. But he refused to enjoy privileges which were denied to his brethren, and left his school.

Cæsarius, the brother of Gregory Nazianzen, had been a physician at the emperor's court, under Constantius. He still continued to practise there, under Julian. His brother Gregory wrote to him that he and his father, the bishop of Nazianzum, in Cappadocia, were very much grieved that he should remain at the court of an infidel, seeking worldly greatness. He told

him that they were obliged to conceal the circumstance from his mother, who was a very pious woman, lest her grief should be more than her nature could endure. This letter had the desired effect. Julian tried all his artifices to persuade him to remain; but he said, "I am a Christian, and must continue so." He left the court, and went home to his pious father.

A number of persons, in different places, suffered rather on account of their imprudent zeal, than because they were Christians. They went into the temples, and overturned the idols. In this manner, they provoked the officers to punish them with death. Christians cannot be too cautious, in their conduct towards opposers. The apostle Paul says, Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat. Resentment, or retaliation for injuries, is contrary to the spirit of the gospel. The Lord Jesus says, If any man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also. He also tells us to return good for evil. The apostle Paul says again, Let your moderation be known to all men; and follow peace with all men. A



great many professors of religion think they are persecuted, when they only suffer the consequences of their imprudence. When we know our duty, we should do it boldly, without asking who may be offended by it. But we ought always to avoid giving unnecessary offence, by indulging an imprudent zeal.

At Ancyra, the capital of Galatia, a minister named Basil, had opposed Arianism with great zeal, under Constantius. He now went through the city, exhorting the people publicly not to worship idols. Seeing the heathen employed in idolatrous worship, he sighed, and prayed that no Christian might be guilty of such wickedness. The governor charged him with sedition, and sent him to prison. When Julian came to the city, he sent for Basil. The minister reproached the emperor for his apostacy, and was tortured to death.

Almost all the people in Neocæsarea, in Cappadocia, were Christians.\* They had destroyed the temple of Fortune, and brought upon them in consequence, the hatred of Ju-

\* See Stories of the Second and Third Centuries. Published by the American S. S. Union.

lian. He therefore oppressed them with heavy taxes. Julian came to Antioch, at the yearly feast of Apollo. On this occasion, he expected to see the magnificence of that wealthy city displayed before him, as the high priest of Apollo. He asked the priest what sacrifice was to be offered at the festival. The priest told him that he had brought a goose from home, but the city had prepared nothing. He was mortified at this, and said to the senate, "You all of you suffer every thing to be carried out of your houses and given to the Galileans. They support the poor with your wealth, and give credit to their impiety." But he could not persuade them to do any thing for the poor heathen god, whose temple was deserted. Here we have another testimony to the charity that prevailed among Christians. It is evident, also, from this circumstance, that Christianity prevailed very generally among the people at Antioch.

Mark, the bishop of Arethusa, in Spain, was a man of great piety and virtue. In the beginning of the reign of Constantius, when all Julian's family were in danger, this bishop saved his life. Yet this apostate and ungrate-

ful man ordered him to rebuild an idol temple which he had destroyed in the time of Constantius. He refused, because he could not do it, without disobeying God. He was therefore tortured, in a dreadful manner. He bore his sufferings with astonishing patience. The officer who tortured him was affected by his conduct, and said to the emperor, "Is it not a shame that the Christians should be so much superior to us?" After this, a number of his persecutors attended to his instructions.

The Lord at length brought upon George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, a just punishment for his cruelties towards Christians. In the year 362, he was murdered by the Pagans. Athanasius had spent seven years, partly in the desert, and partly in the house of a pious woman in Alexandria. He now ventured to return openly to that city. The general voice of the people decided for Athanasius; his church was restored to him, and the Arians were obliged to hold their meetings in private houses. He entered upon his labours again; treated his enemies with mildness; relieved the distresses of all; and preached the truth boldly. He held a council at Alexandria,

composed of those who had suffered from the Arian persecution. At this council, those who had been deceived or forced into the adoption of the Arian creed, owned with tears that they had been imposed upon, and were received into the church. But Athanasius was not long allowed to enjoy his liberty. The heathen sent word to the emperor that he corrupted the city, and all Egypt; and that, if he continued there long, not a Pagan would be left. Julian wrote in answer that he allowed the Christian ministers who had been banished, to return to their country, but not to their churches; and ordered Athanasius immediately to leave the city. The Christians wrote to the emperor, begging him to let the bishop remain. In his answer, he treats them with great contempt. At the same time he wrote to the governor of Egypt, that if Athanasius was not banished within a certain time, he would fine the officers one hundred pounds of gold. It is evident, from these severe measures, that the emperor dreaded the influence of the piety and talents of Athanasius. He saw that his labours were continually undermining the declining cause of Paganism.

“We must retire a little, friends,” said the bishop; “it is a cloud that will soon be over.” He went on board a ship, and sailed on the river Nile, to the obscure parts of Egypt. But his persecutors followed him. As his enemies came near, he directed his companions to return to Alexandria, and meet them. When the persecutors met them, and inquired for Athanasius, they answered, “he is near; make haste, and you will soon overtake him.” They went forward with full speed. The bishop had concealed himself near the road; and when they had passed by, he returned to Alexandria. Here he concealed himself till the end of the persecution.

At Antioch, the psalms which the Christians sung, in their worship, very much offended the emperor. Among others, this chorus greatly enraged him:—“Confounded be all they that worship graven images.” He ordered an officer to punish them.

But God did not suffer this wily enemy long to vex the church. He engaged in a war with the king of Persia, in which he was killed. While the blood was streaming from his wound, he filled his hand with it, and

threw it into the air, saying, "O, GALILEAN, [alluding to Christ] THOU HAST CONQUERED."

