

0265-0339 – Eusebius Caesariensis – Vita Constantini

The Life Of The Blessed Emperor Constantine

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§3. Oration of Eusebius.

The *Editions* and *Translations* of this work are substantially identical with those of the Life, above, but some of the earlier ones do not contain the work. It was delivered in the year 336 (or possibly 335) at Constantinople, in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's accession, Constantine himself being present (cf. *V.C.* 4. 46 and *O.C.* 1). It gave the emperor lively satisfaction, from which one may safely infer a peculiar taste for combined panegyric and philosophical theology unless the hypothesis of a double work be true. According to this hypothesis the work consists of two separate orations, spoken perhaps at different times, the first including chapters 1–10, which are panegyric in character, and the other chapters 11–18, which are theological (compare Lightfoot, *Eusebius*, p. 343; also McGiffert, *Prolegomena*, p. 43). It is like the oration of Constantine, a proper part of the Life of Constantine being appended according to his promise in *Bk.* 4, ch. 46.

The special points relating to these works are treated in the notes.



CONSTANTINE.

I. THE LIFE OF CONSTANTINE.

II. THE ORATION OF CONSTANTINE.

III. THE ORATION OF EUSEBIUS.



THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED EMPEROR CONSTANTINE,

BY

EUSEBIUS PAMPHILUS.

Book I.

Chapter I.—*Preface.—Of the Death of Constantine.*

Already³⁰⁴⁹ have all mankind united in celebrating with joyous festivities the completion of the second and third decennial period of this great emperor's reign; already have we ourselves received him as a triumphant conqueror in the assembly of God's ministers, and greeted him with the due meed of praise on the twentieth anniversary of his reign:³⁰⁵⁰ and still more recently we have woven, as it were, garlands of words, wherewith we encircled his sacred head in his own palace on his thirtieth anniversary.³⁰⁵¹

But now, while I desire³⁰⁵² to give utterance to some of the customary sentiments, I stand perplexed and doubtful which way to turn, being wholly lost in wonder at the extraordinary spectacle before me. For to whatever quarter I direct my view, whether to the east, or to the west, or over the

³⁰⁴⁹ Literally "recently" or "not long since," and so it is rendered by Tr. 1709, Stroth, Molzberger, Valesius ("nuper"), and Portesius. Christopherson and Cousin avoid the awkwardness by circumlocution or simple omission, while our translator shows his one characteristic excellence of hitting nearly the unliteral meaning in a way which is hard to improve.

³⁰⁵⁰ The assembly referred to was the Council of Nicæa. Constantine's vicennial celebration was held at Nicomedia during the session of the Council at Nicæa (July 25), according to Hieronymus and others, but celebrated again at Rome the following year. The speech of Eusebius on this occasion is not preserved. Valesius thinks the one spoken of in the *V. C.* 3. 11, as delivered in the presence of the council, is the one referred to.

³⁰⁵¹ This oration is the one appended by Eusebius to this *Life of Constantine*, and given in this translation (cf. *V. C.* 4. 46).

³⁰⁵² [In the text it is ὁ λόγος, "my power of speech, or of description, much desires," and so throughout this preface: but this kind of personification seems scarcely suited to the English idiom.—*Bag.*] This usage of Logos is most interesting. Both he and his friend, the emperor, are fond of dwelling on the circles of philosophical thought which center about the word Logos (cf. the Oration of Constantine, and especially the Vicennial Oration of Eusebius). "My Logos desires" seems to take the place in ancient philosophical slang which "personality" or "self" does in modern. In ancient usage the word includes "both the ratio and the oratio" (Liddell and Scott), both the thought and its expression, both reasoning and saying,—the "internal" and "expressed" of the Stoics, followed by Philo and early Christian theology. He seems to use it in the combined sense, and it makes a pretty good equivalent for "personality," "my personality desires," &c. The idiom is kept up through the chapter.

whole world, or toward heaven itself, everywhere and always I see the blessed one yet administering the self-same empire. On earth I behold his sons, like some new reflectors of his brightness, diffusing everywhere the luster of their father's character,³⁰⁵³ and himself still living and powerful, and governing all the affairs of men more completely than ever before, being multiplied in the succession of his children. They had indeed had previously the dignity of Cæsars;³⁰⁵⁴ but now, being invested with his very self, and graced by his accomplishments, for the excellence of their piety they are proclaimed by the titles of Sovereign, Augustus, Worshipful, and Emperor.

Chapter II.—*The Preface Continued.*

And I am indeed amazed, when I consider that he who was but lately visible and present with us in his mortal body, is still, even after death, when the natural thought disclaims everything superfluous as unsuitable, most marvelously endowed with the same imperial dwellings, and honors, and praises as heretofore.³⁰⁵⁵ But farther, when I raise my thoughts even to the arch of heaven, and there contemplate his thrice-blessed soul in communion with God himself, freed from every mortal and earthly vesture, and shining in a refulgent robe of light, and when I perceive that it is no more connected with the fleeting periods and occupations of mortal life, but honored with an ever-blooming crown, and an immortality of endless and blessed existence, I stand as it were without power of speech or thought³⁰⁵⁶ and unable to utter a single phrase, but condemning my own weakness, and imposing silence on myself, I resign the task of speaking his praises worthily to one who is better able, even to him who, being the immortal God and veritable Word, alone has power to confirm his own sayings.³⁰⁵⁷

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³⁰⁵³ Constantine II., Constantius, and Constans proved on the whole sorry reflectors of glory.

³⁰⁵⁴ The first had been Cæsar more than twenty years; the second, ten; and the third, less than five.

³⁰⁵⁵ Referring to special honors paid after death, as mentioned in Bk. 4.

³⁰⁵⁶ Here there is play on the word Logos. My logos stands voiceless and a-logos, "un-logosed." If the author meant both to refer to expression, the first relates to the sound, and the second to the power of construction or composition. The interchangeableness of the weaving of consecutive thought in the mind, and the weaving it in expressed words, is precisely the question of the "relation of thought and language," so warmly contested by modern philosophers and philologists (cf. Müller, *Science of Thought*, Shedd's *Essays*, &c.). The old use of logos for both operations of "binding together" various ideas into one synthetical form has decided advantages.

³⁰⁵⁷ Here there is again the play on the word Logos. For Eusebius' philosophy of the logos, and of Christ as the Logos or Word, see the second half of his tricennial oration and notes.

Chapter III.—*How God honors Pious Princes, but destroys Tyrants.*

Having given assurance that those who glorify and honor him will meet with an abundant recompense at his hands, while those who set themselves against him as enemies and adversaries will compass the ruin of their own souls, he has already established the truth of these his own declarations, having shown on the one hand the fearful end of those tyrants who denied and opposed him,³⁰⁵⁸ and at the same time having made it manifest that even the death of his servant, as well as his life, is worthy of admiration and praise, and justly claims the memorial, not merely of perishable, but of immortal monuments.

Mankind, devising some consolation for the frail and precarious duration of human life, have thought by the erection of monuments to glorify the memories of their ancestors with immortal honors. Some have employed the vivid delineations and colors of painting³⁰⁵⁹; some have carved statues from lifeless blocks of wood; while others, by engraving their inscriptions deep on tablets³⁰⁶⁰ and monuments, have thought to transmit the virtues of those whom they honored to perpetual remembrance. All these indeed are perishable, and consumed by the lapse of time, being representations of the corruptible body, and not expressing the image of the immortal soul. And yet these seemed sufficient to those who had no well-grounded hope of happiness after the termination of this mortal life. But God, that God, I say, who is the common Saviour of all, having treasured up with himself, for those who love godliness, greater blessings than human thought has conceived, gives the earnest and first-fruits of future rewards even here, assuring in some sort immortal hopes to mortal eyes. The ancient oracles of the prophets, delivered to us in the Scripture, declare this; the lives of pious men, who shone in old time with every virtue, bear witness to posterity of the same; and our own days prove it to be true, wherein Constantine, who alone of all that ever wielded the Roman power was the friend of God the Sovereign of all, has appeared to all mankind so clear an example of a godly life.

Chapter IV.—*That God honored Constantine.*

And God himself, whom Constantine worshiped, has confirmed this truth by the clearest manifestations of his will, being present to aid him³⁰⁶¹ at the commencement, during the course,

³⁰⁵⁸ Compare Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, which doubtless the author had in mind.

³⁰⁵⁹ [Κηροχότου γραφής, properly encaustic painting, by means of melted wax.—*Bag*] Compare admirable description of the process in the *Century Dictionary*, ed. Whitney, N.Y. 1889, v. 2.

³⁰⁶⁰ Κύβεις, at first used of triangular tablets of wood, brass, or stone, but afterwards of any inscribed “pillars or tablets.” Cf. *Lexicons*.

³⁰⁶¹ Whether δεξιῶς is read or δεξιός, with Valesius, “present to aid,” covers the idea better than “graciously present” (Molz).

and at the end of his reign, and holding him up to the human race as an instructive example of godliness. Accordingly, by the manifold blessings he has conferred on him, he has distinguished him alone of all the sovereigns of whom we have ever heard as at once a mighty luminary and most clear-voiced herald of genuine piety.

Chapter V.—*That he reigned above Thirty Years, and lived above Sixty.*

With respect to the duration of his reign, God honored him with three complete periods of ten years, and something more, extending the whole term of his mortal life to twice this number of years.³⁰⁶² And being pleased to make him a representative of his own sovereign power, he displayed him as the conqueror of the whole race of tyrants, and the destroyer of those God-defying giants³⁰⁶³ of the earth who madly raised their impious arms against him, the supreme King of all. They appeared, so to speak, for an instant, and then disappeared: while the one and only true God, when he had enabled his servant, clad in heavenly panoply, to stand singly against many foes, and by his means had relieved mankind from the multitude of the ungodly, constituted him a teacher of his worship to all nations, to testify with a loud voice in the hearing of all that he acknowledged the true God, and turned with abhorrence from the error of them that are no gods.

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Chapter VI.—*That he was the Servant of God, and the Conqueror of Nations.*

Thus, like a faithful and good servant, did he act and testify, openly declaring and confessing himself the obedient minister of the supreme King. And God forthwith rewarded him, by making him ruler and sovereign, and victorious to such a degree that he alone of all rulers pursued a continual course of conquest, unsubdued and invincible, and through his trophies a greater ruler than tradition records ever to have been before. So dear was he to God, and so blessed; so pious and so fortunate in all that he undertook, that with the greatest facility he obtained the authority over more nations than any who had preceded him,³⁰⁶⁴ and yet retained his power, undisturbed, to the very close of his life.

³⁰⁶² Compare discussion of length of reign and life under *Life* in Prolegomena, p. 411.

³⁰⁶³ Ἰγύεντων. The persecuting emperors appear to be meant, of whom there is more mention hereafter.—*Bag.*] Refers of course to the mythical Gigantes who fought against the gods. It is used in the same sense in which Æschylus uses it of Capaneus (*Theb.* 424), who defied Zeus in declaring that even his thunderbolts should not keep him out of Thebes.

³⁰⁶⁴ Compare the various wars against Franks, Bructerians, Goths, Sarmatians and others mentioned in *Life* in Prolegomena. Compare also chapter 8 of this book.

Chapter VII.—*Comparison with Cyrus, King of the Persians, and with Alexander of Macedon.*

Ancient history describes Cyrus, king of the Persians, as by far the most illustrious of all kings up to his time. And yet if we regard the end of his days,³⁰⁶⁵ we find it but little corresponded with his past prosperity, since he met with an inglorious and dishonorable death at the hands of a woman.³⁰⁶⁶

Again, the sons of Greece celebrate Alexander the Macedonian as the conqueror of many and diverse nations; yet we find that he was removed by an early death, before he had reached maturity, being carried off by the effects of revelry and drunkenness.³⁰⁶⁷ His whole life embraced but the space of thirty-two years, and his reign extended to no more than a third part of that period. Unsparring as the thunderbolt, he advanced through streams of blood and reduced entire nations and cities, young and old, to utter slavery. But when he had scarcely arrived at the maturity of life, and was lamenting the loss of youthful pleasures, death fell upon him with terrible stroke, and, that he might not longer outrage the human race, cut him off in a foreign and hostile land, childless, without successor, and homeless. His kingdom too was instantly dismembered, each of his officers taking away and appropriating a portion for himself. And yet this man is extolled for such deeds as these.³⁰⁶⁸

Chapter VIII.—*That he conquered nearly the Whole World.*

But our emperor began his reign at the time of life at which the Macedonian died, yet doubled the length of his life, and trebled the length of his reign. And instructing his army in the mild and sober precepts of godliness, he carried his arms as far as the Britons, and the nations that dwell in the very bosom of the Western ocean. He subdued likewise all Scythia, though situated in the remotest North, and divided into numberless diverse and barbarous tribes. He even pushed his conquests to the Blemmyans and Ethiopians, on the very confines of the South; nor did he think the acquisition of the Eastern nations unworthy his care. In short, diffusing the effulgence of his

³⁰⁶⁵ [Such seems to be the probable meaning of this passage, which is manifestly corrupt, and of which various emendations have been proposed.—*Bag.*] Perhaps better paraphrased, “But since the test of blessedness lies not in this, but in his end, we look and find that this.” The key to the idea is found in the remark near the end of chapter 11. Cf. also note.

³⁰⁶⁶ This is the account of Diodorus, who says he was taken prisoner and crucified by the queen of the “Scythians” (3. 11, ed. 1531, f. 80^b). Herodotus says that he was slain in battle, but his head cut off afterwards and dipped in a sack of blood by the queen Tomyris, who had rejected his suit, the death of whose son he had caused, and who had sworn to “give him his fill of blood” (Herod. Bk. I, §§205–214). Xenophon says he died quietly in bed (*Cyrop.* 8. 7).

³⁰⁶⁷ A malarial fever, but made fatal by drinking at a banquet (cf. Plut. chaps. 75 and 76, Arrian, Bk. 7).

³⁰⁶⁸ Eusebius’ rhetorical purpose makes him unfair to Alexander, who certainly in comparison with others of his time brought relative blessing to the conquered (cf. Smith, *Dict.* I, p. 122).

holy light to the ends of the whole world, even to the most distant Indians, the nations dwelling on the extreme circumference of the inhabited earth, he received the submission of all the rulers,³⁰⁶⁹ governors,³⁰⁷⁰ and satraps of barbarous nations, who cheerfully welcomed and saluted him, sending embassies and presents, and setting the highest value on his acquaintance and friendship; insomuch that they honored him with pictures and statues in their respective countries, and Constantine alone of all emperors was acknowledged and celebrated by all. Notwithstanding, even among these distant nations, he proclaimed the name of his God in his royal edicts with all boldness.



Chapter IX.—*That he was the Son of a Pious Emperor, and bequeathed the Power to Royal Sons.*

Nor did he give this testimony in words merely, while exhibiting failure in his own practice, but pursued every path of virtue, and was rich in the varied fruits of godliness. He ensured the affection of his friends by magnificent proofs of liberality; and inasmuch as he governed on principles of humanity, he caused his rule to be but lightly felt and acceptable to all classes of his subjects; until at last, after a long course of years, and when he was wearied by his divine labors, the God whom he honored crowned him with an immortal reward, and translated him from a transitory kingdom to that endless life which he has laid up in store for the souls of his saints, after he had raised him up three sons to succeed him in his power. As then the imperial throne had descended to him from his father, so, by the law of nature, was it reserved for his children and their descendants, and perpetuated, like some paternal inheritance, to endless generations. And indeed God himself, who distinguished this blessed prince with divine honors while yet present with us, and who has adorned his death with choice blessings from his own hand, should be the writer of his actions; since he has recorded his labors and successes on heavenly monuments.³⁰⁷¹

Chapter X.—*Of the Need for this History, and its Value for Edification.*

However, hard as it is to speak worthily of this blessed character, and though silence were the safer and less perilous course, nevertheless it is incumbent on me, if I would escape the charge of negligence and sloth, to trace as it were a verbal portraiture, by way of memorial of the pious prince, in imitation of the delineations of human art. For I should be ashamed of myself were I not to employ my best efforts, feeble though they be and of little value, in praise of one who honored God

³⁰⁶⁹ Toparchs or prefects.

³⁰⁷⁰ Ethnarchs.

³⁰⁷¹ "The pillars of heaven."—*Molz* (?).

with such surpassing devotion. I think too that my work will be on other grounds both instructive and necessary, since it will contain a description of those royal and noble actions which are pleasing to God, the Sovereign of all. For would it not be disgraceful that the memory of Nero, and other impious and godless tyrants far worse than he, should meet with diligent writers to embellish the relation of their worthless deeds with elegant language, and record them in voluminous histories, and that I should be silent, to whom God himself has vouchsafed such an emperor as all history records not, and has permitted me to come into his presence, and enjoy his acquaintance and society?³⁰⁷²

Wherefore, if it is the duty of any one, it certainly is mine, to make an ample proclamation of his virtues to all in whom the example of noble actions is capable of inspiring the love of God. For some who have written the lives of worthless characters, and the history of actions but little tending to the improvement of morals, from private motives, either love or enmity, and possibly in some cases with no better object than the display of their own learning, have exaggerated unduly their description of actions intrinsically base, by a refinement and elegance of diction.³⁰⁷³ And thus they have become to those who by the Divine favor had been kept apart from evil, teachers not of good, but of what should be silenced in oblivion and darkness. But my narrative, however unequal to the greatness of the deeds it has to describe, will yet derive luster even from the bare relation of noble actions. And surely the record of conduct that has been pleasing to God will afford a far from unprofitable, indeed a most instructive study, to persons of well-disposed minds.

Chapter XI.—*That his Present Object is to record only the Pious Actions of Constantine.*

It is my intention, therefore, to pass over the greater part of the royal deeds of this thrice-blessed prince; as, for example, his conflicts and engagements in the field, his personal valor, his victories and successes against the enemy, and the many triumphs he obtained: likewise his provisions for the interests of individuals, his legislative enactments for the social advantage of his subjects, and a multitude of other imperial labors which are fresh in the memory of all; the design of my present undertaking being to speak and write of those circumstances only which have reference to his religious character.

And since these are themselves of almost infinite variety, I shall select from the facts which have come to my knowledge such as are most suitable, and worthy of lasting record, and endeavor to narrate them as briefly as possible. Henceforward, indeed, there is a full and free opportunity for celebrating in every way the praises of this truly blessed prince, which hitherto we have been

³⁰⁷² The Bagster translation, following Valesius, divides the tenth chapter, making the eleventh begin at this point.

³⁰⁷³ It looks as if there might perhaps be a direct hit at Lactantius here, as having, through “enmity,” described actions intrinsically base in peculiarly elegant diction; but Lactantius’ descriptions are hardly more realistic than Eusebius’ own.

unable to do, on the ground that we are forbidden to judge any one blessed before his death,³⁰⁷⁴ because of the uncertain vicissitudes of life. Let me implore then the help of God, and may the inspiring aid of the heavenly Word be with me, while I commence my history from the very earliest period of his life.

Chapter XII.—*That like Moses, he was reared in the Palaces of Kings.*

Ancient history relates that a cruel race of tyrants oppressed the Hebrew nation; and that God, who graciously regarded them in their affliction, provided that the prophet Moses, who was then an infant, should be brought up in the very palaces and bosoms of the oppressors, and instructed in all the wisdom they possessed. And when in the course of time he had arrived at manhood, and the time was come for Divine justice to avenge the wrongs of the afflicted people, then the prophet of God, in obedience to the will of a more powerful Lord, forsook the royal household, and, estranging himself in word and deed from the tyrants by whom he had been brought up, openly acknowledging his true brethren and kinsfolk. Then God, exalting him to be the leader of the whole nation, delivered the Hebrews from the bondage of their enemies, and inflicted Divine vengeance through his means on the tyrant race. This ancient story, though rejected by most as fabulous, has reached the ears of all. But now the same God has given to us to be eye-witnesses of miracles more wonderful than fables, and, from their recent appearance, more authentic than any report. For the tyrants of our day have ventured to war against the Supreme God, and have sorely afflicted His Church.³⁰⁷⁵ And in the midst of these, Constantine, who was shortly to become their destroyer, but at that time of tender age, and blooming with the dawn of early youth, dwelt, as that other servant of God had done, in the very home of the tyrants,³⁰⁷⁶ but young as he was did not share the manner of life of the ungodly: for from that early period his noble nature, under the leading of the Divine Spirit, inclined him to piety and a life acceptable to God. A desire, moreover, to emulate the example of his father had its influence in stimulating the son to a virtuous course of conduct. His father was Constantius³⁰⁷⁷ (and we ought to revive his memory at this time), the most illustrious emperor of our age; of whose life it is necessary briefly to relate a few particulars, which tell to the honor of his son.

³⁰⁷⁴ [Alluding probably to Ecclesiastes xi. 28, "Judge none blessed before his death; for a man shall be known in his children." Or, possibly, to the well-known opinion of Solon to the same effect. Vide Herod. i. 32; Aristot. Eth. Nicom. i. II.—*Bag.*] Compare also above, chapter 7.