Young people may learn a useful lesson from the history of Julian. He suffered his mind to become prejudiced against Christianity, by the conduct of some hypocritical professors. In this state of mind, he permitted his principles to be poisoned by the insinuating arts of infidel philosophers. There are many persons in the church who are not Christians. We cannot, therefore, judge of the principles and effects of the gospel by the conduct of those who call themselves Christians. Young persons, then, who are surrounded by worldly-minded professors, should not listen to the scoffs and sneers of infidels, but examine the subject for themselves. If they will look into the Bible, they will find that all the evil conduct of church members, which troubles them so much, is there pointedly condemned. We are also taught, in the Holy Scriptures, to expect false professors to creep into the church; so that, the very circumstance which creates doubts in the minds of many inquirers, is an evidence of the truth of the scriptures. Young inquirers should first give their hearts to the

Lord Jesus, and then they will *know* that the Bible is true.

QUESTIONS.—Why was Julian called the *Apostate*? What prejudiced his mind against Christianity? Who took advantage of this, to set his mind against the gospel? What course did he pursue in persecuting Christians? What did he encourage the Jews to do? What prevented them from building the temple? How did he treat the Christian soldiers? What did he do, to encourage divisions in the church? What effect had this? How did he treat Christian school teachers? What can you relate of Basil? What is said of Neocæsarea? What circumstance happened at Antioch, at the yearly feast of Apollo? What is said of Mark? What punishment did the Lord bring upon George, the tyrannical bishop of Alexandria? What happened in that city, after his death? What can you relate of the death of Julian? What lesson should young persons learn from the history of Julian?

## CHAPTER VIII.

*History of the Church under Jovian.*

THE death of Julian completely disappointed the hopes of Paganism. As soon as the news was circulated, the temples were shut, and the priests ran away. Jovian, the next emperor, returned with his army to Antioch, and immediately set himself about regulating the affairs of religion. \* The church was now torn by divisions, and split up into many contending parties. Under this state of things, Jovian declared the Christian religion to be the established religion of the government. But he tolerated all others. He made a law, by which the Pagans were allowed to open their temples, and establish their own worship. At the same time he forbade many of their impious rites and ceremonies. He restored the Christians to their churches, and called back those who had been banished.

As soon as Athanasius heard of the death of Julian, he appeared suddenly at Alexandria.



His people were filled with surprise and great joy. He had been concealed in the city, from the time that he was persecuted by Julian. Jovian immediately wrote him a letter, heartily approving his conduct in the late persecutions, and confirming him in his office. The emperor also wrote again, to ask the bishops' advice respecting Arianism. Athanasius called together some bishops, who joined with him in recommending to the emperor the Nicene faith. Upon the invitation of the emperor, Athanasius visited him at Antioch. Many of the Arian bishops, and the leaders of several other sects, came to the emperor at the same time, each asking favour for his own party. "I hate disputes," said the emperor. "I love and honour men of peace and promoters of union." The Arians were confounded. Seeing their hopes of favour from the emperor at an end, they signed the Nicene creed, and joined the church at Antioch, under Meletius, the orthodox bishop. We see by this, as well as by their conduct under Constantine, how little sincerity there was among the Arians. Jovian had told them that he would not persecute them; yet, when they

found they could not enjoy worldly grandeur, by the favour of the emperor, they gave up the point, and returned to the general church. Yet, it was only to remain there undisturbed, till they could find another opportunity to step into power.

The Arians of Alexandria tried to get Lucius, a man entirely destitute of piety, appointed bishop of that city. For this purpose, they went before the emperor, with Lucius at their head. The friends of Athanasius also sent some persons to oppose them. The Arians begged him to set over them any other man than Athanasius. "I have made inquiries," said Jovian; "he teaches sound doctrine." "It is true," answered the Arians, "he speaks well, but means ill." The emperor replied, "I need no other testimony. If he means ill, he must give account of that to God. We men hear words; God alone knows the heart." He sent Athanasius to Alexandria, where he lived ten years, and directed the affairs of the church.

In this manner, Jovian exhibits a frankness of manner and firmness of purpose, which do great honour to his character. The malignity

of the Arians is also here strikingly manifest. They exhibit the spirit of religious party strife in its worst shape. My young readers should take warning from this, against indulging a contentious disposition, in matters of religion. Religious party feeling grieves away the Holy Spirit, who cannot dwell in the midst of strife. When people give themselves up to it, they almost always neglect the practice of vital piety, and often run into extravagant errors. But Jovian died suddenly, after a reign of seven months; so that the church was again thrown into a state of confusion.

QUESTIONS.—What was the character of Jovian? When he was made emperor, what did he first do? What effect had the death of Julian upon Paganism? What did Jovian do, after he had made peace with the king of Persia? What was then the state of the church? What course did Jovian pursue towards these contending parties? What is said of Athanasius? What did the Arians of Antioch do? How did the emperor treat the Arians of Alexandria, when they came to answer Athanasius?

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Church under Valens—Death of Athanasius—Arian persecution at Alexandria—Eusebius of Samosata.*

AFTER JOVIAN'S death, Valentinian was made emperor. But he gave the eastern part of the empire to his brother Valens. Valentinian was sound in his belief, and followed the example of Jovian, in regulating the affairs of the church. But Valens was a man of weak understanding, and easily led astray. And he appears to have been as wicked as he was weak. He supported the Arians, and persecuted all others; ordering all those who believed the Nicene creed to be driven out of Constantinople. In the beginning of the year 367, the Arians persuaded Valens to turn out of their churches all the bishops that had been banished under Constantius. These bishops had most of them returned, during the reign of Julian and Jovian. The people of Alexandria were strongly attached to Athanasius.

On this account Tatian, the governor of Alexandria, was afraid at first to obey the order of the emperor. At length, however, he broke into the church, where Athanasius lodged, in the night, and tried to find him. But Athanasius had left the church before, and concealed himself in his father's tomb. He remained there four months. Valens, however, was afraid of a tumult among the people. He therefore allowed the bishop to return to his church. The emperor now received baptism from Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople. This man made Valens swear that he would always support the Arian creed.

About this time, a council was held at Laodicea. The principal object of this assembly appears to have been to correct some abuses, which, in the general declension, had crept into the church. Among other things, they forbade clergymen to lend money upon usury, to visit taverns, or to assist at the public shows. They also condemned the idolatrous custom of praying to angels, so much practised now among the Roman Catholics. This shows that superstition and idolatry were already preparing the way for the dark ages of Popery.

At Antioch, Arianism triumphed, both in numbers and power. Yet there were a considerable number who remained firm in the truth. In the year 370, Eudoxius, bishop of Constantinople, died. The Arians chose Demophilus in his place, and the orthodox chose Evagrius. Valens, in a great rage, banished Evagrius, and the bishop who ordained him. Eighty ministers were then sent to the emperor to complain of this conduct. The tyrant was enraged at their boldness; yet he was afraid to punish them openly. He therefore gave orders to one of his officers to murder them secretly. The officer pretended that he was going to send them into banishment. They cheerfully submitted to the order. The officer put them on board a ship, and ordered the sailors to set it on fire as soon as they were out of sight of land. They did so, and escaped in a boat. The ship was driven by a strong wind into the harbour of Dacidizus, on the coast of Bithynia, where all the ministers were burnt up in it. It was not intended that the murder should be known; but God suffered not the mean spirited Valens to conceal this malignant and inhuman transaction.

About this time, a council of forty-six bishops was held by the friends of the truth. They mourned over the wretched state of the church. Infidels laughed at the miseries brought upon the church of Christ by those who professed to be his followers. The faith of weak Christians was shaken. The churches had now become nurseries of false doctrine and impiety. True Christians forsook them, and went into the deserts. There they lifted up their hands to God with sighs and tears. Meletius, who was at the head of this council, was banished. His people still continued to meet, at the foot of a mountain, near Antioch.

Some of the ministers were banished to Antinous, in Thebais, in Egypt. Most of the inhabitants of this place were heathen, and they preached the gospel to them. So, the persecution in this case, was the means of spreading the gospel.

Athanasius died in the year 373. He had been bishop of Alexandria forty-six years. During most of this time he was employed in opposing the Arian heresy. He was constantly persecuted. He was several times banished, and endured a great variety of suf-

fering. His conduct every where appears consistent and upright. The only fault we find with him is, that he seems to have given up his mind so much to controversy, as to have neglected in some measure the cultivation of piety; and he manifested too much bitterness towards his adversaries. Yet he appears to have been raised up by Providence, to defend the doctrine of the Trinity.

When Athanasius died, he recommended to the church to choose Peter in his place. He was elected, by the united voice of the church. But Euzoius, the Arian bishop of Antioch, persuaded the emperor to interfere. He caused Peter to be imprisoned, and appointed Lucius, whom Jovian had rejected with such contempt, to fill the place of Athanasius.

Magnus, the Pagan officer, who came so near being punished by Jovian, now joined with the Arians in persecuting the true followers of Christ. Magnus took nineteen ministers and deacons, some of whom were very old. He told them to agree to the sentiments of the Arians. They refused, and were whipped, tortured, insulted, and banished into Heliopolis and Phœnicia. Some of the faithful were



seen to weep over these things. Palladius, the governor of Egypt, who was a Pagan, sent them to prison. He afterwards whipped them, and sent twenty-three of them, who were monks, to work in the mines. Many other acts of savage cruelty were committed by the Arians against Christians. Euzoius, after filling Alexandria with tears, returned to Antioch.

The Arians tried to persuade the monks of Egypt to join their party. But they offered their necks to the sword, rather than give up the truth. A number of them were banished, but were afterwards allowed to return. Peter escaped from prison, and went to Europe.

Eusebius, bishop of Samosata, was turned out of his office by the Arians, and banished. He was a very zealous and godly man. He went secretly, in the dress of a soldier, to a great many places in the east, to strengthen the churches and to ordain pastors. When the person sent by the emperor came to inform him of his banishment, he told him to conceal himself, or he would be thrown into the river, and his death laid to his charge. He went away secretly, but his people fol-

lowed him. His friends would have supplied him liberally with money for his journey ; but he would take but very little of them. He prayed and instructed the people, and then went away in peace. In the time of Constantius, the decree of a council held at Antioch was given to him to keep. The Arians persuaded the emperor to order him to give it up. He told Constantius that what had been delivered by a synod could not be given up, except by order of the same synod. The emperor then threatened to cut off his hand. But he still refused to give up the decree. Constantius was struck with admiration at his fortitude, and let him go. Eunomius was appointed in his place, by the Arians. He was a man of a mild temper, and tried to gain the favour of the people. But they were so strongly attached to their old bishop, that they would not go to hear the Arian preach. Eunomius therefore left them. After the death of Valens, Eusebius returned to his church. He afterwards went to the town of Dolicha, to ordain an orthodox minister. While he was there, an Arian woman threw a stone upon his head, and killed him. Before he died, he made

his friends promise that they would not bring the woman to justice; for he loved mercy better.

The emperor Valens was killed in a battle with the Goths, in the year 378, after having reigned fourteen years. A little before his death, he let the bishops who had been banished return to their churches. Lucius was driven from Alexandria, and Peter returned to his church.

QUESTIONS.—What was the character of Valens? How did he treat the believers in the Nicene faith? What did he do to the bishops who had been banished by Constantius? What happened at Constantinople after the death of Eudoxius? What was done to the eighty ministers who were sent to complain of these proceedings? What happened at Edessa? When did Athanasius die? How long had he been bishop? What was his character? What happened at Alexandria after his death? What did Magnus, the Pagan, do? What is related of Eusebius, of Samosata? When did Valens die? What did he do just before his death?

## CHAPTER X.

*History of the Church under Valentinian.*

WHEN Valentinian first began to reign, he made a law that no person should be compelled in matters of religion. But soon after, he took away the revenues of the heathen temples, and prohibited some of the wicked practices connected with their idolatrous worship. In general, however, he was very indulgent towards the Pagans.

At this time the church had become exceedingly corrupt, in all the large cities. The office of bishop, in those places, had become an object of ambition. Since the establishment of Christianity by law, these bishops had become very rich. They lived in splendid style; were richly dressed, and rode in chariots; and their tables were spread with dainties. This made the office a matter of contention among worldly men; and few men of real piety were appointed. The histories of the church at this period, which have been

preserved, relate principally to the affairs of these large cities. This is the reason why this history furnishes so little evidence of vital godliness in the church. But there was, doubtless, much true piety in the small towns, and in the country, which were beyond the reach of this worldly influence. We have general accounts, highly favourable to the characters of many of the bishops of the provinces. They were modest in their appearance, lived temperately, and wore plain dress. It is to be presumed that they were faithful in discharging their pastoral duties, and that true piety still prevailed extensively among the common people.