³⁰⁷⁵ The persecuting emperors. Compare Prolegomena, *Life*.

³⁰⁷⁶ He was brought up with Diocletian and Galerius. Compare Prolegomena, *Life*.

³⁰⁷⁷ Constantius Chlorus, Neo-Platonist and philanthropist. Compare following description.

Chapter XIII.—*Of Constantius his Father, who refused to imitate Diocletian, Maximian, and Maxentius,*³⁰⁷⁸*in their Persecution of the Christians.*

At a time when four emperors³⁰⁷⁹ shared the administration of the Roman empire, Constantius alone, following a course of conduct different from that pursued by his colleagues, entered into the friendship of the Supreme God.

For while they besieged and wasted the churches of God, leveling them to the ground, and obliterating the very foundations of the houses of prayer,³⁰⁸⁰ he kept his hands pure from their abominable impiety, and never in any respect resembled them. They polluted their provinces by the indiscriminate slaughter of godly men and women; but he kept his soul free from the stain of this crime.³⁰⁸¹ They, involved in the mazes of impious idolatry, enthralled first themselves, and then all under their authority, in bondage to the errors of evil demons, while he at the same time originated the profoundest peace throughout his dominions, and secured to his subjects the privilege of celebrating without hindrance the worship of God. In short, while his colleagues oppressed all men by the most grievous exactions, and rendered their lives intolerable, and even worse than death, Constantius alone governed his people with a mild and tranquil sway, and exhibited towards them a truly parental and fostering care. Numberless, indeed, are the other virtues of this man, which are the theme of praise to all; of these I will record one or two instances, as specimens of the quality of those which I must pass by in silence, and then I will proceed to the appointed order of my narrative.



Chapter XIV.—*How Constantius his Father, being reproached with Poverty by Diocletian, filled his Treasury, and afterwards restored the Money to those by whom it had been contributed.*

In consequence of the many reports in circulation respecting this prince, describing his kindness and gentleness of character, and the extraordinary elevation of his piety, alleging too, that by reason of his extreme indulgence to his subjects, he had not even a supply of money laid up in his treasury; the emperor who at that time occupied the place of supreme power sent to reprehend his neglect of the public weal, at the same time reproaching him with poverty, and alleging in proof of the charge the empty state of his treasury. On this he desired the messengers of the emperor to remain with him awhile, and, calling together the wealthiest of his subjects of all nations under his dominion,

³⁰⁷⁸ The author of the chapter heading means of course Galerius. Maxentius was not emperor until after the death of Constantius.

³⁰⁷⁹ [Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius.—*Bag.*]

³⁰⁸⁰ For account of these persecutions, see *Church History*, Bk. 8, and notes of McGiffert.

³⁰⁸¹ Compare the *Church History*, 8. 13, and Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 15. The latter says he allowed buildings to be destroyed, but spared human life.

he informed them that he was in want of money, and that this was the time for them all to give a voluntary proof of their affection for their prince.

As soon as they heard this (as though they had long been desirous of an opportunity for showing the sincerity of their good will), with zealous alacrity they filled the treasury with gold and silver and other wealth; each eager to surpass the rest in the amount of his contribution: and this they did with cheerful and joyous countenances. And now Constantius desired the messengers of the great emperor³⁰⁸² personally to inspect his treasures, and directed them to give a faithful report of what they had seen; adding, that on the present occasion he had taken this money into his own hands, but that it had long been kept for his use in the custody of the owners, as securely as if under the charge of faithful treasurers. The ambassadors were overwhelmed with astonishment at what they had witnessed: and on their departure it is said that the truly generous prince sent for the owners of the property, and, after commending them severally for their obedience and true loyalty, restored it all, and bade them return to their homes.

This one circumstance, then, conveys a proof of the generosity of him whose character we are attempting to illustrate: another will contain the clearest testimony to his piety.

Chapter XV.—*Of the Persecution raised by his Colleagues.*

By command of the supreme authorities of the empire, the governors of the several provinces had set on foot a general persecution of the godly. Indeed, it was from the imperial courts themselves that the very first of the pious martyrs proceeded, who passed through those conflicts for the faith, and most readily endured both fire and sword, and the depths of the sea; every form of death, in short, so that in a brief time all the royal palaces were bereft of pious men.³⁰⁸³ The result was, that the authors of this wickedness were entirely deprived of the protecting care of God, since by their persecution of his worshipers they at the same time silenced the prayers that were wont to be made on their own behalf.

³⁰⁸² Or the senior Augustus. "Diocletian is thus entitled in the ancient panegyrist and in inscriptions."—*Heinichen*.

It was "towards the end of the second century of the Christian era" that there began to be a plurality of *Augusti*, but "from this time we find two or even a greater number of *Augusti*; and though in that and in all similar cases the persons honored with the title were regarded as participators of the imperial power, still the one who received the title first was looked upon as the head of the empire."—Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.*

³⁰⁸³ Compare accounts of martyrs in the palaces, in the *Church History*, 8. 6.

Chapter XVI.—*How Constantius, feigning Idolatry, expelled those who consented to offer Sacrifice, but retained in his Palace all who were willing to confess Christ.*

On the other hand, Constantius conceived an expedient full of sagacity, and did a thing which sounds paradoxical, but in fact was most admirable.

He made a proposal to all the officers of his court, including even those in the highest stations of authority, offering them the following alternative: either that they should offer sacrifice to demons, and thus be permitted to remain with him, and enjoy their usual honors; or, in case of refusal, that they should be shut out from all access to his person, and entirely disqualified from acquaintance and association with him. Accordingly, when they had individually made their choice, some one way and some the other; and the choice of each had been ascertained, then this admirable prince disclosed the secret meaning of his expedient, and condemned the cowardice and selfishness of the one party, while he highly commended the other for their conscientious devotion to God. He declared, too, that those who had been false to their God must be unworthy of the confidence of their prince; for how was it possible that they should preserve their fidelity to him, who had proved themselves faithless to a higher power? He determined, therefore, that such persons should be removed altogether from the imperial court, while, on the other hand, declaring that those men who, in bearing witness for the truth, had proved themselves to be worthy servants of God, would manifest the same fidelity to their king, he entrusted them with the guardianship of his person and empire, saying that he was bound to treat such persons with special regard as his nearest and most valued friends, and to esteem them far more highly than the richest treasures.

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Chapter XVII.—*Of his Christian Manner of Life.*

The father of Constantine, then, is said to have possessed such a character as we have briefly described. And what kind of death was vouchsafed to him in consequence of such devotion to God, and how far he whom he honored made his lot to differ from that of his colleagues in the empire, may be known to any one who will give his attention to the circumstances of the case. For after he had for a long time given many proofs of royal virtue, in acknowledging the Supreme God alone, and condemning the polytheism of the ungodly, and had fortified his household by the prayers of holy men,³⁰⁸⁴ he passed the remainder of his life in remarkable repose and tranquillity, in the enjoyment of what is counted blessedness,—neither molesting others nor being molested ourselves.

Accordingly, during the whole course of his quiet and peaceful reign, he dedicated his entire household, his children, his wife, and domestic attendants, to the One Supreme God: so that the

³⁰⁸⁴ “Is said to have” is added conjecturally here by an earlier editor, but Heinichen omits, as it would seem Eusebius himself did.

company assembled within the walls of his palace differed in no respect from a church of God; wherein were also to be found his ministers, who offered continual supplications on behalf of their prince, and this at a time when, with most,³⁰⁸⁵ it was not allowable to have any dealings with the worshipers of God, even so far as to exchange a word with them.

Chapter XVIII.—*That after the Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian, Constantius became Chief Augustus, and was blessed with a Numerous Offspring.*

The immediate consequence of this conduct was a recompense from the hand of God, insomuch that he came into the supreme authority of the empire. For the older emperors, for some unknown reason, resigned their power; and this sudden change took place in the first year after their persecution of the churches.³⁰⁸⁶

From that time Constantius alone received the honors of chief Augustus, having been previously, indeed, distinguished by the diadem of the imperial Cæsars,³⁰⁸⁷ among whom he held the first rank; but after his worth had been proved in this capacity, he was invested with the highest dignity of the Roman empire, being named chief Augustus of the four who were afterwards elected to that honor. Moreover, he surpassed most of the emperors in regard to the number of his family, having gathered around him a very large circle of children both male and female. And, lastly, when he had attained to a happy old age, and was about to pay the common debt of nature, and exchange this life for another, God once more manifested His power in a special manner on his behalf, by providing that his eldest son Constantine should be present during his last moments, and ready to receive the imperial power from his hands.³⁰⁸⁸

Chapter XIX.—*Of his Son Constantine, who in his Youth accompanied Diocletian into Palestine.*

The latter had been with his father's imperial colleagues,³⁰⁸⁹ and had passed his life among them, as we have said, like God's ancient prophet. And even in the very earliest period of his youth he

³⁰⁸⁵ Other readings are "with the others," or "with the rest," but in whatever reading it refers to all the other emperors.

³⁰⁸⁶ The persecution was in 303 or 304. Compare discussion of date in Clinton, *Fasti Rom.* ann. 303–305. The abdication was in 305.

³⁰⁸⁷ Eusebius uses the terms Augustus, king, autocrat, and Cæsar with a good deal of interchangeableness. It is hard to tell sometimes whether king (βασιλεύς) means emperor or Cæsar. In general, Augustus has been transferred in translations, and king and autocrat both rendered emperor, which seems to be his real usage.

³⁰⁸⁸ Constantine reached him just before his death, though possibly some weeks before. Compare Prolegomena.

³⁰⁸⁹ Diocletian and Galerius.

was judged by them to be worthy of the highest honor. An instance of this we have ourselves seen, when he passed through Palestine with the senior emperor,³⁰⁹⁰ at whose right hand he stood, and commanded the admiration of all who beheld him by the indications he gave even then of royal greatness. For no one was comparable to him for grace and beauty of person, or height of stature; and he so far surpassed his compeers in personal strength as to be a terror to them. He was, however, even more conspicuous for the excellence of his mental³⁰⁹¹ qualities than for his superior physical endowments; being gifted in the first place with a sound judgment,³⁰⁹² and having also reaped the advantages of a liberal education. He was also distinguished in no ordinary degree both by natural intelligence and divinely imparted wisdom.



Chapter XX.—*Flight of Constantine to his Father because of the Plots of Diocletian.*³⁰⁹³

The emperors then in power, observing his manly and vigorous figure and superior mind, were moved with feelings of jealousy and fear, and thenceforward carefully watched for an opportunity of inflicting some brand of disgrace on his character. But the young man, being aware of their designs, the details of which, through the providence of God, more than once came to him, sought safety in flight;³⁰⁹⁴ in this respect again keeping up his resemblance to the great prophet Moses. Indeed, in every sense God was his helper; and he had before ordained that he should be present in readiness to succeed his father.

Chapter XXI.—*Death of Constantius, who leaves his Son Constantine Emperor.*³⁰⁹⁵

Immediately, therefore, on his escape from the plots which had been thus insidiously laid for him, he made his way with all haste to his father, and arrived at length at the very time that he was

³⁰⁹⁰ Diocletian. He was on his way to Egypt in the famous campaign against Achilleus in 296–297.

³⁰⁹¹ Or “psychical,” meaning more than intellectual.

³⁰⁹² Rather, perhaps, “self-control.”

³⁰⁹³ Eusebius himself speaks in the plural, and other writers speak of plots by both Diocletian and Galerius. Compare Prolegomena.

³⁰⁹⁴ Compare detailed account in Lactantius, *De M. P.* c. 24.

³⁰⁹⁵ βασιλεύς. The writer of the chapter headings uses this word here and Augustus in the following chapter, but it does not seem to mean technically “Cæsar,” and so the rendering emperor is retained.

lying at the point of death.³⁰⁹⁶ As soon as Constantius saw his son thus unexpectedly in his presence, he leaped from his couch, embraced him tenderly, and, declaring that the only anxiety which had troubled him in the prospect of death, namely, that caused by the absence of his son, was now removed, he rendered thanks to God, saying that he now thought death better than the longest life,³⁰⁹⁷ and at once completed the arrangement of his private affairs. Then, taking a final leave of the circle of sons and daughters by whom he was surrounded, in his own palace, and on the imperial couch, he bequeathed the empire, according to the law of nature,³⁰⁹⁸ to his eldest son, and breathed his last.

Chapter XXII.—*How, after the Burial of Constantius, Constantine was Proclaimed Augustus by the Army.*

Nor did the imperial throne remain long unoccupied: for Constantine invested himself with his father's purple, and proceeded from his father's palace, presenting to all a renewal, as it were, in his own person, of his father's life and reign. He then conducted the funeral procession in company with his father's friends, some preceding, others following the train, and performed the last offices for the pious deceased with an extraordinary degree of magnificence, and all united in honoring this thrice blessed prince with acclamations and praises, and while with one mind and voice, they glorified the rule of the son as a living again of him who was dead, they hastened at once to hail their new sovereign by the titles of Imperial and Worshipful Augustus, with joyful shouts.³⁰⁹⁹ Thus the memory of the deceased emperor received honor from the praises bestowed upon his son, while the latter was pronounced blessed in being the successor of such a father. All the nations also under his dominion were filled with joy and inexpressible gladness at not being even for a moment deprived of the benefits of a well ordered government.

³⁰⁹⁶ This seems to imply that Constantine reached him only after he was sick in bed, i.e. at York in Britain; but other accounts make it probable that he joined him at Boulogne before he sailed on this last expedition to Britain. Compare *Prolegomena*.

³⁰⁹⁷ Literally, "than immortality [on earth]."

³⁰⁹⁸ It will hardly be agreed that imperial succession is a law of nature anyway. Rather, "the succession [where it exists] is established by the express will or the tacit consent of the nation," and the "pretended proprietary right...is a chimera" (Vattell, *Law of Nations*, Phila., 1867, p. 24, 25). That primogeniture is a natural law has been often urged, but it seems to be simply the law of first come first served. The English custom of primogeniture is said to have risen from the fact that in feudal times the eldest son was the one who, at the time of the father's death, was of an age to meet the duties of feudal tenure (compare Kent, *Commentaries*, Boston, 1867, v. 4, p. 420, 421). This is precisely the fact respecting Constantine. His several brothers were all too young to be thought of.

³⁰⁹⁹ The verdict was not confirmed at once. Galerius refused him the title of emperor, and he contented himself with that of Cæsar for a little. Compare *Prolegomena*.

In the instance of the Emperor Constantius, God has made manifest to our generation what the end of those is who in their lives have honored and loved him.

Chapter XXIII.—*A Brief Notice of the Destruction of the Tyrants.*

With respect to the other princes, who made war against the churches of God, I have not thought it fit in the present work to give any account of their downfall,³¹⁰⁰ nor to stain the memory of the good by mentioning them in connection with those of an opposite character. The knowledge of the facts themselves will of itself suffice for the wholesome admonition of those who have witnessed or heard of the evils which severally befell them.



Chapter XXIV.—*It was by the Will of God that Constantine became possessed of the Empire.*

Thus then the God of all, the Supreme Governor of the whole universe, by his own will appointed Constantine, the descendant of so renowned a parent, to be prince and sovereign: so that, while others have been raised to this distinction by the election of their fellow-men, he is the only one to whose elevation no mortal may boast of having contributed.

Chapter XXV.—*Victories of Constantine over the Barbarians and the Britons.*

As soon then as he was established on the throne, he began to care for the interests of his paternal inheritance, and visited with much considerate kindness all those provinces which had previously been under his father's government. Some tribes of the barbarians who dwelt on the banks of the Rhine, and the shores of the Western ocean, having ventured to revolt, he reduced them all to obedience, and brought them from their savage state to one of gentleness. He contented himself with checking the inroads of others, and drove from his dominions, like untamed and savage beasts, those whom he perceived to be altogether incapable of the settled order of civilized life.³¹⁰¹ Having disposed of these affairs to his satisfaction, he directed his attention to other quarters of the world, and first passed over to the British nations,³¹⁰² which lie in the very bosom of the ocean. These he

³¹⁰⁰ But he has done this himself in his *Church History*. Compare also Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*.

³¹⁰¹ The Franci, Bructeri, &c.

³¹⁰² [Eusebius here speaks of a *second* expedition of Constantine to Britain, which is not mentioned by other ancient writers; or he may have been forgetful or ignorant of the fact that Constantine had received the imperial authority in Britain itself,

reduced to submission, and then proceeded to consider the state of the remaining portions of the empire, that he might be ready to tender his aid wherever circumstances might require it.

Chapter XXVI.—*How he resolved to deliver Rome from Maxentius.*

While, therefore, he regarded the entire world as one immense body, and perceived that the head of it all, the royal city of the Roman empire, was bowed down by the weight of a tyrannous oppression; at first he had left the task of liberation to those who governed the other divisions of the empire, as being his superiors in point of age. But when none of these proved able to afford relief, and those who had attempted it had experienced a disastrous termination of their enterprise,³¹⁰³ he said that life was without enjoyment to him as long as he saw the imperial city thus afflicted, and prepared himself for the overthrowal of the tyranny.

Chapter XXVII.—*That after reflecting on the Downfall of those who had worshiped Idols, he made Choice of Christianity.*

Being convinced, however, that he needed some more powerful aid than his military forces could afford him, on account of the wicked and magical enchantments which were so diligently practiced by the tyrant,³¹⁰⁴ he sought Divine assistance, deeming the possession of arms and a numerous soldiery of secondary importance, but believing the co-operating power of Deity invincible and not to be shaken. He considered, therefore, on what God he might rely for protection and assistance. While engaged in this enquiry, the thought occurred to him, that, of the many emperors who had preceded him, those who had rested their hopes in a multitude of gods, and served them with sacrifices and offerings, had in the first place been deceived by flattering predictions, and oracles which promised them all prosperity, and at last had met with an unhappy end, while not one of their gods had stood by to warn them of the impending wrath of heaven; while one alone who had pursued an entirely opposite course, who had condemned their error, and honored the one Supreme God during his whole life, had found him to be the Saviour and Protector of his empire, and the Giver of every good thing. Reflecting on this, and well weighing the fact that they who had trusted in many gods had also fallen by manifold forms of death, without leaving behind them either family or offspring, stock, name, or memorial among men: while the God of his father had given

Constantius having died in his palace at York, a.d. 306. Vide Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. 14.—*Bag.*] It seems to be a part of the confusion about his crossing to Britain in the first place.

³¹⁰³ Referring to the unsuccessful expeditions of Severus and Galerius.

³¹⁰⁴ Compare chapters 36 and 37; also Lactantius, *De M. P.* chap. 44.

to him, on the other hand, manifestations of his power and very many tokens: and considering farther that those who had already taken arms against the tyrant, and had marched to the battle-field under the protection of a multitude of gods, had met with a dishonorable end (for one of them³¹⁰⁵ had shamefully retreated from the contest without a blow, and the other,³¹⁰⁶ being slain in the midst of his own troops, became, as it were, the mere sport of death³¹⁰⁷); reviewing, I say, all these considerations, he judged it to be folly indeed to join in the idle worship of those who were no gods, and, after such convincing evidence, to err from the truth; and therefore felt it incumbent on him to honor his father's God alone.



Chapter XXVIII.—*How, while he was praying, God sent him a Vision of a Cross of Light in the Heavens at Mid-day, with an Inscription admonishing him to conquer by that.*

Accordingly he called on him with earnest prayer and supplications that he would reveal to him who he was, and stretch forth his right hand to help him in his present difficulties. And while he was thus praying with fervent entreaty, a most marvelous sign appeared to him from heaven, the account of which it might have been hard to believe had it been related by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history,³¹⁰⁸ when he was honored with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who could hesitate to accredit the relation, especially since the testimony of after-time has established its truth? He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, Conquer by this. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the miracle.³¹⁰⁹

³¹⁰⁵ Galerius.

³¹⁰⁶ Severus.

³¹⁰⁷ This last phrase has exercised the ingenuity of translators greatly. This translation does well enough, though one might hazard "was easily overcome by death," or "was an easy victim to death."

³¹⁰⁸ Note here the care Eusebius takes to throw off the responsibility for the marvelous. It at the same time goes to show the general credibility of Eusebius, and some doubt in his mind of the exact nature and reality of what he records.

³¹⁰⁹ This very circumstantial account has met with doubters from the very beginning, commencing with Eusebius himself. There are all sorts of explanations, from that of an actual miracle to that of pure later invention. The fact of some, at least supposed, special divine manifestation at this time can hardly be denied. It is mentioned vaguely by *Paneg.* 313, and on the triumphal arch shortly after. It is reported as a dream by Lactantius about the same time with the erection of the arch, and alluded to in general, but hardly to be doubted, terms by Nazarius in 321. Moreover, it is witnessed to by the fact of the standard of the cross which was made. As to the real nature of the manifestation, it has been thought to be as recorded by Constantine, and if so, as perhaps some natural phenomenon of the sun, or to have been a simple dream, or an hallucination. It is hardly profitable

Chapter XXIX.—*How the Christ of God appeared to him in his Sleep, and commanded him to use in his Wars a Standard made in the Form of the Cross.*

He said, moreover, that he doubted within himself what the import of this apparition could be. And while he continued to ponder and reason on its meaning, night suddenly came on; then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies.