Ambrose was born in France, in the year 333. His father was an officer in the emperor's army. He had a brother and a sister, both older than himself. At Rome he made himself master of all the learning which the city could afford. His sister, who was a pious woman, taught him the doctrines of the Bible, and he became pious. He early distinguished himself as a lawyer. The commander of the army of Italy noticed his abilities, and chose him as one of his council. Ambrose was placed

at Milan, with authority to appoint governors to several provinces. When he gave any man a commission, he would tell him to govern more like a bishop than a judge. He held this office five years, and was noted for his prudence and justice.

Immediately after the death of Auxentius, the Arian bishop of Milan, the bishops of the province met together to choose another. The emperor told them to choose a man who could teach by his life, as well as by his preaching, and assured them that he would approve their choice. They requested him to name the man. But he refused, telling them that *they* ought to understand better than *he*, the qualifications necessary to so important an office. The people of the city were divided. The Arian party tried hard to get a man who would promote their views. The contention was so sharp that there was great danger of a tumult. When Ambrose heard these things, he ran to the church, and exhorted the people to submit to the laws and preserve peace. When he had done speaking, an infant's voice was heard in the crowd, "Ambrose is bishop." The whole assembly immediately cried out, "Ambrose

shall be the man." All parties agreed immediately, and he was elected by the united voice of the assembly.

Ambrose was astonished, and positively refused to accept the office. But, finding that the people were determined, he undertook to go out of the city secretly in the night; but he lost his way, and in the morning found himself at the gate of the city. He was taken, and kept by a guard, till the matter was laid before the emperor. Valentinian cheerfully consented. But Ambrose again made his escape, and concealed himself with a friend in the country. The emperor published a threatening edict; and Ambrose returned again to Milan, for he was afraid of exposing his friend to the resentment of the emperor. Valentinian then gave thanks to God, that he had chosen the same man to take care of men's souls, whom he had before appointed to manage their worldly affairs. When he became bishop, the emperor received his instructions and admonitions with reverence. On one occasion, he heard the bishop represent the faults of some persons in office, with great plainness. He told him, in answer, that he knew the honesty of his

character before his ordination ; and requested him to follow the rules of the gospel, and correct the faults into which he himself was prone to fall. This conduct was honourable to the religious character of Valentinian. Persons in authority generally dislike to be told of their faults.

Ambrose was thirty-four years old when he was chosen bishop. He immediately gave all his money to the church and to the poor. He also gave his lands to the church ; but reserved the yearly rent of them to support his sister. He also gave the charge of his family to his brother. Being thus free from worldly cares, he gave himself up wholly to the work of the ministry. He first applied himself diligently to the study of the Holy Scriptures. He spent all the time which he could spare from the duties of his office, in reading. He preached every Sabbath. He opposed Arianism ; and by his labours it was rooted out of Italy.

There was a minister of great learning and piety at Rome, whose name was Simplician. Ambrose persuaded him to remove to Milan. He then placed himself under his instruction,



and improved greatly in Christian knowledge and experience. He was sensible of his want of knowledge, and was willing to learn from those who were below him in office. Simplician was the means, in the hand of the Lord, of awakening in Ambrose a higher tone of pious feeling than was common with the bishops of that age. Ambrose laboured with great zeal, and restored purity of doctrine and discipline in the church. In the year 375, the emperor Valentinian died.

QUESTIONS.—What law did Valentinian make when he first began to reign? What did he do soon after? What was the state of religion at this time in large cities? What, in small towns, and in the country? What circumstances can you relate of the early life of Ambrose? Can you tell how Ambrose came to be chosen bishop of Milan? What did he do, immediately after this? When did Valentinian die?

## CHAPTER XI.

*The Church under Gratian, Valentinian II. and Theodosius, till the death of Gratian—The Priscillianists—Martin of Tours.*

GRATIAN, Valentinian's eldest son, reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Britain; and Valentinian, Gratian's infant brother, was made emperor of the rest of the western empire. Gratian appears to have been sincerely pious, from his early years. The good of the empire seems to have been the first object of his desires. He chose Theodosius, a man of great abilities, to rule with him in the east, with no other motive than to promote the best interests of the empire. He also managed the affairs of his infant brother in Italy with great affection and tenderness. There, Gracchus, the governor, laboured hard to subdue idolatry.

Gratian was only sixteen years old, when he began to reign. But his mind was earnestly fixed on divine things, and he felt his ignorance, and his need of instruction. He there-

fore wrote to Ambrose, requesting him to come to him, and teach him the doctrine of salvation. He tells the bishop that he does not desire to study for the sake of contention. He wishes to experience in his own heart the love of God, and the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Although Ambrose was eminently pious, yet he was not entirely free from the prevailing superstitions of the age in which he lived. The superstitious veneration of the monkish life continued to increase. Nor was it confined to one sex. Before monks were known in the world, it was the practice of many pious ladies to devote themselves to a single life. But they lived privately, in their fathers' houses; and their vows were not so strict as to make it criminal for them afterwards to marry. But, as the monastic life began to be considered so meritorious, these ladies devoted themselves to it, under the most solemn promises; so that, it was considered in the highest degree criminal for them ever afterwards to marry. They also formed themselves into religious communities, as they were called, and lived together in houses built for the purpose. When

these communities were first formed, there was doubtless much real piety in them; though it must have been mixed with a great deal of superstition. They afterwards became nurseries of idolatry and impiety. Marcellinas, the sister of Ambrose, was one of these women. She was sincerely pious; and was the means of early leading her brother to the Saviour. This led him to approve her manner of life. He, therefore, encouraged and promoted female religious communities. He wrote books on the subject, and established rules for the regulation of this kind of life. By this means, he got the ill will of many parents, whose daughters embraced the monastic life. But he taught the essential truths of the gospel, and promoted the Christian graces of faith and love, which were now so much neglected in the church.