Chapter XXX.—*The Making of the Standard of the Cross.*

At dawn of day he arose, and communicated the marvel to his friends: and then, calling together the workers in gold and precious stones, he sat in the midst of them, and described to them the figure of the sign he had seen, bidding them represent it in gold and precious stones. And this representation I myself have had an opportunity of seeing.

to discuss the possibilities. The lack of contemporary evidence to details and the description of Lactantius as a dream is fatal to any idea of a miraculous image with inscriptions clearly seen by all. Some cross-like arrangement of the clouds, or a "parahelion," or some sort of a suggestion of a cross, may have been seen by all, but evidently there was no definite, vivid, clear perception, or it would have been in the mouths of all and certainly recorded, or at least it would not have been recorded as *something else* by Lactantius. It seems probable that the emperor, thinking intensely, with all the weight of his great problem resting on his energetic mind, wondering if the Christian God was perhaps the God who could help, saw in some suggestive shape of the clouds or of sunlight the form of a cross, and there flashed out in his mind in intensest reality the vision of the words, so that for the moment he was living in the intensest reality of such a vision. His mind had just that intense activity to which such a thing is possible or actual. It is like Goethe's famous meeting of his own self. It is that genius power for the realistic representation of ideal things. This is not the same exactly as "hallucination," or even "imagination." The hallucination probably came later when Constantine gradually represented to himself and finally to Eusebius the vivid idea with its slight ground, as an objective reality,—a common phenomenon. When the emperor went to sleep, his brain molecules vibrating to the forms of his late intense thought, he inevitably dreamed, and dreaming naturally confirmed his thought. This does not say that the suggestive form seen, or the idea itself, and the direction of the dream itself, were not providential and the work of the Holy Spirit, for they were, and were special in character, and so miraculous (or why do ideas come?); but it is to be feared that Constantine's own spirit or something else furnished some of the later details. There is a slight difference of authority as to when and where the vision took place. The panegyrist seems to make it before leaving Gaul, and Malalas is inaccurate as usual in having it happen in a war against the barbarians. For farther discussion of the subject see monographs under *Literature* in the Prolegomena, especially under the names: Baring, Du Voisin, Fabricius, Girault, Heumann, Jacutius Mamachi, Molinet, St. Victor, Suhr, Toderini, Weidener, Wernsdorf, Woltereck. The most concise, clear, and admirable supporter of the account of Eusebius, or rather Constantine, as it stands, is Newman, *Miracles* (Lond. 1875), 271–286.

Chapter XXXI.—*A Description of the Standard of the Cross, which the Romans now call the Labarum.*³¹¹⁰

Now it was made in the following manner. A long spear, overlaid with gold, formed the figure of the cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it. On the top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this,³¹¹¹ the symbol of the Saviour's name, two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P being intersected by X in its centre:³¹¹² and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period. From the cross-bar of the spear was suspended a cloth,³¹¹³ a royal piece, covered with a profuse embroidery of most brilliant precious stones; and which, being also richly interlaced with gold, presented an indescribable degree of beauty to the beholder. This banner was of a square form, and the upright staff, whose lower section was of great length,³¹¹⁴ bore a golden half-length portrait³¹¹⁵ of the pious emperor and his children on its upper part, beneath the trophy of the cross, and immediately above the embroidered banner.

The emperor constantly made use of this sign of salvation as a safeguard against every adverse and hostile power, and commanded that others similar to it should be carried at the head of all his armies.

³¹¹⁰ [From the Bretagnic *lab*, to raise, or from *labarva*, which, in the Basque language, still signifies a standard.—Riddle's *Lat. Dict.* voc. *Labarum*. Gibbon declares the derivation and meaning of the word to be "totally unknown, in spite of the efforts of the critics, who have ineffectually tortured the Latin, Greek, Spanish, Celtic, Teutonic, Illyric, Armenian, &c., in search of an etymology."—*Decline and Fall*, chap. 22, note 33.—*Bag.*] Compare the full article of Venables, in Smith and Cheetham, *Dict.* 1 (1880), 908–911, with its references and cuts.

³¹¹¹ Thus rather than "on." Compare cuts in article of Venables. "It [the monogram of Christ] is often set within a crown or palm branch."—*Wolcott, Sacred Archaeology*, p. 390.

³¹¹² [Χιαζομένου τοῦ ῥ κατά τὸ μεσαίτατον. The figure would seem to answer to the description in the text. Gibbon gives two specimens ~~and~~ engraved from ancient monuments. Chap. 20, note 35.—*Bag.*] The various coins given by Venables all have the usual form of the monogram. ~~Compare~~ also Tyrwhitt, art. *Monogram*, in Smith and Cheetham; also the art. *Monogramme du Christ*, in Martigny, *Dict. d. ant.* (1877), 476–483.

³¹¹³ That this was no new invention of Constantine may be seen by comparing the following description of an ordinary Roman standard, "...each cohort had for its own ensign the serpent or dragon, which was woven on a square piece of cloth, elevated on a gilt staff, to which a cross-bar was adapted for the purpose...under the eagle or other emblem was often placed a head of the reigning emperor." Yates, art. *Signa militaria*, in Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.* (1878), 1044–1045.

³¹¹⁴ "Which in its full extent was of great length."—*Bag.*, according to suggestion of Valesius of a possible meaning, but better as above, meaning the part below the cross-bar. So *Valesius, Christopherson, 1709, Molzberger.*

³¹¹⁵ "Medallions."—*Venables.*

Chapter XXXII.—*How Constantine received Instruction, and read the Sacred Scriptures.*

These things were done shortly afterwards. But at the time above specified, being struck with amazement at the extraordinary vision, and resolving to worship no other God save Him who had appeared to him, he sent for those who were acquainted with the mysteries of His doctrines, and enquired who that God was, and what was intended by the sign of the vision he had seen. They affirmed that He was God, the only begotten Son of the one and only God: that the sign which had appeared was the symbol of immortality,³¹¹⁶ and the trophy of that victory over death which He had gained in time past when sojourning on earth. They taught him also the causes of His advent, and explained to him the true account of His incarnation. Thus he was instructed in these matters, and was impressed with wonder at the divine manifestation which had been presented to his sight. Comparing, therefore, the heavenly vision with the interpretation given, he found his judgment confirmed; and, in the persuasion that the knowledge of these things had been imparted to him by Divine teaching, he determined thenceforth to devote himself to the reading of the Inspired writings.

Moreover, he made the priests of God his counselors, and deemed it incumbent on him to honor the God who had appeared to him with all devotion. And after this, being fortified by well-grounded hopes in Him, he hastened to quench the threatening fire of tyranny.

Chapter XXXIII.—*Of the Adulterous Conduct of Maxentius at Rome.*³¹¹⁷

For he who had tyrannically possessed himself of the imperial city,³¹¹⁸ had proceeded to great lengths in impiety and wickedness, so as to venture without hesitation on every vile and impure action.

For example: he would separate women from their husbands, and after a time send them back to them again, and these insults he offered not to men of mean or obscure condition, but to those who held the first places in the Roman senate. Moreover, though he shamefully dishonored almost numberless free women, he was unable to satisfy his ungoverned and intemperate desires. But³¹¹⁹

³¹¹⁶ Both Socrates (5. 17) and Sozomen (7. 15) relate that symbols of the cross found in a temple of Serapis, on its destruction by Theodosius, were explained by the Christians of the time as symbols of immortality. Cf. also Suidas (ed. Gasiford, 2 (1834), 3398), s. v. Σταυροί; Valesius on Socrates and Sozomen; Jablonski, *Opuscula*, 1, p. 156-. The study of the pre-Christian use of the cross is most suggestive. It suggests at least that in some way the passion of our Lord was the realization of some world-principle or "natural Law."

³¹¹⁷ Compare the *Church History*, 8. 14.

³¹¹⁸ Maxentius, made emperor by an uprising of the Prætorian Guards in 306.

³¹¹⁹ "For" seems to express the author's real meaning, but both punctuation of editors and renderings of translators insist on "but."

when he assayed to corrupt Christian women also, he could no longer secure success to his designs, since they chose rather to submit their lives³¹²⁰ to death than yield their persons to be defiled by him.



Chapter XXXIV.—*How the Wife of a Prefect slew herself for Chastity's Sake.*³¹²¹

Now a certain woman, wife of one of the senators who held the authority of prefect, when she understood that those who ministered to the tyrant in such matters were standing before her house (she was a Christian), and knew that her husband through fear had bidden them take her and lead her away, begged a short space of time for arraying herself in her usual dress, and entered her chamber. There, being left alone, she sheathed a sword in her own breast, and immediately expired, leaving indeed her dead body to the procurers, but declaring to all mankind, both to present and future generations, by an act which spoke louder than any words, that the chastity for which Christians are famed is the only thing which is invincible and indestructible. Such was the conduct displayed by this woman.

Chapter XXXV.—*Massacre of the Roman People by Maxentius.*

All men, therefore, both people and magistrates, whether of high or low degree, trembled through fear of him whose daring wickedness was such as I have described, and were oppressed by his grievous tyranny. Nay, though they submitted quietly, and endured this bitter servitude, still there was no escape from the tyrant's sanguinary cruelty. For at one time, on some trifling pretense, he exposed the populace to be slaughtered by his own body-guard; and countless multitudes of the Roman people were slain in the very midst of the city by the lances and weapons, not of Scythians or barbarians, but of their own fellow-citizens. And besides this, it is impossible to calculate the number of senators whose blood was shed with a view to the seizure of their respective estates, for at different times and on various fictitious charges, multitudes of them suffered death.

Chapter XXXVI.—*Magic Arts of Maxentius against Constantine; and Famine at Rome.*

³¹²⁰ Various readings of text add "lawfully married" women, and send them back again "grievously dishonored," and so *Bag.*, but Heinichen has this reading. Compare note of Heinichen.

³¹²¹ This chapter is found almost word for word in the *Church History*, 8. 14.

But the crowning point of the tyrant's wickedness was his having recourse to sorcery: sometimes for magic purposes ripping up women with child, at other times searching into the bowels of new-born infants. He slew lions also, and practiced certain horrid arts for evoking demons, and averting the approaching war, hoping by these means to get the victory. In short, it is impossible to describe the manifold acts of oppression by which this tyrant of Rome enslaved his subjects: so that by this time they were reduced to the most extreme penury and want of necessary food, a scarcity such as our contemporaries do not remember ever before to have existed at Rome.³¹²²

Chapter XXXVII.—*Defeat of Maxentius's Armies in Italy.*

Constantine, however, filled with compassion on account of all these miseries, began to arm himself with all warlike preparation against the tyranny. Assuming therefore the Supreme God as his patron, and invoking His Christ to be his preserver and aid, and setting the victorious trophy, the salutary symbol, in front of his soldiers and body-guard, he marched with his whole forces, trying to obtain again for the Romans the freedom they had inherited from their ancestors.

And whereas, Maxentius, trusting more in his magic arts than in the affection of his subjects, dared not even advance outside the city gates,³¹²³ but had guarded every place and district and city subject to his tyranny, with large bodies of soldiers,³¹²⁴ the emperor, confiding in the help of God, advanced against the first and second and third divisions of the tyrant's forces, defeated them all with ease at the first assault,³¹²⁵ and made his way into the very interior of Italy.

Chapter XXXVIII.—*Death of Maxentius on the Bridge of the Tiber.*³¹²⁶

And already he was approaching very near Rome itself, when, to save him from the necessity of fighting with all the Romans for the tyrant's sake, God himself drew the tyrant, as it were by

³¹²² 1709, *Molz.* &c., add "nor anywhere else," but *Bag.* is undoubtedly right in translating simply "ever before." The chapter is found substantially and in part word for word in the *Church History*, 8. 14.

³¹²³ "Because the soothsayers had foretold that if he went out of it, he should perish." Lact. *De M. P.*

³¹²⁴ *Bag.* adds "and numberless ambuscades," following *Valesius* and 1709. The word so rendered is the word for "companies of soldiers." The rather awkward "multitude of heavy-armed soldiers and myriads of companies of soldiers" may be rendered as above, although "larger bodies of soldiers and limitless supplies" suggested by the translation is perhaps the real meaning. He had both "men and means."

³¹²⁵ At Sigusium, Turin, Brescia, and Verona.

³¹²⁶ The Milvian, the present Ponte Molle.



secret cords, a long way outside the gates.³¹²⁷ And now those miracles recorded in Holy Writ, which God of old wrought against the ungodly (discredited by most as fables, yet believed by the faithful), did he in every deed confirm to all alike, believers and unbelievers, who were eye-witnesses of the wonders. For as once in the days of Moses and the Hebrew nation, who were worshipers of God, “Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea and his chosen chariot-captains are drowned in the Red Sea,”³¹²⁸—so at this time Maxentius, and the soldiers and guards³¹²⁹ with him, “went down into the depths like stone,”³¹³⁰ when, in his flight before the divinely-aided forces of Constantine, he essayed to cross the river which lay in his way, over which, making a strong bridge of boats, he had framed an engine of destruction, really against himself, but in the hope of ensnaring thereby him who was beloved by God. For his God stood by the one to protect him, while the other, godless,³¹³¹ proved to be the miserable contriver of these secret devices to his own ruin. So that one might well say, “He hath made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violence shall come down upon his own pate.”³¹³² Thus, in the present instance, under divine direction, the machine erected on the bridge, with the ambuscade concealed therein, giving way unexpectedly before the appointed time, the bridge began to sink, and the boats with the men in them went bodily to the bottom.³¹³³ And first the wretch himself, then his armed attendants and guards, even as the sacred oracles had before described, “sank as lead in the mighty waters.”³¹³⁴ So that they who thus obtained victory from God might well, if not in the same words, yet in fact in the same spirit as the people of his great servant Moses, sing and speak as they did concerning the impious tyrant of old: “Let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath been glorified exceedingly: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. He is become

³¹²⁷ The present Ponte Molle is nearly 2½ kilometers (say 1½ miles) from the Porta del Popolo (at the Mons Pincius). The walls at that time were the ones built by Aurelian, and are substantially the same as the present ones. This Pons Milvius was first built 100 years b.c., and “some part of the first bridge is supposed to remain” (Jenkin, p. 329). Compare Jenkin, art. *Bridges*, in *Enc. Brit.* 4 (1878), 329, for cut and description.

³¹²⁸ Ex. xv. 4. This is identically taken from the Septuagint with the change of only one word, where Eusebius gains little in exchanging “swallowed up in” for plunged or drowned in.

³¹²⁹ “Heavy armed and light armed.”

³¹³⁰ Ex. xv. 5.

³¹³¹ “Godless,” or if ἄνευσι to be read, “destitute of his aid,” as *Bag*. Much conjecture has been expended on this reading. Heinichen has ἀθεεῖ.

³¹³² Ps. vii. 15, 16, Septuagint translation.

³¹³³ This matter is discussed in the Prolegomena.

³¹³⁴ Ex. xv. 10.

my helper and my shield unto salvation.” And again, “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, marvelous in praises, doing wonders?”³¹³⁵

Chapter XXXIX.—*Constantine’s Entry into Rome.*

Having then at this time sung these and suchlike praises to God, the Ruler of all and the Author of victory, after the example of his great servant Moses, Constantine entered the imperial city in triumph. And here the whole body of the senate, and others of rank and distinction in the city, freed as it were from the restraint of a prison, along with the whole Roman populace, their countenances expressive of the gladness of their hearts, received him with acclamations and abounding joy; men, women, and children, with countless multitudes of servants, greeting him as deliverer, preserver, and benefactor, with incessant shouts. But he, being possessed of inward piety toward God, was neither rendered arrogant by these plaudits, nor uplifted by the praises he heard:³¹³⁶ but, being sensible that he had received help from God, he immediately rendered a thanksgiving to him as the Author of his victory.

Chapter XL.—*Of the Statue of Constantine holding a Cross, and its Inscription.*

Moreover, by loud proclamation and monumental inscriptions he made known to all men the salutary symbol, setting up this great trophy of victory over his enemies in the midst of the imperial city, and expressly causing it to be engraven in indelible characters, that the salutary symbol was the safeguard of the Roman government and of the entire empire. Accordingly, he immediately ordered a lofty spear in the figure of a cross to be placed beneath the hand of a statue representing himself, in the most frequented part of Rome, and the following inscription to be engraven on it in the Latin language: by virtue of this salutary sign, which is the true test of valor, I have preserved and liberated your city from the yoke of tyranny. I have also set at liberty the roman senate and people, and restored them to their ancient distinction and splendor.³¹³⁷

³¹³⁵ Ex. xv. 1, 2, 11, Septuagint version. This whole chapter with the last paragraph of the preceding are in the *Church History*, 9. 9.

³¹³⁶ Compare Prolegomena under *Character*, and also for other accounts of the universal joy under *Life*.

³¹³⁷ Compare the *Church History*, 9. 9.

If it be true, as Crusè says, that in this inscription there are traces of the Latin original, it gives a strong presumption that Eusebius was quoting a really existing inscription and accordingly that it is genuine. If so, of course the probability of the vision of the cross is greatly increased.



Chapter XLI.—*Rejoicings throughout the Provinces; and Constantine's Acts of Grace.*

Thus the pious emperor, glorying in the confession of the victorious cross, proclaimed the Son of God to the Romans with great boldness of testimony. And the inhabitants of the city, one and all, senate and people, reviving, as it were, from the pressure of a bitter and tyrannical domination, seemed to enjoy purer rays of light, and to be born again into a fresh and new life. All the nations, too, as far as the limit of the western ocean, being set free from the calamities which had heretofore beset them, and gladdened by joyous festivals, ceased not to praise him as the victorious, the pious, the common benefactor: all, indeed, with one voice and one mouth, declared that Constantine had appeared by the grace of God as a general blessing to mankind. The imperial edict also was everywhere published, whereby those who had been wrongfully deprived of their estates were permitted again to enjoy their own, while those who had unjustly suffered exile were recalled to their homes. Moreover, he freed from imprisonment, and from every kind of danger and fear, those who, by reason of the tyrant's cruelty, had been subject to these sufferings.

Chapter XLII.—*The Honors Conferred upon Bishops, and the Building of Churches.*

The emperor also personally inviting the society of God's ministers, distinguished them with the highest possible respect and honor, showing them favor in deed and word as persons consecrated to the service of his God. Accordingly, they were admitted to his table, though mean in their attire and outward appearance; yet not so in his estimation, since he thought he saw not the man as seen by the vulgar eye, but the God in him. He made them also his companions in travel, believing that He whose servants they were would thus help him. Besides this, he gave from his own private resources costly benefactions to the churches of God, both enlarging and heightening the sacred edifices,³¹³⁸ and embellishing the august sanctuaries³¹³⁹ of the church with abundant offerings.

Chapter XLIII.—*Constantine's Liberality to the Poor.*

³¹³⁸ "Oratories," or chapels.

³¹³⁹ Various rendered, but seems to say that the smaller buildings were enlarged and the larger ones enriched. The number of buildings which Constantine is claimed to have erected in Rome alone is prodigious. One meets at every turn in the modern city churches which were, it is said, founded or remodeled by him. For interesting monograph which claims to have established the Constantinian foundation of many of these, see Ciampini in Prolegomena, under *Literature*.

He likewise distributed money largely to those who were in need, and besides these showing himself philanthropist and benefactor even to the heathen, who had no claim on him;³¹⁴⁰ and even for the beggars in the forum, miserable and shiftless, he provided, not with money only, or necessary food, but also decent clothing. But in the case of those who had once been prosperous, and had experienced a reverse of circumstances, his aid was still more lavishly bestowed. On such persons, in a truly royal spirit, he conferred magnificent benefactions; giving grants of land to some, and honoring others with various dignities. Orphans of the unfortunate he cared for as a father, while he relieved the destitution of widows, and cared for them with special solicitude. Nay, he even gave virgins, left unprotected by their parents' death, in marriage to wealthy men with whom he was personally acquainted. But this he did after first bestowing on the brides such portions as it was fitting they should bring to the communion of marriage.³¹⁴¹ In short, as the sun, when he rises upon the earth, liberally imparts his rays of light to all, so did Constantine, proceeding at early dawn from the imperial palace, and rising as it were with the heavenly luminary, impart the rays of his own beneficence to all who came into his presence. It was scarcely possible to be near him without receiving some benefit, nor did it ever happen that any who had expected to obtain his assistance were disappointed in their hope.³¹⁴²

Chapter XLIV.—*How he was present at the Synods of Bishops.*

Such, then, was his general character towards all. But he exercised a peculiar care over the church of God: and whereas, in the several provinces there were some who differed from each other in judgment, he, like some general bishop constituted by God, convened synods of his ministers. Nor did he disdain to be present and sit with them in their assembly, but bore a share in their deliberations, ministering to all that pertained to the peace of God. He took his seat, too, in the midst of them, as an individual amongst many, dismissing his guards and soldiers, and all whose duty it was to defend his person; but protected by the fear of God, and surrounded by the guardianship of his faithful friends. Those whom he saw inclined to a sound judgment, and exhibiting a calm

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³¹⁴⁰ So usually rendered literally, "to those who came to him from without," but it might rather mean "foreigners." His generosity included not only the worthy poor citizens, but foreigners and beggars.

³¹⁴¹ The word used is the *κοινωνία*, familiar in the doctrine of the "communion" or "fellowship" of the saints. It has the notion of reciprocity and mutual sharing.

³¹⁴² The popular proverb that at the end of his life he was a spendthrift, as given by Victor, represents the other side of this liberality. Compare Prolegomena, under *Character*.

and conciliatory temper, received his high approbation, for he evidently delighted in a general harmony of sentiment; while he regarded the unyielding wills with aversion.³¹⁴³

Chapter XLV.—*His Forbearance with Unreasonable Men.*

Moreover he endured with patience some who were exasperated against himself, directing them in mild and gentle terms to control themselves, and not be turbulent. And some of these respected his admonitions, and desisted; but as to those who proved incapable of sound judgment, he left them entirely at the disposal of God, and never himself desired harsh measures against any one. Hence it naturally happened that the disaffected in Africa reached such a pitch of violence as even to venture on overt acts of audacity;³¹⁴⁴ some evil spirit, as it seems probable, being jealous of the present great prosperity, and impelling these men to atrocious deeds, that he might excite the emperor's anger against them. He gained nothing, however, by this malicious conduct; for the emperor laughed at these proceedings, and declared their origin to be from the evil one; inasmuch as these were not the actions of sober persons, but of lunatics or demoniacs; who should be pitied rather than punished; since to punish madmen is as great folly as to sympathize with their condition is supreme philanthropy.³¹⁴⁵

Chapter XLVI.—*Victories over the Barbarians.*

Thus the emperor in all his actions honored God, the Controller of all things, and exercised an unwearied³¹⁴⁶ oversight over His churches. And God requited him, by subduing all barbarous nations under his feet, so that he was able everywhere to raise trophies over his enemies: and He proclaimed him as conqueror to all mankind, and made him a terror to his adversaries: not indeed that this was his natural character, since he was rather the meekest, and gentlest, and most benevolent of men.

³¹⁴³ Constantine, like Eusebius himself, would be a distinct "tolerationist" in modern theological controversy. One may imagine that Eusebius entered into favor with Constantine in this way. It commends itself to our feeling; but after all, the unyielding Athanasius was a greater man than Eusebius.

³¹⁴⁴ Compare Prolegomena, under *Life* and *Works*.

³¹⁴⁵ [This passage in the text is defective or corrupt.—*Bag.*] What is given is substantially the conventional translation of *Valesius*, *Heinichen*, *Molzberger*, and with some variation, *1709* and *Bag*. It is founded, however, on a conjectural reading, and reluctant against this, a suggestion may be hazarded—"an excessive philanthropy for the folly of the insane, even to the point of sympathy for them."

³¹⁴⁶ Some read "unbroken" or "perfect."

Chapter XLVII.—*Death of Maximin,³¹⁴⁷who had attempted a Conspiracy, and of Others whom Constantine detected by Divine Revelation.*

While he was thus engaged, the second of those who had resigned the throne, being detected in a treasonable conspiracy, suffered a most ignominious death. He was the first whose pictures, statues, and all similar marks of honor and distinction were everywhere destroyed, on the ground of his crimes and impiety. After him others also of the same family were discovered in the act of forming secret plots against the emperor; all their intentions being miraculously revealed by God through visions to His servant.

For he frequently vouchsafed to him manifestations of himself, the Divine presence appearing to him in a most marvelous manner, and according to him manifold intimations of future events. Indeed, it is impossible to express in words the indescribable wonders of Divine grace which God was pleased to vouchsafe to His servant. Surrounded by these, he passed the rest of his life in security, rejoicing in the affection of his subjects, rejoicing too because he saw all beneath his government leading contented lives; but above all delighted at the flourishing condition of the churches of God.

Chapter XLVIII.—*Celebration of Constantine's Decennalia.*

While he was thus circumstanced, he completed the tenth year of his reign. On this occasion he ordered the celebration of general festivals, and offered prayers of thanksgiving to God, the King of all, as sacrifices without flame or smoke.³¹⁴⁸ And from this employment he derived much pleasure: not so from the tidings he received of the ravages committed in the Eastern provinces.



Chapter XLIX.—*How Licinius oppressed the East.*

For he was informed that in that quarter a certain savage beast was besetting both the church of God and the other inhabitants of the provinces, owing, as it were, to the efforts of the evil spirit to produce effects quite contrary to the deeds of the pious emperor: so that the Roman empire, divided into two parts, seemed to all men to resemble night and day; since darkness overspread the

³¹⁴⁷ There is long discussion of whether Maximian or Maximin is intended. To any one who compares the order of narration in the *Church History*, 9. 9, 11, the discussion will seem idle, though it is curious that the one most jealous and greedy of power should have been mistaken for one of the abdicators. It seems as if there had been some confusion in the mind of Eusebius himself.

³¹⁴⁸ Unburnt offerings, meat offerings.

provinces of the East, while the brightest day illumined the inhabitants of the other portion. And whereas the latter were receiving manifold blessings at the hand of God, the sight of these blessings proved intolerable to that envy which hates all good, as well as to the tyrant who afflicted the other division of the empire; and who, notwithstanding that his government was prospering, and he had been honored by a marriage connection³¹⁴⁹ with so great an emperor as Constantine, yet cared not to follow the steps of that pious prince, but strove rather to imitate the evil purposes and practice of the impious; and chose to adopt the course of those whose ignominious end he had seen with his own eyes, rather than to maintain amicable relations with him who was his superior.³¹⁵⁰

Chapter L.—*How Licinius attempted a Conspiracy against Constantine.*

Accordingly he engaged in an implacable war against his benefactor, altogether regardless of the laws of friendship, the obligation of oaths, the ties of kindred, and already existing treaties. For the most benignant emperor had given him a proof of sincere affection in bestowing on him the hand of his sister, thus granting him the privilege of a place in family relationship and his own ancient imperial descent, and investing him also with the rank and dignity of his colleague in the empire.³¹⁵¹ But the other took the very opposite course, employing himself in machinations against his superior, and devising various means to repay his benefactor with injuries. At first, pretending friendship, he did all things by guile and treachery, expecting thus to succeed in concealing his designs; but God enabled his servant to detect the schemes thus devised in darkness. Being discovered, however, in his first attempts, he had recourse to fresh frauds; at one time pretending friendship, at another claiming the protection of solemn treaties. Then suddenly violating every engagement, and again beseeching pardon by embassies, yet after all shamefully violating his word, he at last declared open war, and with desperate infatuation resolved thenceforward to carry arms against God himself, whose worshiper he knew the emperor to be.

Chapter LI.—*Intrigues of Licinius against the Bishops, and his Prohibition of Synods.*

And at first he made secret enquiry respecting the ministers of God subject to his dominion, who had never, indeed, in any respect offended against his government, in order to bring false

³¹⁴⁹ Licinius married in 313 Constantia, sister of Constantine.

³¹⁵⁰ Thus generally following the *Church History* (10. 8).

³¹⁵¹ This rendering of *Bag.* is really a gloss from the *Church History*, 10. 8. Compare rendering of McGiffert. Molzberger renders "and left him in complete possession of the portions of the kingdom which had fallen to his lot."

accusations against them. And when he found no ground of accusation, and had no real ground of objection against them, he next enacted a law, to the effect that the bishops should never on any account hold communication with each other, nor should any one of them absent himself on a visit to a neighboring church; nor, lastly, should the holding of synods, or councils for the consideration of affairs of common interest,³¹⁵² be permitted. Now this was clearly a pretext for displaying his malice against us. For we were compelled either to violate the law, and thus be amenable to punishment, or else, by compliance with its injunctions, to nullify the statutes of the Church; inasmuch as it is impossible to bring important questions to a satisfactory adjustment, except by means of synods. In other cases also this God-hater, being determined to act contrary to the God-loving prince, enacted such things. For whereas the one assembled the priests of God in order to honor them, and to promote peace and unity of judgment; the other, whose object it was to destroy everything that was good, used all his endeavors to destroy the general harmony.

Chapter LII.—*Banishment of the Christians, and Confiscation of their Property.*

And whereas Constantine, the friend of God, had granted to His worshipers freedom of access to the imperial palaces; this enemy of God, in a spirit the very reverse of this, expelled thence all Christians subject to his authority. He banished those who had proved themselves his most faithful and devoted servants, and compelled others, on whom he had himself conferred honor and distinction as a reward for their former eminent services, to the performance of menial offices as slaves to others; and at length, being bent on seizing the property of all as a windfall for himself, he even threatened with death those who professed the Saviour's name. Moreover, being himself of a nature hopelessly debased by sensuality, and degraded by the continual practice of adultery and other shameless vices, he assumed his own worthless character as a specimen of human nature generally, and denied that the virtue of chastity and continence existed among men.

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Chapter LIII.—*Edict that Women should not meet with the Men in the Churches.*

Accordingly he passed a second law, which enjoined that men should not appear in company with women in the houses of prayer, and forbade women to attend the sacred schools of virtue, or to receive instruction from the bishops, directing the appointment of women to be teachers of their own sex. These regulations being received with general ridicule, he devised other means for effecting the ruin of the churches. He ordered that the usual congregations of the people should be held in

³¹⁵² Perhaps "synods or councils and conferences on economic matters."

the open country outside the gates, alleging that the open air without the city was far more suitable for a multitude than the houses of prayer within the walls.

Chapter LIV.—*That those who refuse to sacrifice are to be dismissed from Military Service, and those in Prison not to be fed.*

Failing, however, to obtain obedience in this respect also, at length he threw off the mask, and gave orders that those who held military commissions in the several cities of the empire should be deprived of their respective commands, in case of their refusal to offer sacrifices to the demons. Accordingly the forces of the authorities in every province suffered the loss of those who worshiped God; and he too who had decreed this order suffered loss, in that he thus deprived himself of the prayers of pious men. And why should I still further mention how he directed that no one should obey the dictates of common humanity by distributing food to those who were pining in prisons, or should even pity the captives who perished with hunger; in short, that no one should perform a virtuous action, and that those whose natural feelings impelled them to sympathize with their fellow-creatures should be prohibited from doing them a single kindness? Truly this was the most utterly shameless and scandalous of all laws, and one which surpassed the worst depravity of human nature: a law which inflicted on those who showed mercy the same penalties as on those who were the objects of their compassion, and visited the exercise of mere humanity with the severest punishments.³¹⁵³

Chapter LV.—*The Lawless Conduct and Covetousness of Licinius.*

Such were the ordinances of Licinius. But why should I enumerate his innovations respecting marriage, or those concerning the dying, whereby he presumed to abrogate the ancient and wisely established laws of the Romans, and to introduce certain barbarous and cruel institutions in their stead, inventing a thousand pretenses for oppressing his subjects? Hence it was that he devised a new method of measuring land, by which he reckoned the smallest portion at more than its actual dimensions, from an insatiable desire of acquisition. Hence too he registered the names of country residents who were now no more, and had long been numbered with the dead, procuring to himself by this expedient a shameful gain. His meanness was unlimited and his rapacity insatiable. So that when he had filled all his treasuries with gold, and silver, and boundless wealth, he bitterly bewailed his poverty, and suffered as it were the torments of Tantalus. But why should I mention how many innocent persons he punished with exile; how much property he confiscated; how many men of

³¹⁵³ Compare *Church History*, 10. 9.

noble birth and estimable character he imprisoned, whose wives he handed over to be basely insulted by his profligate slaves, and to how many married women and virgins he himself offered violence, though already feeling the infirmities of age? I need not enlarge on these subjects, since the enormity of his last actions causes the former to appear trifling and of little moment.³¹⁵⁴

Chapter LVI.—*At length he undertakes to raise a Persecution.*

For the final efforts of his fury appeared in his open hostility to the churches, and he directed his attacks against the bishops themselves, whom he regarded as his worst adversaries, bearing special enmity to those men whom the great and pious emperor treated as his friends. Accordingly he spent on us the utmost of his fury, and, being transported beyond the bounds of reason, he paused not to reflect on the example of those who had persecuted the Christians before him, nor of those whom he himself had been raised up to punish and destroy for their impious deeds: nor did he heed the facts of which he had been himself a witness, though he had seen with his own eyes the chief originator of these our calamities (whoever he was), smitten by the stroke of the Divine scourge.

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Chapter LVII.—*That Maximian,³¹⁵⁵ brought Low by a Fistulous Ulcer with Worms, issued an Edict in Favor of the Christians.*

For whereas this man had commenced the attack on the churches, and had been the first to pollute his soul with the blood of just and godly men, a judgment from God overtook him, which at first affected his body, but eventually extended itself to his soul. For suddenly an abscess appeared in the secret parts of his person, followed by a deeply seated fistulous ulcer; and these diseases fastened with incurable virulence on the intestines, which swarmed with a vast multitude of worms, and emitted a pestilential odor. Besides, his entire person had become loaded, through gluttonous excess, with an enormous quantity of fat, and this, being now in a putrescent state, is said to have presented to all who approached him an intolerable and dreadful spectacle. Having, therefore, to struggle against such sufferings, at length, though late, he came to a realization of his past crimes against the Church; and, confessing his sins before God, he put a stop to the persecution of the Christians, and hastened to issue imperial edicts and rescripts for the rebuilding of their churches,

³¹⁵⁴ Compare *Church History*, 10. 9, and the same for the following chapters, in parts or whole.

³¹⁵⁵ [Galerius Maximian. The description of his illness and death in the next chapter is repeated from the author's *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. 8, c. 16.—*Bag.*] Compare translation of McGiffert, p. 338, and note; also Lactantius, *De M. P.* c. 33.

at the same time enjoining them to perform their customary worship, and to offer up prayers on his behalf.³¹⁵⁶

Chapter LVIII.—*That Maximin, who had persecuted the Christians, was compelled to fly, and conceal himself in the Disguise of a Slave.*

Such was the punishment which he underwent who had commenced the persecution. He,³¹⁵⁷ however, of whom we are now speaking, who had been a witness of these things, and known them by his own actual experience, all at once banished the remembrance of them from his mind, and reflected neither on the punishment of the first, nor the divine judgment which had been executed on the second persecutor.³¹⁵⁸ The latter had indeed endeavored to outstrip his predecessor in the career of crime, and prided himself on the invention of new tortures for us. Fire nor sword, nor piercing with nails, nor yet wild beasts or the depths of the sea sufficed him. In addition to all these, he discovered a new mode of punishment, and issued an edict directing that their eyesight should be destroyed. So that numbers, not of men only, but of women and children, after being deprived of the sight of their eyes, and the use of the joints of their feet, by mutilation or cauterization, were consigned in this condition to the painful labor of the mines. Hence it was that this tyrant also was overtaken not long after by the righteous judgment of God, at a time when, confiding in the aid of the demons whom he worshiped as gods, and relying on the countless multitudes of his troops, he had ventured to engage in battle. For, feeling himself on that occasion destitute of all hope in God, he threw from him the imperial dress which so ill became him, hid himself with unmanly timidity in the crowd around him, and sought safety in flight.³¹⁵⁹

He afterwards lurked about the fields and villages in the habit of a slave, hoping he should thus be effectually concealed. He had not, however, eluded the mighty and all-searching eye of God: for even while he was expecting to pass the residue of his days in security, he fell prostrate, smitten by God's fiery dart, and his whole body consumed by the stroke of Divine vengeance; so that all trace of the original lineaments of his person was lost, and nothing remained to him but dry bones and a skeleton-like appearance.

Chapter LIX.—*That Maximin, blinded by Disease, issued an Edict in Favor of the Christians.*

³¹⁵⁶ Compare edict in the *Church History*, 8. 17.

³¹⁵⁷ Licinius.

³¹⁵⁸ [Maximin, ruler of the Eastern provinces of the empire.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁵⁹ He was defeated by Licinius, who had much inferior forces. Compare Prolegomena, under *Life*, and references.

And still the stroke of God continued heavy upon him, so that his eyes protruded and fell from their sockets, leaving him quite blind: and thus he suffered, by a most righteous retribution, the very same punishment which he had been the first to devise for the martyrs of God. At length, however, surviving even these sufferings, he too implored pardon of the God of the Christians, and confessed his impious fighting against God: he too recanted, as the former persecutor had done; and by laws and ordinances explicitly acknowledged his error in worshiping those whom he had accounted gods, declaring that he now knew, by positive experience, that the God of the Christians was the only true God. These were facts which Licinius had not merely received on the testimony of others, but of which he had himself had personal knowledge: and yet, as though his understanding had been obscured by some dark cloud of error, persisted in the same evil course.



Book II.

Chapter I.—*Secret Persecution by Licinius, who causes Some Bishops to be put to Death at Amasia of Pontus.*

In this manner, he of whom we have spoken continued to rush headlong towards that destruction which awaits the enemies of God; and once more, with a fatal emulation of their example whose ruin he had himself witnessed as the consequence of their impious conduct, he re-kindled the persecution of the Christians, like a long-extinguished fire, and fanned the unhallowed flame to a fiercer height than any who had gone before him.

At first, indeed, though breathing fury and threatenings against God, like some savage beast of prey, or some crooked and wriggling serpent, he dared not, from fear of Constantine, openly level his attacks against the churches of God subject to his dominion; but dissembled the virulence of his malice, and endeavored by secret and limited measures to compass the death of the bishops, the most eminent of whom he found means to remove, through charges laid against them by the governors of the several provinces. And the manner in which they suffered had in it something strange, and hitherto unheard of. At all events, the barbarities perpetrated at Amasia of Pontus surpassed every known excess of cruelty.

Chapter II.—*Demolition of Churches, and Butchery of the Bishops.*

For in that city some of the churches, for the second time since the commencement of the persecutions, were leveled with the ground, and others were closed by the governors of the several

districts, in order to prevent any who frequented them from assembling together, or rendering due worship to God. For he by whose orders these outrages were committed was too conscious of his own crimes to expect that these services were performed with any view to his benefit, and was convinced that all we did, and all our endeavors to obtain the favor of God, were on Constantine's behalf.

These servile governors³¹⁶⁰ then, feeling assured that such a course would be pleasing to the impious tyrant, subjected the most distinguished prelates of the churches to capital punishment. Accordingly, men who had been guilty of no crime were led away, without cause³¹⁶¹ punished like murderers: and some suffered a new kind of death, having their bodies cut piecemeal; and, after this cruel punishment, more horrible than any named in tragedy, being cast, as a food to fishes, into the depths of the sea. The result of these horrors was again, as before, the flight of pious men, and once more the fields and deserts received the worshipers of God. The tyrant, having thus far succeeded in his object, he farther determined to raise a general persecution of the Christians:³¹⁶² and he would have accomplished his purpose, nor could anything have hindered him from carrying his resolution into effect, had not he who defends his own anticipated the coming evil, and by his special guidance conducted his servant Constantine to this part of the empire, causing him to shine forth as a brilliant light in the midst of the darkness and gloomy night.

Chapter III.—*How Constantine was stirred in Behalf of the Christians thus in Danger of Persecution.*

He, perceiving the evils of which he had heard to be no longer tolerable, took wise counsel, and tempering the natural clemency of his character with a certain measure of severity, hastened to succor those who were thus grievously oppressed. For he judged that it would rightly be deemed a pious and holy task to secure, by the removal of an individual, the safety of the greater part of the human race. He judged too, that if he listened to the dictates of clemency only, and bestowed his pity on one utterly unworthy of it, this would, on the one hand, confer no real benefit on a man whom nothing would induce to abandon his evil practices, and whose fury against his subjects would only be likely to increase;³¹⁶³ while, on the other hand, those who suffered from his oppression would thus be forever deprived of all hope of deliverance.



³¹⁶⁰ Literally, “the flatterers and time-servers about him.”

³¹⁶¹ Or “openly.”

³¹⁶² [The reading in the text is τούτων, but should be πάντων, of *all* Christians, as it is in *Hist. Eccles.* Bk. 10, c. 8, from which this passage is almost verbally taken.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁶³ This seems to intend some exoneration of Constantine, explaining why he was what the heathen called “faithless” towards Licinius.

Influenced by these reflections, the emperor resolved without farther delay to extend a protecting hand to those who had fallen into such an extremity of distress. He accordingly made the usual warlike preparations, and assembled his whole forces, both of horse and foot. But before them all was carried the standard which I have before described, as the symbol of his full confidence in God.