The barbarous Goths now overran the country, and carried off many Christians. This afforded Ambrose an opportunity to exercise his liberality. He even sold the vessels of the church, to redeem the captives.

At Sirmium, in Illyricum, the Arian bishop Photinus, had spread error very extensively

in the church. The office of bishop, in that place, was vacant, in the year 379, and Ambrose was sent for to attend the election of a bishop. The empress Justina, the mother of young Valentinian, lived at Sirmium. She belonged to the Arian party, and tried to have Ambrose turned out of the church. By her influence, the mob was excited against him. They insulted him in the church. But he would not leave the house, but remained in the pulpit.

At Antioch, Meletius was restored to his church. Constantinople had been forty years under Arian tyranny. True religion was little known in that great city. Gregory Nazianzum was appointed bishop, for the purpose of bringing the church back to the faith and practice of the gospel. In the year 380, Theodosius made a law against Arianism, and in favour of the Nicene faith.

The emperor called a council in Constantinople, to settle the distracted state of the eastern church. Three hundred and fifty bishops came to this council. But it was greatly inferior in piety and wisdom to that

of Nice. Their proceedings were confused and disorderly.

Soon after this, Gregory, disgusted with the corruptions of the church, left his office at Constantinople. Theodosius once more attempted to unite all parties, by a conference at Constantinople. But this was impossible. The Novatians were the only sect that united cordially with the general church in sentiment. They were on friendly terms with the church, and were tolerated by the emperor. The rest were condemned.

In the year 383, Amphiloehus, of Iconium, with some other bishops, went to court. Arcadius, the emperor's son, about six years old, was near his father. Amphiloehus paid the usual respects to the emperor, but took no notice of his son. Theodosius told him to salute his son. The bishop went near, and stroking him, said, "Save you, my child." The emperor was angry, and ordered him to be driven from the court. Amphiloehus then spoke out with a loud voice, "*You* cannot bear to have *your* son neglected; be assured that God, in like manner, is offended with

those who honour not his Son as himself!" The emperor was struck with the justness of the remark, and immediately made a law, forbidding the heretics to meet for worship. The bishop's remark was striking and just; but the emperor's conduct was unjust and oppressive.

In the same year, Maximus, the commander of the army in Britain, rebelled against Gratian. The emperor's troops left him, and he fled towards Italy. At Lyons, Adragathius invited him to a feast, and swore friendship to him, upon the Bible. Gratian, sincere himself, trusted him with Christian confidence. But his false hearted friend, murdered him in his own house. This emperor possessed a most amiable disposition. He was also a man of learning, and well acquainted with the affairs of religion and government. He was chaste, temperate, benevolent, and conscientious, in all his conduct. But, what adds a living lustre to his character, he was sincerely and ardently pious towards God. Yet, he seems to have been destitute of a talent for managing the affairs of government. The Lord Jesus showed in him that his kingdom

was not of this world. When he was dying, he lamented the absence of his beloved Ambrose; but he did not mourn over the loss of his kingdom.

During the reign of Gratian, Priscillian appeared in Spain. He was eloquent, and ingenious; but very contentious. He had great powers of body and mind, and affected much modesty and gravity of manners. He embraced many strange and mystical notions. Many weak minded and credulous persons, who are always fond of something new and strange, followed him. They were called Priscillianists.

After the death of Gratian, the rebel Maximus, assumed the authority of emperor, and entered, victoriously, into Treves. Idacius, an aged presbyter, and Ithacius, bishop of Sossu-ba, had, before this, tried to get the magistrates to turn the Priscillianists out of the cities. They now applied to Maximus, and Priscillian came before him to defend himself and his people. Martin, bishop of Tours, a man of eminent piety, and true Christian spirit, blamed the Ithacians for bringing the heretics before the emperor as criminals. He entreated Maxi-



mus not to shed their blood. They had been pronounced heretics by the bishops, and turned out of the church. He said this was sufficient. He represented to him, also, the impropriety of the civil officers interfering with the affairs of the church. These sentiments agree with the spirit of the New Testament; and they show that this holy man understood the principles of religious liberty. After much persevering entreaty, Maximus promised that he would not take the lives of the heretics. But two bishops, Magnus and Rufus, afterwards prevailed upon him to put to death Priscillian and four of his principal leaders. The heresy, however, was not subdued by this means. Priscillian was honoured as a martyr; and fifteen years after, the contention was still maintained with great warmth. Although the actors in this affair had no claim to the character of Christians, yet their conduct was laid to the charge of Christianity. These contending parties were equally destitute of true piety, though one of them professed to receive the truth. Men who feared God, and loved moderation and charity, wept and prayed in secret, and were despised by both parties.

Ambrose was sent to Maximus, with a message from the younger Valentinian. While at the court of the usurper, he refused to hold communion with the bishops who had been concerned in the death of the heretics. Maximus was enraged, and ordered Ambrose to leave his court. Here he also had the grief to see Hyginus, an aged bishop, near his end, dragged into banishment. A number of holy men protested against these barbarities, and were branded by the ruling party as heretics. Among these, was Martin, of Tours. Here is another striking evidence of the evils arising from the union of church and state. A usurper, who had murdered a pious Christian emperor, becomes the head of the church, and gives laws to the Christian world!

MARTIN, of *Tours*, was born at Ticinum, in Italy. In his youth, he was a soldier in the armies of Constantius and Julian. But he served in that capacity against his will. The life of a soldier cannot be agreeable to the mind of a sincere Christian. The gospel breathes a spirit of peace and good will to men. No Christian, therefore, who feels the love of Christ in his heart, can take delight in

destroying the lives of his fellow creatures. When only ten years old, Martin went to the church, of his own accord, and gave in his name as a candidate for baptism. At the age of twelve, he was desirous of entering into the monastic life. But his father, who was a soldier, compelled him to serve in the army. While there, he was remarkable for his freedom from the vices common among soldiers. He saved nothing for himself, out of his wages, except what was necessary for his daily food. The rest, he gave to the poor. At the age of eighteen, he was baptized. Two years afterwards, he left the army. Some time after this, he was taken by a band of robbers, who lived in the mountains. He was bound, and given to one of them to be plundered. The robber led him away into a private place, and asked him who he was. Martin answered, "I am a Christian." "Are you not afraid?" said the robber. "I never was more at ease," answered Martin, "because I know the mercy of the Lord Jesus to be most present in trials; I am more concerned for you, who, by your course of life, make yourself unfit to partake of the mercy of Christ." He then entered

into an argument, and preached the gospel to the robber. The man believed, and became a sincere Christian.