Chapter IV.—*That Constantine prepared himself for the War by Prayer: Licinius by the Practice of Divination.*

He took with him also the priests of God, feeling well assured that now, if ever, he stood in need of the efficacy of prayer, and thinking it right that they should constantly be near and about his person, as most trusty guardians of the soul.

Now, as soon as the tyrant understood that Constantine's victories over his enemies were secured to him by no other means than the cooperation of God, and that the persons above alluded to were continually with him and about his person; and besides this, that the symbol of the salutary passion preceded both the emperor himself and his whole army; he regarded these precautions with ridicule (as might be expected), at the same time mocking and reviling the emperor with blasphemous words.

On the other hand, he gathered round himself Egyptian diviners and soothsayers, with sorcerers and enchanters, and the priests and prophets of those whom he imagined to be gods. He then, after offering the sacrifices which he thought the occasion demanded, enquired how far he might reckon on a successful termination of the war. They replied with one voice, that he would unquestionably be victorious over his enemies, and triumphant in the war: and the oracles everywhere held out to him the same prospect in copious and elegant verses. The soothsayers certified him of favorable omens from the flight of birds; the priests³¹⁶⁴ declared the same to be indicated by the motion of the entrails of their victims. Elevated, therefore, by these fallacious assurances, he boldly advanced at the head of his army, and prepared for battle.

Chapter V.—*What Licinius, while sacrificing in a Grove, said concerning Idols, and concerning Christ.*

³¹⁶⁴ Soothsayers and priests. These were technically "augurs" and "haruspices." Compare for their functions the articles *Augur*, *Divinatio*, and *Haruspices*, in Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.*

And when he was now ready to engage, he desired the most approved of his body-guard³¹⁶⁵ and his most valued friends to meet him in one of the places which they consider sacred. It was a well-watered and shady grove, and in it were several marble statues of those whom he accounted to be gods. After lighting tapers and performing the usual sacrifices in honor of these, he is said to have delivered the following speech:

“Friends and fellow-soldiers! These are our country’s gods, and these we honor with a worship derived from our remotest ancestors. But he who leads the army now opposed to us has proved false to the religion of his forefathers, and adopted atheistic sentiments, honoring in his infatuation some strange and unheard-of Deity, with whose despicable standard he now disgraces his army, and confiding in whose aid he has taken up arms, and is now advancing, not so much against *us* as against those very gods whom he has forsaken. However, the present occasion shall prove which of us is mistaken in his judgment, and shall decide between our gods and those whom our adversaries profess to honor. For either it will declare the victory to be ours, and so most justly evince that our gods are the true saviours and helpers; or else, if this God of Constantine’s, who comes we know not whence, shall prove superior to our deities (who are many, and in point of numbers, at least, have the advantage), let no one henceforth doubt which god he ought to worship, but attach himself at once to the superior power, and ascribe to him the honors of the victory. Suppose, then, this strange God, whom we now regard with ridicule, should really prove victorious; then indeed we must acknowledge and give him honor, and so bid a long farewell to those for whom we light our tapers in vain. But if our own gods triumph (as they undoubtedly will), then, as soon as we have secured the present victory, let us prosecute the war without delay against these despisers of the gods.”

Such were the words he addressed to those then present, as reported not long after to the writer of this history by some who heard them spoken.³¹⁶⁶ And as soon as he had concluded his speech, he gave orders to his forces to commence the attack.



Chapter VI.—*An Apparition seen in the Cities subject to Licinius, as of Constantine’s Troops passing through them.*

While these things were taking place a supernatural appearance is said to have been observed in the cities subject to the tyrant’s rule. Different detachments of Constantine’s army seemed to

³¹⁶⁵ Literally, “shield-bearers,” but here relates to a chosen body of guards, as in the Macedonian army. Compare Liddell and Scott, *Lex. s.v.* ὑπασπιστής

³¹⁶⁶ The whole passage seems altogether too appropriate to receive ready credence; but it is worth noting here how Eusebius “quotes his authors,” and seems to give the thing for what it is worth, keeping perhaps the same modicum of reservation for the hearers’ relative imagination and memory, when relating after the events, that the modern reader does.

present themselves to the view, marching at noonday through these cities, as though they had obtained the victory. In reality, not a single soldier was anywhere present at the time, and yet this appearance was seen through the agency of a divine and superior power, and foreshadowed what was shortly coming to pass. For as soon as the armies were ready to engage, he who had broken through the ties of friendly alliance³¹⁶⁷ was the first to commence the battle; on which Constantine, calling on the name of “God the Supreme Saviour,” and giving this as the watchword to his soldiers, overcame him in this first conflict: and not long after in a second battle he gained a still more important and decisive victory, the salutary trophy preceding the ranks of his army.

Chapter VII.—*That Victory everywhere followed the Presence of the Standard of the Cross in Battle.*

Indeed, wherever this appeared, the enemy soon fled before his victorious troops. And the emperor perceiving this, whenever he saw any part of his forces hard pressed, gave orders that the salutary trophy should be moved in that direction, like some triumphant charm³¹⁶⁸ against disasters: at which the combatants were divinely inspired, as it were, with fresh strength and courage, and immediate victory was the result.

Chapter VIII.—*That Fifty Men were selected to carry the Cross.*

Accordingly, he selected those of his bodyguard who were most distinguished for personal strength, valor, and piety, and entrusted them with the sole care and defense of the standard. There were thus no less than fifty men whose only duty was to surround and vigilantly defend the standard, which they carried each in turn on their shoulders. These circumstances were related to the writer of this narrative by the emperor himself in his leisure moments, long after the occurrence of the events: and he added another incident well worthy of being recorded.

Chapter IX.—*That One of the Cross-Bearers, who fled from his Post, was slain: while Another, who faithfully stood his Ground, was preserved.*

³¹⁶⁷ [Licinius was suspected of having secretly countenanced Bassianus (who had married Constantine’s sister Anastasia, and received the rank of Cæsar) in a treasonable conspiracy. Vide Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. 14.—*Bag.*] Compare Prolegomena, under *Life*.

³¹⁶⁸ Or “remedy”; i.e. that which keeps off harm.

For he said that once, during the very heat of an engagement, a sudden tumult and panic attacked his army, which threw the soldier who then bore the standard into an agony of fear, so that he handed it over to another, in order to secure his own escape from the battle. As soon, however, as his comrade had received it, and he had withdrawn, and resigned all charge of the standard, he was struck in the belly by a dart, which took his life. Thus he paid the penalty of his cowardice and unfaithfulness, and lay dead on the spot: but the other, who had taken his place as the bearer of the salutary standard, found it to be the safeguard of his life. For though he was assailed by a continual shower of darts, the bearer remained unhurt, the staff of the standard receiving every weapon. It was indeed a truly marvelous circumstance, that the enemies' darts all fell within and remained in the slender circumference of this spear, and thus saved the standard-bearer from death; so that none of those engaged in this service ever received a wound.

This story is none of mine, but for this,³¹⁶⁹ too, I am indebted to the emperor's own authority, who related it in my hearing along with other matters. And now, having thus through the power of God secured these first victories, he put his forces in motion and continued his onward march.

Chapter X.—*Various Battles, and Constantine's Victories.*

The van, however, of the enemy, unable to resist the emperor's first assault, threw down their arms, and prostrated themselves at his feet. All these he spared, rejoicing to save human life. But there were others who still continued in arms, and engaged in battle. These the emperor endeavored to conciliate by friendly overtures, but when these were not accepted he ordered his army to commence the attack. On this they immediately turned and betook themselves to flight; and some were overtaken and slain according to the laws of war, while others fell on each other in the confusion of their flight, and perished by the swords of their comrades.

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Chapter XI.—*Flight, and Magic Arts of Licinius.*

In these circumstances their commander, finding himself bereft of the aid of his followers,³¹⁷⁰ having lost his lately numerous array, both of regular and allied forces, having proved, too, by experience, how vain his confidence had been in those whom he thought to be gods, ignominiously took to flight, by which indeed he effected his escape, and secured his personal safety, for the pious

³¹⁶⁹ [Πἑλιν, "again," alluding to the former miracle, the vision of the cross, which Eusebius does not venture to attest himself, but relates on the word and oath of Constantine. Vide Bk. 1, cc. 28 and 30.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁷⁰ "Slaves," a word which has frequently been used by Eusebius in this literal sense.

emperor had forbidden his soldiers to follow him too closely,³¹⁷¹ and thus allowed him an opportunity for escape. And this he did in the hope that he might hereafter, on conviction of the desperate state of his affairs, be induced to abandon his insane and presumptuous ambition, and return to sounder reason. So Constantine, in his excessive humanity, thought and was willing patiently to bear past injuries, and extend his forgiveness to one who so ill deserved it; but Licinius, far from renouncing his evil practices, still added crime to crime, and ventured on more daring atrocities than ever. Nay, once more tampering with the detestable arts of magic, he again was presumptuous: so that it might well be said of him, as it was of the Egyptian tyrant of old, that God had hardened his heart.³¹⁷²

Chapter XII.—*How Constantine, after praying in his Tabernacle, obtained the Victory.*

But while Licinius, giving himself up to these impieties, rushed blindly towards the gulf of destruction, the emperor on the other hand, when he saw that he must meet his enemies in a second battle, devoted the intervening time to his Saviour. He pitched the tabernacle of the cross³¹⁷³ outside and at a distance from his camp, and there passed his time in a pure and holy manner, offering up prayers to God; following thus the example of his ancient prophet, of whom the sacred oracles testify, that he pitched the tabernacle without the camp.³¹⁷⁴ He was attended only by a few, whose faith and pious devotion he highly esteemed. And this custom he continued to observe whenever he meditated an engagement with the enemy. For he was deliberate in his measures, the better to insure safety, and desired in everything to be directed by divine counsel. And making earnest supplications to God, he was always honored after a little with a manifestation of his presence. And then, as if moved by a divine impulse, he would rush from the tabernacle, and suddenly give orders to his army to move at once without delay, and on the instant to draw their swords. On this they would immediately commence the attack, fight vigorously, so as with incredible celerity to secure the victory, and raise trophies of victory over their enemies.

Chapter XIII.—*His Humane Treatment of Prisoners.*

³¹⁷¹ This idiom here is nearly the English, “followed on the heels” of any one.

³¹⁷² Ex. ix. 12.

³¹⁷³ [This tabernacle, which Constantine always carried with him in his military expeditions, is described by Sozomen, Bk. 1, c. 8: see English translation.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁷⁴ [Alluding to Ex. xxxiii. 7, &c.—*Bag.*]

Thus the emperor and his army had long been accustomed to act, whenever there was a prospect of an engagement; for his God was ever present to his thoughts, and he desired to do everything according to his will, and conscientiously to avoid any wanton sacrifice of human life. He was anxious thus for the preservation not only of his own subjects, but even of his enemies. Accordingly he directed his victorious troops to spare the lives of their prisoners, admonishing them, as human beings, not to forget the claims of their common nature. And whenever he saw the passions of his soldiery excited beyond control, he repressed their fury by a largess of money, rewarding every man who saved the life of an enemy with a certain weight of gold. And the emperor's own sagacity led him to discover this inducement to spare human life, so that great numbers even of the barbarians were thus saved, and owed their lives to the emperor's gold.

Chapter XIV.—*A Farther Mention of his Prayers in the Tabernacle.*

Now these, and a thousand such acts as these, were familiarly and habitually done by the emperor. And on the present occasion he retired, as his custom was before battle, to the privacy of his tabernacle, and there employed his time in prayer to God. Meanwhile he strictly abstained from anything like ease, or luxurious living, and disciplined himself by fasting and bodily mortification, imploring the favor of God by supplication and prayer, that he might obtain his concurrence and aid, and be ready to execute whatever he might be pleased to suggest to his thoughts. In short, he exercised a vigilant care over all alike, and interceded with God as much for the safety of his enemies as for that of his own subjects.

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Chapter XV.—*Treacherous Friendship, and Idolatrous Practices of Licinius.*

And inasmuch as he who had lately fled before him now dissembled his real sentiments, and again petitioned for a renewal of friendship and alliance, the emperor thought fit, on certain conditions, to grant his request,³¹⁷⁵ in the hope that such a measure might be expedient, and generally advantageous to the community. Licinius, however, while he pretended a ready submission to the terms prescribed, and attested his sincerity by oaths, at this very time was secretly engaged in collecting a military force, and again meditated war and strife, inviting even the barbarians to join

³¹⁷⁵ ["He consented to leave his rival, or, as he again styled Licinius, his friend and brother, in the possession of Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; but the provinces of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece, were yielded to the Western empire, and the dominions of Constantine now extended from the confines of Caledonia to the extremity of Peloponnesus."]—Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. XIV.—*Bag.*]

his standard,³¹⁷⁶ and he began also to look about him for other gods, having been deceived by those in whom he had hitherto trusted. And, without bestowing a thought on what he had himself publicly spoken on the subject of false deities, or choosing to acknowledge that God who had fought on the side of Constantine, he made himself ridiculous by seeking for a multitude of new gods.

Chapter XVI.—*How Licinius counseled his Soldiers not to attack the Standard of the Cross.*

Having now learned by experience the Divine and mysterious power which resided in the salutary trophy, by means of which Constantine's army had become habituated to victory, he admonished his soldiers never to direct their attack against this standard, nor even incautiously to allow their eyes to rest upon it; assuring them that it possessed a terrible power, and was especially hostile to him; so that they would do well carefully to avoid any collision with it. And now, having given these directions, he prepared for a decisive conflict with him whose humanity prompted him still to hesitate, and to postpone the fate which he foresaw awaited his adversary. The enemy, however, confident in the aid of a multitude of gods, advanced to the attack with a powerful array of military force, preceded by certain images of the dead, and lifeless statues, as their defense. On the other side, the emperor, secure in the armor of godliness, opposed to the numbers of the enemy the salutary and life-giving sign, as at once a terror to the foe, and a protection from every harm. And for a while he paused, and preserved at first the attitude of forbearance, from respect to the treaty of peace to which he had given his sanction, that he might not be the first to commence the contest.

Chapter XVII.—*Constantine's Victory.*

³¹⁷⁶ [Gibbon (chap. XIV.) says that the reconciliation of Constantine and Licinius maintained, *above eight years*, the tranquillity of the Roman world. If this be true, it may be regarded as one proof that our author's work is rather to be considered as a general sketch of Constantine's life and character than as a minutely correct historical document.—*Bag.*] There is either a strange lack of perspective in this account, or else Eusebius omits all account of the first wars with Licinius (314) which resulted in the division of territory mentioned in the above note. This latter view is plausible on comparison with the account in the *Church History*. In this view the conditions referred to above relate to the terms on which Licinius was spared on Constantia's request, and what follows is the explanation of the alleged oath-breaking of Constantine in putting Licinius to death.

But as soon as he perceived that his adversaries persisted in their resolution, and were already drawing their swords, he gave free scope to his indignation, and by a single charge³¹⁷⁷ overthrew in a moment the entire body of the enemy, thus triumphing at once over them and their gods.

Chapter XVIII.—*Death of Licinius, and Celebration of the Event.*

He then proceeded to deal with this adversary of God and his followers according to the laws of war, and consign them to fitting punishment. Accordingly the tyrant himself, and they whose counsels had supported him in his impiety, were together subjected to the just punishment of death. After this, those who had so lately been deceived by their vain confidence in false deities, acknowledged with unfeigned sincerity the God of Constantine, and openly professed their belief in him as the true and only God.



Chapter XIX.—*Rejoicings and Festivities.*

And now, the impious being thus removed, the sun once more shone brightly after the gloomy cloud of tyrannic power. Each separate portion of the Roman dominion became blended with the rest; the Eastern nations united with those of the West, and the whole body of the Roman empire was graced as it were by its head in the person of a single and supreme ruler, whose sole authority pervaded the whole. Now too the bright rays of the light of godliness gladdened the days of those who had heretofore been sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Past sorrows were no more remembered, for all united in celebrating the praises of the victorious prince, and avowed their recognition of his preserver as the only true God. Thus he whose character shone with all the virtues of piety, the emperor Victor, for he had himself adopted this name as a most fitting appellation to express the victory which God had granted him over all who hated or opposed him,³¹⁷⁸ assumed the dominion of the East, and thus singly governed the Roman empire, re-united, as in former times, under one head. Thus, as he was the first to proclaim to all the sole sovereignty of God, so he himself, as sole sovereign of the Roman world, extended his authority over the whole human race. Every apprehension of those evils under the pressure of which all had suffered was now removed; men whose heads had drooped in sorrow now regarded each other with smiling countenances, and looks expressive of their inward joy. With processions and hymns of praise they first of all, as they

³¹⁷⁷ “With one shout and charge.” This does not agree with the account of the final struggle by which Licinius came into Constantine’s power, as generally given, and lends some probability to the view that after he had been captured he again revolted.

³¹⁷⁸ Like very many other things which Eusebius tells of Constantine, that which was entirely customary with other emperors as well as Constantine has the appearance of being peculiar to him. Victor is a common title of various emperors.

were told, ascribed the supreme sovereignty to God, as in truth the King of kings; and then with continued acclamations rendered honor to the victorious emperor, and the Cæsars, his most discreet and pious sons. The former afflictions were forgotten, and all past impieties forgiven: while with the enjoyment of present happiness was mingled the expectation of continued blessings in the future.

Chapter XX.—*Constantine's Enactments in Favor of the Confessors.*

Moreover, the emperor's edicts, permeated with his humane spirit, were published among us also, as they had been among the inhabitants of the other division of the empire; and his laws, which breathed a spirit of piety toward God, gave promise of manifold blessings, since they secured many advantages to his provincial subjects in every nation, and at the same time prescribed measures suited to the exigencies of the churches of God. For first of all they recalled those who, in consequence of their refusal to join in idol worship, had been driven to exile, or ejected from their homes by the governors of their respective provinces. In the next place, they relieved from their burdens those who for the same reason had been adjudged to serve in the civil courts, and ordained restitution to be made to any who had been deprived of property. They too, who in the time of trial had signalized themselves by fortitude of soul in the cause of God, and had therefore been condemned to the painful labor of the mines, or consigned to the solitude of islands, or compelled to toil in the public works, all received an immediate release from these burdens; while others, whose religious constancy had cost them the forfeiture of their military rank, were vindicated by the emperor's generosity from this dishonor: for he granted them the alternative either of resuming their rank, and enjoying their former privileges, or, in the event of their preferring a more settled life, of perpetual exemption from all service. Lastly, all who had been compelled by way of disgrace and insult to serve in the employments of women,³¹⁷⁹ he likewise freed with the rest.

Chapter XXI.—*His Laws concerning Martyrs, and concerning Ecclesiastical Property.*

Such were the benefits secured by the emperor's written mandates to the persons of those who had thus suffered for the faith, and his laws made ample provision for their property also.

With regard to those holy martyrs of God who had laid down their lives in the confession of His name, he directed that their estates should be enjoyed by their nearest kindred; and, in default of any of these, that the right of inheritance should be vested in the churches. Farther, whatever

³¹⁷⁹ [In the gynæcia (γυναικεῖα), or places where women, and subsequently slaves of both sexes, were employed in spinning and weaving for the emperor. *Vide infra*, ch. 34.—*Bag.*] See note on ch. 34.

property had been consigned to other parties from the treasury, whether in the way of sale or gift, together with that retained in the treasury itself, the generous mandate of the emperor directed should be restored to the original owners. Such benefits did his bounty, thus widely diffused, confer on the Church of God.



Chapter XXII.—*How he won the Favor of the People.*

But his munificence bestowed still further and more numerous favors on the heathen peoples and the other nations of his empire. So that the inhabitants of our [Eastern] regions, who had heard of the privileges experienced in the opposite portion of the empire, and had blessed the fortunate recipients of them, and longed for the enjoyment of a similar lot for themselves, now with one consent proclaimed their own happiness, when they saw themselves in possession of all these blessings; and confessed that the appearance of such a monarch to the human race was indeed a marvelous event, and such as the world's history had never yet recorded. Such were their sentiments.

Chapter XXIII.—*That he declared God to be the Author of his Prosperity: and concerning his Rescripts.*

And now that, through the powerful aid of God his Saviour, all nations owned their subjection to the emperor's authority, he openly proclaimed to all the name of Him to whose bounty he owed all his blessings, and declared that He, and not himself, was the author of his past victories. This declaration, written both in the Latin and Greek languages, he caused to be transmitted through every province of the empire. Now the excellence of his style of expression³¹⁸⁰ may be known from a perusal of his letters themselves which were two in number; one addressed to the churches of God; the other to the heathen population in the several cities of the empire. The latter of these I think it well to insert here as connected with my present subject, in order on the one hand that a copy of this document may be recorded as matter of history, and thus preserved to posterity, and on the other that it may serve to confirm the truth of my present narrative. It is taken from an authentic copy of the imperial statute in my own possession and the signature in the emperor's own handwriting attaches as it were the impress of truth to the statement I have made.

³¹⁸⁰ "The value of our narrative" is the rendering of Molzberger. "The powerfulness of his language."—1709.

Chapter XXIV.—*Law of Constantine respecting Piety towards God, and the Christian Religion.*³¹⁸¹

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to the inhabitants of the province of Palestine.

“To all who entertain just and sound sentiments respecting the character of the Supreme Being, it has long been most clearly evident, and beyond the possibility of doubt, how vast a difference there has ever been between those who maintain a careful observance of the hallowed duties of the Christian religion, and those who treat this religion with hostility or contempt. But at this present time, we may see by still more manifest proofs, and still more decisive instances, both how unreasonable it were to question this truth, and how mighty is the power of the Supreme God: since it appears that they who faithfully observe His holy laws, and shrink from the transgression of His commandments, are rewarded with abundant blessings, and are endued with well-grounded hope as well as ample power for the accomplishment of their undertakings. On the other hand, they who have cherished impious sentiments have experienced results corresponding to their evil choice. For how is it to be expected that any blessing would be obtained by one who neither desired to acknowledge nor duly to worship that God who is the source of all blessing? Indeed, facts themselves are a confirmation of what I say.

Chapter XXV.—*An Illustration from Ancient Times.*

“For certainly any one who will mentally retrace the course of events from the earliest period down to the present time, and will reflect on what has occurred in past ages, will find that all who have made justice and probity the basis of their conduct, have not only carried their undertakings to a successful issue, but have gathered, as it were, a store of sweet fruit as the produce of this pleasant root. Again, whoever observes the career of those who have been bold in the practice of oppression or injustice; who have either directed their senseless fury against God himself, or have conceived no kindly feelings towards their fellow-men, but have dared to afflict them with exile, disgrace, confiscation, massacre, or other miseries of the like kind, and all this without any sense of compunction, or wish to direct thoughts to a better course, will find that such men have received a recompense proportioned to their crimes. And these are results which might naturally and reasonably be expected to ensue.³¹⁸²

³¹⁸¹ Compare Epitome in Sozomen, 1. 8.

³¹⁸² There is a curious unanimity of effort on the part of theological amateurs, ancient and modern, to prove that those upon whom the tower in Siloam fell were guiltier than others. This was the spirit of Lactantius and it is not to be wondered at that Constantine should adopt such a peculiarly self-satisfying doctrine.



Chapter XXVI.—*Of Persecuted and Persecutors.*

“For whoever have addressed themselves with integrity of purpose to any course of action, keeping the fear of God continually before their thoughts, and preserving an unwavering faith in him, without allowing present fears or dangers to outweigh their hope of future blessings—such persons, though for a season they may have experienced painful trials, have borne their afflictions lightly, being supported by the belief of greater rewards in store for them; and their character has acquired a brighter luster in proportion to the severity of their past sufferings. With regard, on the other hand, to those who have either dishonorably slighted the principles of justice, or refused to acknowledge the Supreme God themselves, and yet have dared to subject others who have faithfully maintained his worship to the most cruel insults and punishments; who have failed equally to recognize their own wretchedness in oppressing others on such grounds, and the happiness and blessing of those who preserved their devotion to God even in the midst of such sufferings: with regard, I say, to such men, many a time have their armies been slaughtered, many a time have they been put to flight; and their warlike preparations have ended in total ruin and defeat.

Chapter XXVII.—*How the Persecution became the Occasion of Calamities to the Aggressors.*

“From the causes I have described, grievous wars arose, and destructive devastations. Hence followed a scarcity of the common necessities of life, and a crowd of consequent miseries: hence, too, the authors of these impieties have either met a disastrous death of extreme suffering, or have dragged out an ignominious existence, and confessed it to be worse than death itself, thus receiving as it were a measure of punishment proportioned to the heinousness of their crimes.³¹⁸³ For each experienced a degree of calamity according to the blind fury with which he had been led to combat, and as he thought, defeat the Divine will: so that they not only felt the pressure of the ills of this present life, but were tormented also by a most lively apprehension of punishment in the future world.³¹⁸⁴

Chapter XXVIII.—*That God chose Constantine to be the Minister of Blessing.*

“And now, with such a mass of impiety oppressing the human race, and the commonwealth in danger of being utterly destroyed, as if by the agency of some pestilential disease, and therefore needing powerful and effectual aid; what was the relief, and what the remedy which the Divinity

³¹⁸³ Compare Lactantius, *On the deaths of the persecutors* (De M. P.), and the *Church History* of Eusebius.

³¹⁸⁴ Literally “beneath the earth,” referring of course to the Græco-Roman conception of Hades.

devised for these evils? (And by Divinity is meant the one who is alone and truly God, the possessor of almighty and eternal power: and surely it cannot be deemed arrogance in one who has received benefits from God, to acknowledge them in the loftiest terms of praise.) I myself, then, was the instrument whose services He chose, and esteemed suited for the accomplishment of his will. Accordingly, beginning at the remote Britannic ocean, and the regions where, according to the law of nature, the sun sinks beneath the horizon, through the aid of divine power I banished and utterly removed every form of evil which prevailed, in the hope that the human race, enlightened through my instrumentality, might be recalled to a due observance of the holy laws of God, and at the same time our most blessed faith might prosper under the guidance of his almighty hand.

Chapter XXIX.—*Constantine's Expressions of Piety towards God; and Praise of the Confessors.*

“I said,³¹⁸⁵ under the guidance of his hand; for I would desire never to be forgetful of the gratitude due to his grace. Believing, therefore, that this most excellent service had been confided to me as a special gift, I proceeded as far as the regions of the East, which, being under the pressure of severer calamities, seemed to demand still more effectual remedies at my hands. At the same time I am most certainly persuaded that I myself owe my life, my every breath, in short, my very inmost and secret thoughts, entirely to the favor of the Supreme God. Now I am well aware that they who are sincere in the pursuit of the heavenly hope, and have fixed this hope in heaven itself as the peculiar and predominant principle of their lives, have no need to depend on human favor, but rather have enjoyed higher honors in proportion as they have separated themselves from the inferior and evil things of this earthly existence. Nevertheless I deem it incumbent on me to remove at once and most completely from all such persons the hard necessities laid upon them for a season, and the unjust inflictions under which they have suffered, though free from any guilt or just liability. For it would be strange indeed, that the fortitude and constancy of soul displayed by such men should be fully apparent during the reign of those whose first object it was to persecute them on account of their devotion to God, and yet that the glory of their character should not be more bright and blessed, under the administration of a prince who is His servant.

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Chapter XXX.—*A Law granting Release from Exile, from Service in the Courts, and from the Confiscation of Property.*

³¹⁸⁵ [“I said, under the guidance,” &c. It seems necessary to supply some expression of this kind, in order to preserve the sense, which is otherwise interrupted by the division (in this instance, at least, manifestly improper) into chapters.—*Bag.*]

“Let all therefore who have exchanged their country for a foreign land, because they would not abandon that reverence and faith toward God to which they had devoted themselves with their whole hearts, and have in consequence at different times been subject to the cruel sentence of the courts; together with any who have been enrolled in the registers of the public courts though in time past exempt from such office; let these, I say, now render thanks to God the Liberator of all, in that they are restored to their hereditary property, and their wonted tranquility. Let those also who have been despoiled of their goods, and have hitherto passed a wretched existence, mourning under the loss of all that they possessed, once more be restored to their former homes, their families, and estates, and receive with joy the bountiful kindness of God.

Chapter XXXI.—*Release likewise granted to Exiles in the Islands.*

“Furthermore, it is our command that all those who have been detained in the islands against their will should receive the benefit of this present provision; in order that they who till now have been surrounded by rugged mountains and the encircling barrier of the ocean, being now set free from that gloomy and desolate solitude, may fulfill their fondest wish by revisiting their dearest friends. Those, too, who have prolonged a miserable life in the midst of abject and wretched squalor, welcoming their restoration as an unlooked-for gain, and discarding henceforth all anxious thoughts, may pass their lives with us in freedom from all fear. For that any one could live in a state of fear under our government, when we boast and believe ourselves to be the servants of God, would surely be a thing most extraordinary even to hear of, and quite incredible; and our mission is to rectify the errors of the others.

Chapter XXXII.—*And to those ignominiously employed in the Mines and Public Works.*

“Again, with regard to those who have been condemned either to the grievous labor of the mines, or to service in the public works, let them enjoy the sweets of leisure in place of these long-continued toils, and henceforth lead a far easier life, and more accordant with the wishes of their hearts, exchanging the incessant hardships of their tasks for quiet relaxation. And if any have forfeited the common privilege of liberty, or have unhappily suffered dishonor,³¹⁸⁶ let them hasten back every one to the country of his nativity, and resume with becoming joy their former positions in society, from which they have been as it were separated by long residence abroad.

³¹⁸⁶ Glossed by Molzberger as “political dishonor.”

Chapter XXXIII.—*Concerning those Confessors engaged in Military Service.*

“Once more, with respect to those who had previously been preferred to any military distinction, of which they were afterwards deprived, for the cruel and unjust reason that they chose rather to acknowledge their allegiance to God than to retain the rank they held; we leave them perfect liberty of choice, either to occupy their former stations, should they be content again to engage in military service, or after an honorable discharge, to live in undisturbed tranquillity. For it is fair and consistent that men who have displayed such magnanimity and fortitude in meeting the perils to which they have been exposed, should be allowed the choice either of enjoying peaceful leisure, or resuming their former rank.

Chapter XXXIV.—*The Liberation of Free Persons condemned to labor in the Women’s Apartments, or to Servitude.*

“Lastly, if any have wrongfully been deprived of the privileges of noble lineage, and subjected to a judicial sentence which has consigned them to the women’s apartments³¹⁸⁷ and to the linen making, there to undergo a cruel and miserable labor, or reduced them to servitude for the benefit of the public treasury, without any exemption on the ground of superior birth; let such persons, resuming the honors they had previously enjoyed, and their proper dignities, henceforward exult in the blessings of liberty, and lead a glad life. Let the free man,³¹⁸⁸ too, by some injustice and inhumanity, or even madness, made a slave, who has felt the sudden transition from liberty to bondage, and oftentimes bewailed his unwonted labors, return to his family once more a free man in virtue of this our ordinance, and seek those employments which befit a state of freedom; and let him dismiss from his remembrance those services which he found so oppressive, and which so ill became his condition.

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Chapter XXXV.—*Of the Inheritance of the Property of Martyrs and Confessors, also of those who had suffered Banishment or Confiscation of Property.*

“Nor must we omit to notice those estates of which individuals have been deprived on various pretenses. For if any of those who have engaged with dauntless and resolute determination in the noble and divine conflict of martyrdom have also been stripped of their fortunes; or if the same has

³¹⁸⁷ In the Greek houses there were separate suites for men and women. Compare article *Domus*, in Smith, *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antiq.*

³¹⁸⁸ [That is, the free subject of inferior rank, accustomed to labor for his subsistence, but not to the degradation of slavery.]

been the lot of the confessors, who have won for themselves the hope of eternal treasures; or if the loss of property has befallen those who were driven from their native land because they would not yield to the persecutors, and betray their faith; lastly, if any who have escaped the sentence of death have yet been despoiled of their worldly goods; we ordain that the inheritances of all such persons be transferred to their nearest kindred. And whereas the laws expressly assign this right to those most nearly related, it will be easy to ascertain to whom these inheritances severally belong. And it is evidently reasonable that the succession in these cases should belong to those who would have stood in the place of nearest affinity, had the deceased experienced a natural death.

Chapter XXXVI.—*The Church is declared Heir of those who leave no Kindred; and the Free Gifts of such Persons Confirmed.*

“But should there be no surviving relation to succeed in due course to the property of those above-mentioned, I mean the martyrs, or confessors, or those who for some such cause have been banished from their native land; in such cases we ordain that the church locally nearest in each instance shall succeed to the inheritance. And surely it will be no wrong to the departed that that church should be their heir, for whose sake they have endured every extremity of suffering. We think it necessary to add this also, that in case any of the above-mentioned persons have donated any part of their property in the way of free gift, possession of such property shall be assured, as is reasonable, to those who have thus received it.

Chapter XXXVII —*Lands, Gardens, or Houses, but not Actual Produce from them, are to be given back.*

“And that there may be no obscurity in this our ordinance, but every one may readily apprehend its requirements, let all men hereby know that if they are now maintaining themselves in possession of a piece of land, or a house, or garden, or anything else which had appertained to the before-mentioned persons, it will be good and advantageous for them to acknowledge the fact, and make restitution with the least possible delay. On the other hand, although it should appear that some individuals have reaped abundant profits from this unjust possession, we do not consider that justice demands the restitution of such profits. They must, however, declare explicitly what amount of benefit they have thus derived, and from what sources, and entreat our pardon for this offense; in order that their past covetousness may in some measure be atoned for, and that the Supreme God may accept this compensation as a token of contrition, and be pleased graciously to pardon the sin.

Chapter XXXVIII.—*In what Manner Requests should be made for these.*

“But it is possible that those who have become masters of such property (if it be right or possible to allow them such a title) will assure us by way of apology for their conduct, that it was not in their power to abstain from this appropriation at a time when a spectacle of misery in all its forms everywhere met the view; when men were cruelly driven from their homes, slaughtered without mercy, thrust forth without remorse: when the confiscation of the property of innocent persons was a common thing, and when persecutions and property seizures were unceasing. If any defend their conduct by such reasons as these, and still persist in their avaricious temper, they shall be made sensible that such a course will bring punishment on themselves, and all the more because this correction of evil is the very characteristic of our service to the Supreme God. So that it will henceforth be dangerous to retain what dire necessity may in time past have compelled men to take; especially because it is in any case incumbent on us to discourage covetous desires, both by persuasion, and by warning examples.



Chapter XXXIX.—*The Treasury must restore Lands, Gardens, and Houses to the Churches.*

“Nor shall the treasury itself, should it have any of the things we have spoken of, be permitted to keep them; but, without venturing as it were to raise its voice against the holy churches, it shall justly relinquish in their favor what it has for a time unjustly retained. We ordain, therefore, that all things whatsoever which shall appear righteously to belong to the churches, whether the property consist of houses or fields and gardens, or whatever the nature of it may be, shall be restored in their full value and integrity, and with undiminished right of possession.

Chapter XL.—*The Tombs of Martyrs and the Cemeteries to be transferred to the Possession of the Churches.*

“Again, with respect to those places which are honored in being the depositories of the remains of martyrs, and continue to be memorials of their glorious departure; how can we doubt that they rightly belong to the churches, or refrain from issuing our injunction to that effect? For surely there can be no better liberality, no labor more pleasing or profitable, than to be thus employed under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, in order that those things which have been appropriated on false pretenses by unjust and wicked men, may be restored, as justice demands, and once more secured to the holy churches.

Chapter XLI.—*Those who have purchased Property belonging to the Church, or received it as a Gift, are to restore it.*

“And since it would be wrong in a provision intended to include all cases, to pass over those who have either procured any such property by right of purchase from the treasury, or have retained it when conveyed to them in the form of a gift; let all who have thus rashly indulged their insatiable thirst of gain be assured that, although by daring to make such purchases they have done all in their power to alienate our clemency from themselves, they shall nevertheless not fail of obtaining it, so far as is possible and consistent with propriety in each case. So much then is determined.

Chapter XLII.—*An Earnest Exhortation to worship God.*

“And now, since it appears by the clearest and most convincing evidence, that the miseries which erewhile oppressed the entire human race are now banished from every part of the world, through the power of Almighty God, and at the same time the counsel and aid which he is pleased on many occasions to administer through our agency; it remains for all, both individually and unitedly, to observe and seriously consider how great this power and how efficacious this grace are, which have annihilated and utterly destroyed this generation, as I may call them, of most wicked and evil men; have restored joy to the good, and diffused it over all countries; and now guarantee the fullest authority both to honor the Divine law as it should be honored, with all reverence, and pay due observance to those who have dedicated themselves to the service of that law. These rising as from some dark abyss and, with an enlightened knowledge of the present course of events, will henceforward render to its precepts that becoming reverence and honor which are consistent with their pious character.

Let this ordinance be published in our Eastern provinces.”³¹⁸⁹

Chapter XLIII.—*How the Enactments of Constantine were carried into Effect.*

Such were the injunctions contained in the first letter which the emperor addressed to us. And the provisions of this enactment were speedily carried into effect, everything being conducted in a manner quite different from the atrocities which had but lately been daringly perpetrated during the cruel ascendancy of the tyrants. Those persons also who were legally entitled to it, received the benefit of the emperor’s liberality.

³¹⁸⁹ [This seems to be the subscription or signature in the emperor’s own handwriting, which is referred to at the end of ch.

23.—*Bag.*]



Chapter XLIV.—*That he promoted Christians to Offices of Government, and forbade Gentiles in Such Stations to offer Sacrifice.*

After this the emperor continued to address himself to matters of high importance, and first he sent governors to the several provinces, mostly such as were devoted to the saving faith; and if any appeared inclined to adhere to Gentile worship, he forbade them to offer sacrifice. This law applied also to those who surpassed the provincial governors in rank and dignity,³¹⁹⁰ and even to those who occupied the highest station, and held the authority of the Prætorian Præfecture.³¹⁹¹ If they were Christians, they were free to act consistently with their profession; if otherwise, the law required them to abstain from idolatrous sacrifices.

Chapter XLV.—*Statutes which forbade Sacrifice, and enjoined the Building of Churches.*

Soon after this, two laws were promulgated about the same time; one of which was intended to restrain the idolatrous abominations which in time past had been practiced in every city and country; and it provided that no one should erect images, or practice divination and other false and foolish arts, or offer sacrifice in any way.³¹⁹² The other statute commanded the heightening of the oratories, and the enlargement in length and breadth of the churches of God; as though it were expected that, now the madness of polytheism was wholly removed, pretty nearly all mankind would henceforth attach themselves to the service of God. His own personal piety induced the emperor to devise and write these instructions to the governors of the several provinces: and the law farther admonished them not to spare the expenditure of money, but to draw supplies from the imperial treasury itself. Similar instructions were written also to the bishops of the several churches; and the emperor was pleased to transmit the same to myself, being the first letter which he personally addressed to me.

³¹⁹⁰ [That is, the proconsuls, the vicars (or vice-præfects), and counts, or provincial generals.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁹¹ [The power of the four Prætorian Præfects in the time of Constantine is thus described by Gibbon: “1. The Præfect of the East stretched his ample jurisdiction into the three parts of the globe which were subject to the Romans, from the cataracts of the Nile to the banks of the Phasis, and from the mountains of Thrace to the frontiers of Persia. 2. The important provinces of Pannonia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece once acknowledged the authority of the Præfect of Illyricum. 3. The power of the Præfect of Italy was not confined to the country from whence he derived his title; it extended over the additional territory of Rhætia as far as the banks of the Danube, over the dependent islands of the Mediterranean, and over that part of the continent of Africa which lies between the confines of Cyrene and those of Tingitania. 4. The Præfect of the Gauls comprehended under that plural denomination the kindred provinces of Britain and Spain, and his authority was obeyed from the wall of Antoninus to the fort of Mount Atlas.”—*Decline and Fall*, chap. 17.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁹² [That is, private sacrifices: for it appears that the idolatrous temples were allowed to be open for *public* worship.—*Bag.*]

Chapter XLVI.—*Constantine’s Letter to Eusebius and Other Bishops, respecting the Building of Churches, with Instructions to repair the Old, and erect New Ones on a Larger Scale, with the Aid of the Provincial Governors.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Eusebius.

“Forasmuch as the unholy and willful rule of tyranny has persecuted the servants of our Saviour until this present time, I believe and have fully satisfied myself, best beloved brother, that the buildings belonging to all the churches have either become ruinous through actual neglect, or have received inadequate attention from the dread of the violent spirit of the times.

“But now, that liberty is restored, and that serpent³¹⁹³ driven from the administration of public affairs by the providence of the Supreme God, and our instrumentality, we trust that all can see the efficacy of the Divine power, and that they who through fear of persecution or through unbelief have fallen into any errors, will now acknowledge the true God, and adopt in future that course of life which is according to truth and rectitude. With respect, therefore, to the churches over which you yourself preside, as well as the bishops, presbyters, and deacons of other churches with whom you are acquainted, do you admonish all to be zealous in their attention to the buildings of the churches, and either to repair or enlarge those which at present exist, or, in cases of necessity, to erect new ones.

“We also empower you, and the others through you, to demand what is needful for the work, both from the provincial governors and from the Prætorian Præfect. For they have received instructions to be most diligent in obedience to your Holiness’s orders. God preserve you, beloved brother.” A copy of this charge was transmitted throughout all the provinces to the bishops of the several churches: the provincial governors received directions accordingly, and the imperial statute was speedily carried into effect.