Martin was at length chosen bishop of Tours, by the united voice of the people. It was, however, with great difficulty that he could be persuaded to quit his monastery. He still had one, two miles out of the town. He lived there, with eighty monks, upon very hard fare. Maximus tried to gain favour with Martin. But the bishop told him he could not countenance a usurper and murderer. Maximus pleaded necessity, and the providence of God, for his conduct, and said he had killed no man except in the field of battle. However, notwithstanding the bishop's plainness, Maximus and his wife heard him preach, and took great pains to gain his favour. But Martin continued to oppose his tyranny. Maximus tried to reconcile him to his conduct, in punishing the Priscillianists with death. He also endeavoured to persuade him to communicate with the bishops who had procured their condemnation. The bishop resolutely refused. At length, he consented to communicate with the men, upon condition that the emperor

would save the lives of some men who had been condemned to death. But he bitterly repented of this; and guarded against any future communion with the party of Ithacius. He afterwards left his church, and lived sixteen years in retirement.

QUESTIONS.—Who reigned, after the death of Valentinian? What was the character of Gratian? With what motives did he choose Theodosius to reign with him in the east? How old was he when he began to reign? On what was his mind earnestly fixed? What request did he make of Ambrose? What did Ambrose do, when the Goths carried Christians into captivity? What happened at Sir-mium, in Illyricum? What measures did Theodosius take to settle the distracted state of the eastern church? What was the character of this council? What did they do? What story can you relate of Amphilo-chus? Can you relate the circumstances of Gratian's death? What were the errors taught by Priscillian? How were the Priscillianists treated by Maximus? Who persuaded him to persecute them? Who opposed these measures? What can you relate of the early life of Mar-

tin, of Tours? What did he do, after he became bishop?

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Ambrose persecuted by Valentinian and his Mother—Maximus overthrown—Death of Valentinian—History of the Church to the death of Theodosius the Great—General extension of the Gospel, in the fourth century—Concluding Remarks.*

IT has already been stated that the empress Justina belonged to the Arian party. As soon as her husband, Valentinian, died, she began to teach her son, Valentinian II. the pernicious doctrines of the sect. She also stirred up in him the persecuting spirit which had always distinguished the Arians. Ambrose was the principal object of her hatred, and she persuaded her son to threaten him. The bishop exhorted the young emperor to receive the doctrine delivered to the church by the apostles. At this, Valentinian was greatly enraged,

and, surrounding the church with his guards, ordered Ambrose to come out of it. Ambrose replied, "I shall not willingly give up the sheep of Christ, to be devoured by wolves. You may use your swords and spears against me. Such a death, I shall freely undergo." But the people were strongly attached to Ambrose, and the young emperor and his mother were afraid to proceed to violence.

Ambrose, by his influence, had for some time prevented Maximus from making war upon Valentinian. Yet, the ungrateful Justina continued to vex the bishop. She introduced Auxentius, an Arian bishop, into Milan, in opposition to Ambrose. He challenged Ambrose to dispute with him in the emperor's court. Ambrose wrote to Valentinian that the emperor had no right to decide upon matters of Christian doctrine. He told him to let Auxentius come to the church, and if the people liked him better, let them take him. Auxentius then asked the emperor to send a party of soldiers to obtain for him one of the churches in the city. Valentinian first sent officers to require Ambrose to deliver up the church, with the vessels belonging to it. If

Ambrose had done this, he would have acknowledged that the Arians belonged to the true church. This he could not conscientiously do. He therefore told them that, if the emperor had sent to demand of him his own property, he would have given it up freely. But he could not surrender what had been put into his hands to keep. The next day, he said to his people, "I can grieve, I can weep, I can groan. Against arms and soldiers, tears are my weapons. I cannot resist in any other manner. Our Lord Jesus is Almighty. What he commands must be done. It does not become you to resist." With the love that the people bore to Ambrose, it would have been easy for him to persuade them to defend his rights by force. But he knew that such conduct would have been contrary to the spirit of the gospel. The word of God commands obedience to magistrates, in all cases where it can be done without disobeying God; and forbids Christians to resist their authority.

Valentinian and the empress now increased their demands. They required that the great church newly built in the city, and also the church which stood outside of the walls,



should be given up. Upon the Sabbath, after the sermon, Ambrose was told that officers were sent to the church outside of the city. But this information did not disturb him, and he went on with the service. Soon, however, he was told that the people had met an Arian minister, and laid hands on him. This information filled him with grief. He wept, and prayed that no man's blood might be shed; but rather that his own life might be taken. He immediately sent some ministers and deacons, who brought the man safe from the tumult. The court were now greatly enraged; and a great many of the people were chained and put in prison; so that the prisons were full. The magistrates and men of rank were also threatened. Still Ambrose remained firm, in the conscientious discharge of his duty.

A guard of soldiers surrounded the church where the bishop was, and kept him and the people there all night. They spent their time in singing psalms. In the morning, the emperor sent a person to ask Ambrose if he intended to usurp the empire. The bishop told him that he had an empire, but it was in weakness; for, said he, "When I am weak,

then I am strong." He then reminded him of the service he had done his empire, in preventing Maximus from invading Italy. The court intended, by these measures, to force Ambrose to give up the churches to the Arians. But when they saw his resolutions, they ordered the guards to leave the church, and set at liberty the people who had been thrown into prison. Ambrose continued faithful in praying and preaching; and the spirit of devotion was kept alive among the people.

At length, news came that Maximus was about to make war upon Valentinian. The ungrateful Justina now entreated Ambrose again to undertake an embassy to the usurper, to persuade him to continue at peace. The bishop cheerfully consented, but was unsuccessful. However, Theodosius came to the assistance of Valentinian, defeated Maximus, and put an end to his life. The young emperor then forsook his mother's principles, and embraced the true faith. It is not certain, however, whether he was truly converted, or whether he adopted in form, the sentiments of Ambrose from worldly motives. In the year 392, another rebellion arose in the west, in

which Valentinian lost his life. Ambrose mourned for him from sincere affection.

Theodosius, who reigned in the east, possessed a very passionate temper. At Thessalonica, a tumult was made by the people, in which one of the emperor's officers was killed. The emperor, in a fit of passion, ordered the sword to be let loose upon the people. Ambrose entreated the emperor to spare their lives, and he promised to forgive them. But the great officers of the court afterwards persuaded him to have the order executed. It was done with great cruelty. Some thousands were put to death without trial, the innocent with the guilty.

Ambrose wrote him a faithful letter. He reminded him of the declaration of God's word, that, if the prophet does not warn the wicked, he shall answer for it. He then acknowledged that the emperor manifested a zeal for the faith; but reproved him sharply for indulging the violence of his temper. "I love you," said Ambrose, "I cherish you, I pray for you; but do not blame me, if I give the preference to God." After this act, the bishop refused to admit Theodosius into the

church at Milan. The emperor pleaded the case of David. Ambrose told him to imitate David in his repentance as well as in his sin. Theodosius submitted, and kept from the church eight months. But, on a particular occasion, he expressed his sorrow to Ruffinus, his chief officer, with sighs and tears. "I weep," said he, "that the house of God, which is open to slaves and beggars, is shut to me." Ruffinus tried to persuade the bishop to receive the emperor. Ambrose rebuked him for interfering, as it was by his advice that Theodosius had committed the barbarous act. Ruffinus told him that the emperor was coming. Ambrose answered, that he would hinder him from entering the church; yet, if he chose to play the king, he would offer him his throat. The emperor came, and told the bishop that he was ready to submit to his requirements. Ambrose required him to show his repentance publicly; and in future, to put no man to death until thirty days after his sentence, so that his anger might have time to cool. Theodosius pulled off his imperial robes, and fell down upon the pavement. There he wept, and cried out, "My soul cleaveth unto

the dust; quicken thou me, according to thy word." The people wept and prayed with him. This affair bears some resemblance to that of Nathan and David. In Ambrose, we find the resolution and firmness peculiar to men who fear the Lord. "The righteous are as bold as a lion." In Theodosius, we see a great and wise prince, who had also the fear of God before his eyes. But he had, in a moment of passion, committed a great and crying sin. Here we see him, laying aside his authority, and humbling himself before God. If religion had exerted no influence upon his heart, the bishop would have paid for his boldness with his head.

On the death of Valentinian, Eugenius took upon himself the empire of the west. But Theodosius soon conquered him, and became master of the whole Roman world. He then set himself seriously about to destroy idolatry throughout the empire. At Alexandria, the Pagans who worshipped in the temple of Seraphis, rebelled and murdered a number of Christians. When the Emperor heard of this, he declared that he would not suffer the glory of their martyrdom to be stained with

the blood of their persecutors. He pardoned the murderers, hoping for their conversion but destroyed the temples, which he regarded as the cause of all this mischief. 'There' was an image of their god Seraphis, in the temple. The idolatrous priests had confidently asserted that, if any man should touch this image, the earth would open, the heavens be dissolved, and all things run back again into general confusion. But Theophilus, the bishop, encouraged a soldier to disregard the superstitious notion. He first split off one of the jaws of the image with an axe. A company of mice ran out of the hole he had made. 'The image was then hewn in pieces. 'The year that idolatry was destroyed in Egypt, the Nile did not overflow as plentifully as usual. 'This river used to be worshipped as a god. 'The Pagans said it was angry because its worship was abandoned; and therefore would not overflow, to supply the country with water. When Theodosius was informed of this, he said, "We ought to prefer our duty to God to the streams of the Nile, and the cause of piety to the fertility of the country. Let the Nile never overflow, rather than idolatry be

encouraged." But the next year, the Nile returned to its course, and rose much higher than usual. So the heathen were confounded, and the words of our Saviour verified: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Some of the heathen mocked; but multitudes were convinced; and Egypt generally forsook the idolatry and superstition, which for ages had prevailed there.

After this, the emperor came to Rome, and tried to persuade the senators to embrace the gospel. The Pagans among them declared that they would not give up their religion. The emperor then told them that he saw no reason why he should maintain their religion. He therefore refused to pay the expense of their idolatrous worship out of the treasury of the government. He afterwards made a law, by which those who sacrificed to the idols were to be punished with death. But no one ever suffered under this law, for the Pagans did not consider their religion worth suffering for. After this law was made, none of them ever offered to sacrifice any more.

Theodosius died at Milan, in the year 395.

He was sixty years of age, and had reigned sixteen. This great man appears to have been sincerely pious; and he possessed many of those virtues which adorn the character of a prince. He was full of clemency, liberality, and generosity. He never engaged in war, except when it was forced upon him, and then he was brave and successful. His private character was a pattern of gravity, temperance, and chastity. His principal fault was the indulgence of excessive anger. But we have seen how sorely he was humbled on this account. His wife, Flaccilla, was an humble Christian. After he became emperor, she constantly reminded him of the private and low condition in which they had lived before. She exhorted him still to attend to the duties of religion. She was a pattern of condescension and liberality. She relieved the wants of the sick, the afflicted, and the poor; and often comforted them by her presence and attention. Some of the base flatterers that attend upon the courts of princes, represented to her that it was beneath her dignity to take care of hospitals and houses of mourning. She replied, "The distribution of gold indeed becomes the impe-



rial dignity; but I offer to him who hath given that dignity, my personal labours, as a token of gratitude." It requires more grace to maintain a Christian walk in times of prosperity, than in affliction and adversity. That grace must have been great indeed, which could raise this woman so far above the worldly influence and splendid attractions which surround a throne.