Chapter XLVII.—*That he wrote a Letter in Condemnation of Idolatry.*

Moreover, the emperor, who continually made progress in piety towards God, dispatched an admonitory letter to the inhabitants of every province, respecting the error of idolatry into which his predecessors in power had fallen, in which he eloquently exhorts his subjects to acknowledge the Supreme God, and openly to profess their allegiance to his Christ as their Saviour. This letter also, which is in his own handwriting, I have judged it necessary to translate from the Latin for the

³¹⁹³ [Licinius, thus designated for the subtlety of his character.—*Bag.*] More probably for his wickedness, and perhaps with thought of the “dragon” of the Book of Revelation. The word is δρῆκων, not ὄφις. It is the latter which is used in the LXX, where the English version speaks of the serpent as the “subtlest.” For historical and symbolical use of the words, compare Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship* (Lond., 1874), and Conway, *Demonology and Devil Lore* (N.Y., 1879, 2 v.).

present work, in order that we may hear, as it were, the voice the emperor himself uttering these sentiments in the audience of all mankind.

Chapter XLVIII.—*Constantine's Edict to the People of the Provinces concerning the Error of Polytheism, commencing with Some General Remarks on Virtue and Vice.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to the people of the Eastern provinces.

“Whatever is comprehended under the sovereign³¹⁹⁴ laws of nature, seems to convey to all men an adequate idea of the forethought and intelligence of the divine order. Nor can any, whose minds are directed in the true path of knowledge to the attainment of that end, entertain a doubt that the just perceptions of sound reason, as well as those of the natural vision itself, through the sole influence of genuine virtue, lead to the knowledge of God. Accordingly no wise man will ever be surprised when he sees the mass of mankind influenced by opposite sentiments. For the beauty of virtue would be useless³¹⁹⁵ and unperceived, did not vice display in contrast with it the course of perversity and folly. Hence it is that the one is crowned with reward, while the most high God is himself the administrator of judgment to the other.

“And now I will endeavor to lay before you all as explicitly as possible, the nature of my own hopes of future happiness.³¹⁹⁶

Chapter XLIX.—*Concerning Constantine's Pious Father, and the Persecutors Diocletian and Maximian.*

“The former emperors I have been accustomed to regard as those with whom I could have no sympathy,³¹⁹⁷ on account of the savage cruelty of their character. Indeed, my father was the only one who uniformly practiced the duties of humanity, and with admirable piety called for the blessing of God the Father on all his actions, but the rest, unsound in mind, were more zealous of cruel than

³¹⁹⁴ Or “fixed,” “appointed.”

³¹⁹⁵ By a conjectural reading Stroth makes this “fools,” instead of “useless,” and renders, “For fools would not otherwise recognize the charm of virtue.”

³¹⁹⁶ [The remark of Valesius in reference to the difficulty of this chapter appears probable; viz. that it is partly to be attributed to Constantine's own want of clearness, and partly to his translator, who has rendered obscure Latin into still more obscure Greek.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁹⁷ The word means “having no share with,” and sometimes “disinherited.” It may perhaps mean, “I have been accustomed to think of the former emperors as having been deprived of their possessions on account,” &c.

gentle measures; and this disposition they indulged without restraint, and thus persecuted the true doctrine during the whole period of their reign. Nay, so violent did their malicious fury become, that in the midst of a profound peace, as regards both the religious and ordinary interests of men, they kindled, as it were, the flames of a civil war.³¹⁹⁸

Chapter L.—*That the Persecution originated on Account of the Oracle of Apollo, who, it was said, could not give Oracles because of “the Righteous Men.”*

“About that time it is said that Apollo spoke from a deep and gloomy cavern, and through the medium of no human voice, and declared that *the righteous men* on earth were a bar to his speaking the truth, and accordingly that the oracles from the tripod were fallacious. Hence it was that he suffered his tresses to droop in token of grief,³¹⁹⁹ and mourned the evils which the loss of the oracular spirit would entail on mankind. But let us mark the consequences of this.

Chapter LI.—*That Constantine, when a Youth, heard from him who wrote the Persecution Edict that “the Righteous Men” were the Christians.*

“I call now on thee, most high God, to witness that, when young, I heard him who at that time was chief among the Roman emperors, unhappy, truly unhappy as he was, and laboring under mental delusion, make earnest enquiry of his attendants as to who these righteous ones on earth were, and that one of the Pagan priests then present replied that they were doubtless the Christians. This answer he eagerly received, like some honeyed draught, and unsheathed the sword which was ordained for the punishment of crime, against those whose holiness was beyond reproach. Immediately, therefore, he issued those sanguinary edicts, traced, if I may so express myself, with a sword’s point dipped in blood; at the same time commanding his judges to tax their ingenuity for the invention of new and more terrible punishments.

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Chapter LII.—*The Manifold Forms of Torture and Punishment practiced against the Christians.*

³¹⁹⁸ [The persecution of the Christians, with its attendant horrors, being the act, not of foreign enemies, but of their countrymen and fellow-citizens.—*Bag.*]

³¹⁹⁹ This is translated by Molzberger, “Therefore the priests let their hair hang down,” &c.

“Then, indeed, one might see with what arrogance those venerable worshipers of God were daily exposed, with continued and relentless cruelty, to outrages of the most grievous kind, and how that modesty of character³²⁰⁰ which no enemy had ever treated with disrespect, became the mere sport of their infuriated fellow-citizens. Is there any punishment by fire, are there any tortures or forms of torment, which were not applied to all, without distinction of age or sex? Then, it may be truly said, the earth shed tears, the all-encircling compass of heaven mourned because of the pollution of blood; and the very light of day itself was darkened in grief at the spectacle.

Chapter LIII.—*That the Barbarians kindly received the Christians.*

“But what is the consequence of this? Why, the barbarians themselves may boast now of the contrast their conduct presents to these creel deeds; for they received and kept in gentlest captivity those who then fled from amongst us, and secured to them not merely safety from danger, but also the free exercise of their holy religion. And now the Roman people bear that lasting stain which the Christians, at that time driven from the Roman world, and taking refuge with the barbarians, have branded on them.

Chapter LIV.—*What Vengeance overtook those who on Account of the Oracle raised the Persecution.*

“But why need I longer dwell on these lamentable events, and the general sorrow which in consequence pervaded the world? The perpetrators of this dreadful guilt are now no more: they have experienced a miserable end, and are consigned to unceasing punishment in the depths of the lower world. They encountered each other in civil strife, and have left neither name nor race behind. And surely this calamity would never have befallen them, had not that impious deliverance of the Pythian oracle exercised a delusive power over them.³²⁰¹

Chapter LV.—*Constantine gives Glory to God, makes Grateful Acknowledgment of the Sign of the Cross, and prays for the Churches and People.*

And now I beseech thee, most mighty God, to be merciful and gracious to thine Eastern nations, to thy people in these provinces, worn as they are by protracted miseries; and grant them healing

³²⁰⁰ σωφροσύνη

³²⁰¹ Compare, on all this, the *Church History* and notes, and also the Prolegomena to this work.

through thy servant. Not without cause, O holy God, do I prefer this prayer to thee, the Lord of all. Under thy guidance have I devised and accomplished measures fraught with blessings: preceded by thy sacred sign I have led thy armies to victory: and still, on each occasion of public danger, I follow the same symbol of thy perfections while advancing to meet the foe. Therefore have I dedicated to thy service a soul duly attempered by love and fear. For thy name I truly love, while I regard with reverence that power of which thou hast given abundant proofs, to the confirmation and increase of my faith. I hasten, then, to devote all my powers to the restoration of thy most holy dwelling-place, which those profane and impious men have defiled by the contamination of violence.

Chapter LVI.—*He prays that All may be Christians, but compels None.*

“My own desire is, for the common good of the world and the advantage of all mankind, that thy people should enjoy a life of peace and undisturbed concord. Let those, therefore, who still delight in error, be made welcome to the same degree of peace and tranquillity which they have who believe. For it may be that this restoration of equal privileges to all will prevail to lead them into the straight path. Let no one molest another, but let every one do as his soul desires. Only let men of sound judgment be assured of this, that those only can live a life of holiness and purity, whom thou callest to a reliance on thy holy laws. With regard to those who will hold themselves aloof from us, let them have, if they please, their temples³²⁰² of lies: *we* have the glorious edifice of thy truth, which thou hast given us as our native home.³²⁰³ We pray, however, that they too may receive the same blessing, and thus experience that heartfelt joy which unity of sentiment inspires.

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Chapter LVII.—*He gives Glory to God, who has given Light by his Son to those who were in Error.*

³²⁰² Or “groves.”

³²⁰³ [“Ὅνπερ κατὰ φύσιν δέδωκας. The clause is thus rendered by Valesius: “Nos splendidissimam domum veritatis tuæ, quam nascentibus nobis donasti, retinemus.” This seems almost as unintelligible as the original. The translation above attempted yields, perhaps, a sense not inconsistent with the general scope of the passage.—*Bag.*] *1709* renders “according to nature.” *Molzberger* has “through no merit on our part.” *Stroth* renders “characteristically” or “as our own natural possession” (i.e. *eigenthümlich*), and is confirmed by *Heinichen*, while *Christopherson* has “natura” and *Portesius* “a natura.” The last is the best *translation* “by nature.” As a matter of *interpretation* *Bagster* is probably wrong and *Stroth* substantially right. Whether *Constantine* had the *Epistle to the Romans* in mind or not, he had the same thought as *Paul* that men “by nature” have the “truth of God,” but exchange this for a lie (*Rom.* i. 25; ii. 14; cf. xi. 21 and 24). This suggests, however, another possible meaning, that the truth is known “through the things that are made” (*Rom.* i. 20). For various philosophical usages of φύσις, compare interesting note in *Grant, Ethics of Aristotle*, 1 (Lond. 1885), 483, 484.

“And truly our worship is no new or recent thing, but one which thou hast ordained for thine own due honor, from the time when, as we believe, this system of the universe was first established. And, although mankind have deeply fallen, and have been seduced by manifold errors, yet hast thou revealed a pure light in the person of thy Son, that the power of evil should not utterly prevail, and hast thus given testimony to all men concerning thyself.

Chapter LVIII.—*He glorifies him again for his Government of the Universe.*

The truth of this is assured to us by thy works. It is thy power which removes our guilt, and makes us faithful. The sun and the moon have their settled course. The stars move in no uncertain orbits round this terrestrial globe. The revolution of the seasons recurs according to unerring laws. The solid fabric of the earth was established by thy word: the winds receive their impulse at appointed times; and the course of the waters continues with ceaseless flow,³²⁰⁴ the ocean is circumscribed by an immovable barrier, and whatever is comprehended within the compass of earth and sea, is all contrived for wondrous and important ends.

“Were it not so, were not all regulated by the determination of thy will, so great a diversity, so manifold a division of power, would unquestionably have brought ruin on the whole race and its affairs. For those agencies which have maintained a mutual strife³²⁰⁵ would thus have carried to a more deadly length that hostility against the human race which they even now exercise, though unseen by mortal eyes.

Chapter LIX.—*He gives Glory to God, as the Constant Teacher of Good.*

“Abundant thanks, most mighty God, and Lord of all, be rendered to thee, that, by so much as our nature becomes known from the diversified pursuits of man, by so much the more are the precepts of thy divine doctrine confirmed to those whose thoughts are directed aright, and who are sincerely devoted to true virtue. As for those who will not allow themselves to be cured of their error, let them not attribute this to any but themselves. For that remedy which is of sovereign and healing virtue is openly placed within the reach of all. Only let not any one inflict an injury on that religion which experience itself testifies to be pure and undefiled. Henceforward, therefore, let us all enjoy in common the privilege placed within our reach, I mean the blessing of peace, endeavoring to keep our conscience pure from all that is contrary.

³²⁰⁴ Probably meaning rains.

³²⁰⁵ [Constantine seems here to allude to the Gentile deities as powers of evil, capable, if unrestrained by a superior power, of working universal ruin.—*Bag.*]

Chapter LX.—*An Admonition at the Close of the Edict, that No One should trouble his Neighbor.*

“Once more, let none use that to the detriment of another which he may himself have received on conviction of its truth; but let every one, if it be possible, apply what he has understood and known to the benefit of his neighbor; if otherwise, let him relinquish the attempt. For it is one thing voluntarily to undertake the conflict for immortality, another to compel others to do so from the fear of punishment.

“These are our words; and we have enlarged on these topics more than our ordinary clemency would have dictated, because we were unwilling to dissemble or be false to the true faith; and the more so, since we understand there are some who say that the rites of the heathen temples, and the power of darkness, have been entirely removed. We should indeed have earnestly recommended such removal to all men, were it not that the rebellious spirit of those wicked errors still continues obstinately fixed in the minds of some, so as to discourage the hope of any general restoration of mankind to the ways of truth.”³²⁰⁶

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Chapter LXI.—*How Controversies originated at Alexandria through Matters relating to Arius.*³²⁰⁷

In this manner the emperor, like a powerful herald of God, addressed himself by his own letter to all the provinces, at the same time warning his subjects against superstitious³²⁰⁸ error, and encouraging them in the pursuit of true godliness. But in the midst of his joyful anticipations of the success of this measure, he received tidings of a most serious disturbance which had invaded the peace of the Church. This intelligence he heard with deep concern, and at once endeavored to devise a remedy for the evil. The origin of this disturbance may be thus described. The people of God were in a truly flourishing state, and abounding in the practice of good works. No terror from without assailed them, but a bright and most profound peace, through the favor of God, encompassed his Church on every side. Meantime, however, the spirit of envy was watching to destroy our blessings, which at first crept in unperceived, but soon revelled in the midst of the assemblies of the saints. At length it reached the bishops themselves, and arrayed them in angry hostility against each other, on pretense of a jealous regard for the doctrines of Divine truth. Hence it was that a mighty fire was kindled as it were from a little spark, and which, originating in the first instance

³²⁰⁶ The editorial “we” used by *Bag.* throughout these edicts has been retained, although the first person singular is employed throughout in the original.

³²⁰⁷ For literature relating to Arianism, compare *Literature* at the end of article by Schaff, in Smith and Wace, *Dict.* 1 (1877), 159, and in the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopædia*, 1, p. 137.

³²⁰⁸ “Demoniacal.” *1709* renders “diabolical.”

in the Alexandrian church,³²⁰⁹ overspread the whole of Egypt and Libya, and the further Thebaid. Eventually it extended its ravages to the other provinces and cities of the empire; so that not only the prelates of the churches might be seen encountering each other in the strife of words, but the people themselves were completely divided, some adhering to one faction and others to another. Nay, so notorious did the scandal of these proceedings become, that the sacred matters of inspired teaching were exposed to the most shameful ridicule in the very theaters of the unbelievers.

Chapter LXII.—*Concerning the Same Arius, and the Melitians.*³²¹⁰

Some thus at Alexandria maintained an obstinate conflict on the highest questions. Others throughout Egypt and the Upper Thebaid, were at variance on account of an earlier controversy: so that the churches were everywhere distracted by divisions. The body therefore being thus diseased, the whole of Libya caught the contagion; and the rest of the remoter provinces became affected with the same disorder. For the disputants at Alexandria sent emissaries to the bishops of the several provinces, who accordingly ranged themselves as partisans on either side, and shared in the same spirit of discord.

Chapter LXIII.—*How Constantine sent a Messenger and a Letter concerning Peace.*

As soon as the emperor was informed of these facts, which he heard with much sorrow of heart, considering them in the light of a calamity personally affecting himself, he forthwith selected from the Christians in his train one whom he well knew to be approved for the sobriety and genuineness of his faith,³²¹¹ and who had before this time distinguished himself by the boldness of his religious profession, and sent him to negotiate peace³²¹² between the dissentient parties at Alexandria. He also made him the bearer of a most needful and appropriate letter to the original movers of the strife: and this letter, as exhibiting a specimen of his watchful care over God's people, it may be well to introduce into this our narrative of his life. Its purport was as follows.

³²⁰⁹ It was at Alexandria that the controversy with Arius arose. He was called to account by Alexander of Alexandria who summoned one council and then another, at which Arius and his followers were excommunicated.

³²¹⁰ [The Melitians, or Meletians, an obscure Egyptian sect, of whom little satisfactory is recorded.—*Bag.*] Compare Blunt, *Dict. of Sects, Heresies, &c.* (1874), 305–308.

³²¹¹ [Hosius, bishop of Cordova.—*Bag.*] Hosius had already been for some time a trusted adviser, having acted for Constantine also in the Donatist matters. Compare on Hosius the full article of Morse in Smith and Wace.

³²¹² By “acting as umpire.”

Chapter LXIV.—*Constantine's Letter to Alexander the Bishop, and Arius the Presbyter.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Alexander and Arius.

“I call that God to witness, as well I may, who is the helper of my endeavors, and the Preserver of all men, that I had a twofold reason for undertaking that duty which I have now performed.



Chapter LXV.—*His Continual Anxiety for Peace.*

“My design then was, first, to bring the diverse judgments formed by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition, as it were, of settled uniformity; and, secondly, to restore to health the system of the world, then suffering under the malignant power of a grievous distemper. Keeping these objects in view, I sought to accomplish the one by the secret eye of thought, while the other I tried to rectify by the power of military authority. For I was aware that, if I should succeed in establishing, according to my hopes, a common harmony of sentiment among all the servants of God, the general course of affairs would also experience a change correspondent to the pious desires of them all.

Chapter LXVI.—*That he also adjusted the Controversies which had arisen in Africa.*

“Finding, then, that the whole of Africa was pervaded by an intolerable spirit of mad folly, through the influence of those who with heedless frivolity had presumed to rend the religion of the people into diverse sects; I was anxious to check this disorder, and could discover no other remedy equal to the occasion, except in sending some of yourselves to aid in restoring mutual harmony among the disputants, after I had removed that common enemy³²¹³ of mankind who had interposed his lawless sentence for the prohibition of your holy synods.

Chapter LXVII.—*That Religion began in the East.*

“For since the power of Divine light, and the law of sacred worship, which, proceeding in the first instance, through the favor of God, from the bosom, as it were, of the East, have illumined the world, by their sacred radiance, I naturally believed that you would be the first to promote the salvation of other nations, and resolved with all energy of thought and diligence of enquiry to seek your aid. As soon, therefore, as I had secured my decisive victory and unquestionable triumph over

³²¹³ [Licinius, whose prohibition of synods is referred to in Bk. 1, ch. 51. The disputes here mentioned are those between the Catholic Christians and the Donatists, a very violent sect which sprung up in Africa after the persecution by Diocletian.—*Bag.*]

my enemies, my first enquiry was concerning that object which I felt to be of paramount interest and importance.

Chapter LXVIII.—*Being grieved by the Dissension, he counsels Peace.*

“But, O glorious Providence of God! how deep a wound did not my ears only, but my very heart receive in the report that divisions existed among yourselves more grievous still than those which continued in that country!³²¹⁴ so that you, through whose aid I had hoped to procure a remedy for the errors of others, are in a state which needs healing even more than theirs. And yet, having made a careful enquiry into the origin and foundation of these differences, I find the cause to be of a truly insignificant character, and quite unworthy of such fierce contention. Feeling myself, therefore, compelled to address you in this letter, and to appeal at the same time to your unanimity³²¹⁵ and sagacity, I call on Divine Providence to assist me in the task, while I interrupt your dissension in the character of a minister of peace. And with reason: for if I might expect, with the help of a higher Power, to be able without difficulty, by a judicious appeal to the pious feelings of those who heard me, to recall them to a better spirit, even though the occasion of the disagreement were a greater one, how can I refrain from promising myself a far easier and more speedy adjustment of this difference, when the cause which hinders general harmony of sentiment is intrinsically trifling and of little moment?

Chapter LXIX.—*Origin of the Controversy between Alexander and Arius, and that these Questions ought not to have been discussed.*

I understand, then, that the origin of the present controversy is this. When you, Alexander, demanded of the presbyters what opinion they severally maintained respecting a certain passage in the Divine law,³²¹⁶ or rather, I should say, that you asked them something connected with an unprofitable question, then you, Arius, inconsiderately insisted on³²¹⁷ what ought never to have been conceived at all, or if conceived, should have been buried in profound silence. Hence it was

³²¹⁴ [Africa: alluding to the schism of the Donatists.—*Bag.*]

³²¹⁵ Or “mutual.”

³²¹⁶ [The word νόμος seems to be commonly used by Eusebius as a general term for Divine revelation; as we employ the word “Scripture.”—*Bag.*]

³²¹⁷ The plain English “stuck to” represents the idea of Heinichen (*animo infixisses infixumque teneres*) followed by *Molz* (*mit unkluger Hartnäckigkeit festhielt*). *Bag.* had “gave utterance to,” and with this *Vales.*, 1709, and *Str.* correspond.