Two years after the death of Theodosius the Great, died Ambrose, who was as great an ornament to the church as that prince was to the empire. He was admired, and lamented, by the whole Christian world. He had been bishop of Milan twenty-three years. In this time, he had performed a vast amount of labour. He administered the Lord's Supper every day; preached every Sabbath, and frequently on extraordinary occasions; and spent much of his time in catechising candidates for baptism. So great were his labours, that even his friends found it impossible to approach him. Besides attending to his pastoral duties, he wrote a great many books. He was remarkably kind and sympathetic in his spirit. He loved all men, but the followers, of Christ

were the first in his affections. He called the poor his stewards and treasurers; for he gave all his property to the church and the poor. He maintained the essential truths of the gospel, though perhaps somewhat obscured by the prevailing superstitions of the times in which he lived. He was deeply sensible of in-dwelling sin and corruption. He had a clear view of the operations of the Holy Spirit in renewing the heart, and of justification by faith in Christ alone. His writings are full of pious feelings. A flame of holy love seems to have been lighted up in his heart; and it continued to burn brighter and brighter till his death.

At the close of the fourth century, Christianity was fully established throughout the Roman empire. It had also extended considerably beyond the limits of the empire, among the barbarous nations. The Saracens were at war with the Romans, in the time of Valens. They were governed by a queen named Maovia, who was a Christian. The emperor made peace with her, upon condition that Moses, a monk, who lived in the desert between Egypt and Palestine, should be or-

dained bishop of her country. The emperor ordered him to be carried to Alexandria, to be ordained by Lucius, the Arian bishop of that city. Moses told Lucius, that, although he was unworthy to be called a bishop, yet he would not receive ordination at his hands, which were stained with the blood of many holy men. But Valens had made the treaty, and could not alter it. He therefore permitted Moses to be ordained by the bishops who had been banished. Before this, the nation were chiefly idolaters. But his labours appear to have been greatly blessed among them. Christianity had also made considerable progress among the Goths and in Persia. But, in both these countries, it had suffered the most bitter persecution. The monks continued to make rapid progress during the whole of this century, and the mind of the Christian world was gradually darkening under the influence of superstition. A great many Christian writers lived in this century; but most of their works are controversial. There appears in them but very little of the holy flame of piety, which shines through the writings of the fathers of the apostolic age.

My youthful readers have seen, in the foregoing history, the effects of the establishment of religion by law. I presume they are all convinced of the evil consequences of such a connexion. They have seen, in the history of the church, since it was first established by law, the following effects:—1. Religion has been clothed with worldly grandeur and burdened with pompous ceremonies, which are equally at war with the humble spirit of the gospel. 2. Worldly-minded and ambitious men have been intruded into the sacred office of the ministry, by the civil power, in place of the humble and devoted servants of Christ, who were called to this office in the apostolic age. 3. In the practice of a great body of church members, the doctrine of regeneration or the new birth, had been almost wholly lost sight of, and an attention to outward forms had taken its place. 4. Heresies and divisions had multiplied and overrun the church. 5. A great proportion, both of ministers and people, had become exceedingly corrupt and dissolute in their conduct and manners. 6. The worst of heresies, in consequence of being embraced by the rulers, had become the

established religion of the empire. 7. The true church, composed of the remnant who had really received Christ into their hearts by faith; who rested upon him for salvation, and walked in his commandments, had been deprived of their rights, oppressed, and persecuted. Thus, the name of Christ was dishonoured, and the cause of Christ greatly injured. And so it will always be, to a greater or less extent, where this unauthorized and unhallowed union exists; **FOR THE FROWN OF THE ALMIGHTY RESTS UPON IT.**

**QUESTIONS.**—Can you describe the treatment which Ambrose received from Valentinian and his mother? What circumstance led Valentinian to change his principles and conduct? What did Theodosius do to the people of Thessalonica? What did Ambrose do, when he heard of it? How did the emperor show his sorrow for this transaction? What did Theodosius do, when he became master of the whole empire? What did the Pagans do, at Alexandria? How did Theodosius treat them? What did he do to the images and the temples? What did the heathen say about it? What did he do at Rome? When and where

did Theodosius die? What was his character? What was the character of his wife? When did Ambrose die? What was his character? What were his labours? What is said of the extension of the gospel in this century? What particular effects have you discovered by reading this history, as resulting from the union of church and state?

THE END.

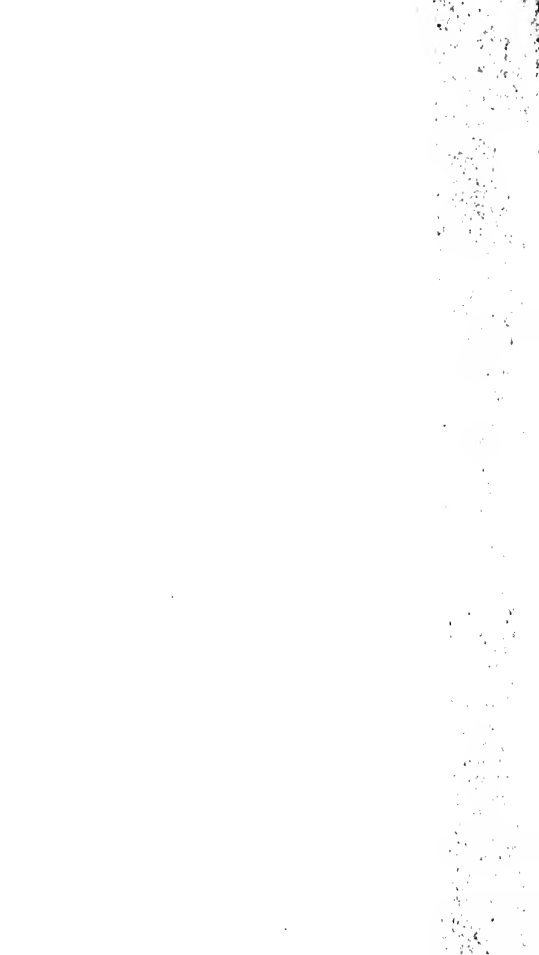
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