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that a dissension arose between you, fellowship was withdrawn,³²¹⁸ and the holy people, rent into diverse parties, no longer preserved the unity of the one body. Now, therefore, do ye both exhibit an equal degree of forbearance,³²¹⁹ and receive the advice which your fellow-servant righteously gives. What then is this advice? It was wrong in the first instance to propose such questions as these, or to reply to them when propounded. For those points of discussion which are enjoined by the authority of no law, but rather suggested by the contentious spirit which is fostered by misused leisure, even though they may be intended merely as an intellectual exercise, ought certainly to be confined to the region of our own thoughts, and not hastily produced in the popular assemblies, nor unadvisedly intrusted to the general ear. For how very few are there able either accurately to comprehend, or adequately to explain subjects so sublime and abstruse in their nature? Or, granting that one were fully competent for this, how many people will he convince? Or, who, again, in dealing with questions of such subtle nicety as these, can secure himself against a dangerous declension from the truth? It is incumbent therefore on us in these cases to be sparing of our words, lest, in case we ourselves are unable, through the feebleness of our natural faculties, to give a clear explanation of the subject before us, or, on the other hand, in case the slowness of our hearers' understandings disables them from arriving at an accurate apprehension of what we say, from one or other of these causes the people be reduced to the alternative either of blasphemy or schism.

Chapter LXX.—*An Exhortation to Unanimity.*

“Let therefore both the unguarded question and the inconsiderate answer receive your mutual forgiveness.³²²⁰ For the cause of your difference has not been any of the leading doctrines or precepts of the Divine law, nor has any new heresy respecting the worship of God arisen among you. You are in truth of one and the same judgment:³²²¹ you may therefore well join in communion and fellowship.

³²¹⁸ *Bag.*, “The meeting of the synod was prohibited.”

³²¹⁹ On “forgiveness.”

³²²⁰ Rendered “forbearance” above.

³²²¹ [The emperor seems at this time to have had a very imperfect knowledge of the errors of the Arian heresy. After the Council of Nice, at which he heard them fully explained, he wrote of them in terms of decisive condemnation in his letter to the Alexandrian church. Vide Socrates' *Eccles. Hist.*, Bk. 1, ch. 9.—*Bag.*] Neither at this time nor at any time does Constantine seem to have entered very fully into an appreciation of doctrinal niceties. Later he was more than tolerant of semi-Arianism. He seems to have depended a good deal on the “explanations” of others, and to have been led in a somewhat devious path in trying to follow all.

Chapter LXXI.—*There should be no Contention in Matters which are in themselves of Little Moment.*

“For as long as you continue to contend about these small and very insignificant questions, it is not fitting that so large a portion of God’s people should be under the direction of your judgment, since you are thus divided between yourselves. I believe it indeed to be not merely unbecoming, but positively evil, that such should be the case. But I will refresh your minds by a little illustration, as follows. You know that philosophers, though they all adhere to one system, are yet frequently at issue on certain points, and differ, perhaps, in their degree of knowledge: yet they are recalled to harmony of sentiment by the uniting power of their common doctrines. If this be true, is it not far more reasonable that you, who are the ministers of the Supreme God, should be of one mind respecting the profession of the same religion? But let us still more thoughtfully and with closer attention examine what I have said, and see whether it be right that, on the ground of some trifling and foolish verbal difference between ourselves, brethren should assume towards each other the attitude of enemies, and the august meeting of the Synod be rent by profane disunion, because of you who wrangle together on points so trivial and altogether unessential? This is vulgar, and rather characteristic of childish ignorance, than consistent with the wisdom of priests and men of sense. Let us withdraw ourselves with a good will from these temptations of the devil. Our great God and common Saviour of all has granted the same light to us all. Permit me, who am his servant, to bring my task to a successful issue, under the direction of his Providence, that I may be enabled, through my exhortations, and diligence, and earnest admonition, to recall his people to communion and fellowship. For since you have, as I said, but one faith, and one sentiment respecting our religion, and since the Divine commandment in all its parts enjoins on us all the duty of maintaining a spirit of concord, let not the circumstance which has led to a slight difference between you, since it does not affect the validity of the whole, cause any division or schism among you. And this I say without in any way desiring to force you to entire unity of judgment in regard to this truly idle question, whatever its real nature may be. For the dignity of your synod may be preserved, and the communion of your whole body maintained unbroken, however wide a difference may exist among you as to unimportant matters. For we are not all of us like-minded on every subject, nor is there such a thing as one disposition and judgment common to all alike. As far, then, as regards the Divine Providence, let there be one faith, and one understanding among you, one united judgment in reference to God. But as to your subtle disputations on questions of little or no significance, though you may be unable to harmonize in sentiment, such differences should be consigned to the secret custody of your own minds and thoughts. And now, let the preciousness of common affection, let faith in the truth, let the honor due to God and to the observance of his law continue immovably among you. Resume, then, your mutual feelings of friendship, love, and regard: restore to the people their wonted embracings; and do ye yourselves, having purified your souls, as it were, once more acknowledge one another. For it often happens that when a reconciliation is effected by the removal of the causes of enmity, friendship becomes even sweeter than it was before.

Chapter LXXII.—*The Excess of his Pious Concern caused him to shed Tears; and his Intended Journey to the East was postponed because of These Things.*

“Restore me then my quiet days, and untroubled nights, that the joy of undimmed light, the delight of a tranquil life, may henceforth be my portion. Else must I needs mourn, with constant tears, nor shall I be able to pass the residue of my days in peace. For while the people of God, whose fellow-servant I am, are thus divided amongst themselves by an unreasonable and pernicious spirit of contention, how is it possible that I shall be able to maintain tranquillity of mind? And I will give you a proof how great my sorrow has been on this behalf. Not long since I had visited Nicomedia, and intended forthwith to proceed from that city to the East. It was while I was hastening towards you, and had already accomplished the greater part of the distance, that the news of this matter reversed my plan, that I might not be compelled to see with my own eyes that which I felt myself scarcely able even to hear. Open then for me henceforward by your unity of judgment that road to the regions of the East which your dissensions have closed against me, and permit me speedily to see yourselves and all other peoples rejoicing together, and render due acknowledgment to God in the language of praise and thanksgiving for the restoration of general concord and liberty to all.”

Chapter LXXIII.—*The Controversy continues without Abatement, even after the Receipt of This Letter.*

In this manner the pious emperor endeavored by means of the foregoing letter to promote the peace of the Church of God. And the excellent man³²² to whom it was intrusted performed his part not merely by communicating the letter itself, but also by seconding the views of him who sent it; for he was, as I have said, in all respects a person of pious character. The evil, however, was greater than could be remedied by a single letter, insomuch that the acrimony of the contending parties continually increased, and the effects of the mischief extended to all the Eastern provinces. These things jealousy and some evil spirit who looked with an envious eye on the prosperity of the Church, wrought.



Book III.

³²² [Hosius of Cordova, mentioned above, ch. 63.—*Bag.*]

Chapter I.—*A Comparison of Constantine's Piety with the Wickedness of the Persecutors.*

In this manner that spirit who is the hater of good, actuated by envy at the blessing enjoyed by the Church, continued to raise against her the stormy troubles of intestine discord, in the midst of a period of peace and joy. Meanwhile, however, the divinely-favored emperor did not slight the duties befitting him, but exhibited in his whole conduct a direct contrast to those atrocities of which the cruel tyrants had been lately guilty,³²²³ and thus triumphed over every enemy that opposed him. For in the first place, the tyrants, being themselves alienated from the true God, had enforced by every compulsion the worship of false deities: Constantine convinced mankind by actions as well as words,³²²⁴ that these had but an imaginary existence, and exhorted them to acknowledge the only true God. They had derided his Christ with words of blasphemy: he assumed that as his safeguard^{B225} against which they directed their blasphemies, and gloried in the symbol of the Saviour's passion. They had persecuted and driven from house and home the servants of Christ: he recalled them every one, and restored them to their native homes. They had covered them with dishonor: he made their condition honorable and enviable in the eyes of all. They had shamefully plundered and sold the goods of godly men: Constantine not only replaced this loss, but still further enriched them with abundant presents. They had circulated injurious calumnies, through their written ordinances, against the prelates of the Church: he on the contrary, conferred dignity on these individuals by personal marks of honor, and by his edicts and statutes raised them to higher distinction than before. They had utterly demolished and razed to the ground the houses of prayer: he commanded that those which still existed should be enlarged, and that new ones should be raised on a magnificent scale at the expense of the imperial treasury. They had ordered the inspired records to be burnt and utterly destroyed: he decreed that copies of them should be multiplied, and magnificently adorned^{B226} at the charge of the imperial treasury. They had strictly forbidden the prelates, anywhere or on any occasion, to convene synods; whereas he gathered them to his court from every province, received them into his palace, and even to his own private apartments and thought them worthy to share his home and table. They had honored the demons with offerings: Constantine exposed their error, and continually distributed the now useless materials for sacrifice, to those who would apply them to a better use. They had ordered the pagan temples to be sumptuously adorned: he razed to their foundations those of them which had been the chief objects of superstitious reverence. They had subjected God's servants to the most ignominious punishments: he took vengeance on the persecutors, and inflicted on them just chastisement in the name of God, while he held the memory

³²²³ Compare contrast with the other emperors in Prolegomena, under *Life*.

³²²⁴ Eusebius expressly states that Constantine's words had little result in conversion. It is meant here that the success of one who relied on God itself proved the vanity of idols.

³²²⁵ This may perhaps mean "ordered to be inscribed" or "wrote it to be his safeguard." This form of *Bag.* is a satisfactory paraphrase.

³²²⁶ Their bindings were adorned with precious stones according to Cedrenus. Compare Prolegomena, *Character, Magnificence*.

of his holy martyrs in constant veneration. They had driven God's worshipers from the imperial palaces: he placed full confidence in them at all times, and knowing them to be the better disposed and more faithful than any beside. They, the victims of avarice, voluntarily subjected themselves as it were to the pangs of Tantalus: he with royal magnificence unlocked all his treasures, and distributed his gifts with rich and high-souled liberality. They committed countless murders, that they might plunder or confiscate the wealth of their victims; while throughout the reign of Constantine the sword of justice hung idle everywhere, and both people and municipal magistrates³²²⁷ in every province were governed rather by paternal authority than by any constraining.³²²⁸ Surely it must seem to all who duly regard these facts, that a new and fresh era of existence had begun to appear, and a light heretofore unknown suddenly to dawn from the midst of darkness on the human race: and all must confess that these things were entirely the work of God, who raised up this pious emperor to withstand the multitude of the ungodly.

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Chapter II.—*Farther Remarks on Constantine's Piety, and his Open Testimony to the Sign of the Cross.*

And when we consider that their iniquities were without example, and the atrocities which they dared to perpetrate against the Church such as had never been heard of in any age of the world, well might God himself bring before us something entirely new, and work thereby effects such as had hitherto been never either recorded or observed. And what miracle was ever more marvelous than the virtues of this our emperor, whom the wisdom of God has vouchsafed as a gift to the human race? For truly he maintained a continual testimony to the Christ of God with all boldness, and before all men; and so far was he from shrinking from an open profession of the Christian name, that he rather desired to make it manifest to all that he regarded this as his highest honor, now

³²²⁷ [Πολιτευτῶν ἀνδρῶν, here, apparently, the Decurions, who formed the *corporations* of the cities, and were subject to responsible and burdensome offices. Vide Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. 17.—*Bag.*] So Valesius maintains, and has been generally if not universally followed. Though it might be overventuresome to change the translation therefore, it befits the sense better and suits the words admirably to apply to the different classes, Peregrini and Cives. This distinction did not fully pass away until the time of Justinian (Long, art. *Civitas*, in Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.*), and it seems certain that Eusebius meant this.

³²²⁸ This above is a sort of resumé of the life of Constantine. For illustration of the various facts mentioned, compare the latter part of the *Church History* and the various acts and documents in this *Life*. Compare also Prolegomena, under *Life*, and especially under *Character*. It seems now and then to be like a little homily on the glory of having the shoe on the other foot—the glory of having done to others what others had done to them.

impressing on his face the salutary sign, and now glorying in it as the trophy which led him on to victory.³²²⁹

Chapter III.—*Of his Picture surmounted by a Cross and having beneath it a Dragon.*

And besides this, he caused to be painted on a lofty tablet, and set up in the front of the portico of his palace, so as to be visible to all, a representation of the salutary sign placed above his head, and below it that hateful and savage adversary of mankind, who by means of the tyranny of the ungodly had wasted the Church of God, falling headlong, under the form of a dragon, to the abyss of destruction. For the sacred oracles in the books of God's prophets have described him as a dragon and a crooked serpent;³²³⁰ and for this reason the emperor thus publicly displayed a painted³²³¹ resemblance of the dragon beneath his own and his children's feet, stricken through with a dart, and cast headlong into the depths of the sea.

In this manner he intended to represent the secret adversary of the human race, and to indicate that he was consigned to the gulf of perdition by virtue of the salutary trophy placed above his head. This allegory, then, was thus conveyed by means of the colors of a picture: and I am filled with wonder at the intellectual greatness of the emperor, who as if by divine inspiration thus expressed what the prophets had foretold concerning this monster, saying that "God would bring his great and strong and terrible sword against the dragon, the flying serpent; and would destroy the dragon that was in the sea."³²³² This it was of which the emperor gave a true and faithful representation in the picture above described.

Chapter IV.—*A Farther Notice of the Controversies raised in Egypt by Arius.*

In such occupations as these he employed himself with pleasure: but the effects of that envious spirit which so troubled the peace of the churches of God in Alexandria, together with the Theban and Egyptian schism, continued to cause him no little disturbance of mind. For in fact, in every

³²²⁹ Note the explicit testimony of Eusebius here, and compare Prolegomena, under *Religious Characteristics*.

³²³⁰ Especially the book of Revelation, and Isaiah as quoted below.

³²³¹ [Literally, by encaustic painting. See Bk. 1, ch. 3, note.—*Bag.*]

³²³² Isa. xxvii. 1. This is not taken from the Septuagint translation, as it corresponds with the Hebrew against the LXX. It differs in the word used for "terrible," and none of the editions (or at least not the Vatican, Holmes and Parsons, Van Ess, or Tischendorf) and none of the mss. cited by Holmes and Parsons, have the phrase "in the sea" as the Hebrew. Grabe has this latter as various reading (ed. Bagster, 16^o, p. 74), but there is hardly a possibility that it is the true reading.

city bishops were engaged in obstinate conflict with bishops, and people rising against people; and almost like the fabled Symplegades,³²³³ coming into violent collision with each other. Nay, some were so far transported beyond the bounds of reason as to be guilty of reckless and outrageous conduct, and even to insult the statues of the emperor. This state of things had little power to excite his anger, but rather caused in him sorrow of spirit; for he deeply deplored the folly thus exhibited by deranged men.

Chapter V.—*Of the Disagreement respecting the Celebration of Easter.*

But before this time another most virulent disorder had existed, and long afflicted the Church; I mean the difference respecting the salutary feast of Easter.³²³⁴ For while one party asserted that the Jewish custom should be adhered to, the other affirmed that the exact recurrence of the period should be observed, without following the authority of those who were in error, and strangers to gospel grace.

Accordingly, the people being thus in every place divided in respect of this,³²³⁵ and the sacred observances of religion confounded for a long period (insomuch that the diversity of judgment in regard to the time for celebrating one and the same feast caused the greatest disagreement between those who kept it, some afflicting themselves with fastings and austerities, while others devoted their time to festive relaxation), no one appeared who was capable of devising a remedy for the evil, because the controversy continued equally balanced between both parties. To God alone, the Almighty, was the healing of these differences an easy task; and Constantine appeared to be the only one on earth capable of being his minister for this good end. For as soon as he was made acquainted with the facts which I have described, and perceived that his letter to the Alexandrian Christians had failed to produce its due effect, he at once aroused the energies of his mind, and declared that he must prosecute to the utmost this war also against the secret adversary who was disturbing the peace of the Church.

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³²³³ The famous rocks in the Euxine which were wont to close against one another and crush all passing ships, and by which the Argo was said (*Od.* 12. 69) to be the only ship which ever passed in safety.

³²³⁴ For endless literature of the Paschal controversy, compare articles in all the religious encyclopædias, especially perhaps Steitz, in the Schaff-Herzog; and for history and discussion of the question itself, see Hensley's art. *Easter*, in Smith and Cheetham, *Dict.*

³²³⁵ By some this phrase is joined to the preceding paragraph,—strangers...“in this as in other respects,” and so *Bag.* translates, but the division followed here is that of *Hein.*

Chapter VI.—*How he ordered a Council to be held at Nicæa.*

Then as if to bring a divine array against this enemy, he convoked a general council, and invited the speedy attendance of bishops from all quarters, in letters expressive of the honorable estimation in which he held them. Nor was this merely the issuing of a bare command but the emperor's good will contributed much to its being carried into effect: for he allowed some the use of the public means of conveyance, while he afforded to others an ample supply of horses³²³⁶ for their transport. The place, too, selected for the synod, the city Nicæa in Bithynia (named from "*Victory*"), was appropriate to the occasion.³²³⁷ As soon then as the imperial injunction was generally made known, all with the utmost willingness hastened thither, as though they would outstrip one another in a race; for they were impelled by the anticipation of a happy result to the conference, by the hope of enjoying present peace, and the desire of beholding something new and strange in the person of so admirable an emperor. Now when they were all assembled, it appeared evident that the proceeding was the work of God, inasmuch as men who had been most widely separated, not merely in sentiment but also personally, and by difference of country, place, and nation, were here brought together, and comprised within the walls of a single city, forming as it were a vast garland of priests, composed of a variety of the choicest flowers.

Chapter VII.—*Of the General Council, at which Bishops from all Nations were Present.*³²³⁸

In effect, the most distinguished of God's ministers from all the churches which abounded in Europe, Lybia,³²³⁹ and Asia were here assembled. And a single house of prayer, as though divinely enlarged, sufficed to contain at once Syrians and Cilicians, Phœnicians and Arabians, delegates from Palestine, and others from Egypt; Thebans and Libyans, with those who came from the region of Mesopotamia. A Persian bishop too was present at this conference, nor was even a Scythian found wanting to the number.³²⁴⁰ Pontus, Galatia, and Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Phrygia, furnished their most distinguished prelates; while those who dwelt in the remotest districts of Thrace

³²³⁶ "Beasts of burden."

³²³⁷ The probably apocryphal version of the summoning letter given by Cowper (*Syr. Misc.*) from the Syriac gives the reason of the choice of Nicæa, "the excellent temperature of the air" there.

³²³⁸ The standard work on councils is Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, available to the English reader in the translation of Clark, Oxenham, &c. (Edinb. 1872 sq.), a work so thoroughly fundamental that a general reference to it will serve as one continuous note to matters relating to the councils held under Constantine.

³²³⁹ = Africa.

³²⁴⁰ It is noted that this evidence of the presence of foreign bishops—"missionary bishops," so to speak—is confirmed by Gelasius and also by the roll of the members.

and Macedonia, of Achaia and Epirus, were notwithstanding in attendance. Even from Spain itself, one whose fame was widely spread took his seat as an individual in the great assembly.³²⁴¹ The prelate of the imperial city³²⁴² was prevented from attending by extreme old age; but his presbyters were present, and supplied his place. Constantine is the first prince of any age who bound together such a garland as this with the bond of peace, and presented it to his Saviour as a thank-offering for the victories he had obtained over every foe, thus exhibiting in our own times a similitude of the apostolic company.



Chapter VIII.—*That the Assembly was composed, as in the Acts of the Apostles, of Individuals from Various Nations.*

For it is said³²⁴³ that in the Apostles' age, there were gathered "devout men from every nation under heaven"; among whom were Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene; and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. But that assembly was less, in that not all who composed it were ministers of God; but in the present company, the number of bishops exceeded two hundred and fifty,³²⁴⁴ while that of the presbyters and deacons in their train, and the crowd of acolytes and other attendants was altogether beyond computation.

Chapter IX.—*Of the Virtue and Age of the Two Hundred and Fifty Bishops.*

Of these ministers of God, some were distinguished by wisdom and eloquence, others by the gravity of their lives, and by patient fortitude of character, while others again united in themselves all these graces.³²⁴⁵ There were among them men whose years demanded veneration: others were

³²⁴¹ [Hosius of Cordova.—*Bag.*]

³²⁴² [It has been doubted whether Rome or Constantinople is here intended. The authority of Sozomen and others is in favor of the former. See English translation, published as one volume of this series.—*Bag.*] Also in this series.

³²⁴³ Acts ii. 5sq.

³²⁴⁴ The number present is given variously as three hundred (Socrates), three hundred and eighteen (Athanasius, &c.), two hundred and seventy (Theodoret), or even two thousand (cf. Hefele). It has been conjectured that the variation came from the omission of names of the Arians (cf. note of Heinichen, Vol. 3, p. 506–507), or that it varied during the two months and more.

³²⁴⁵ This is the way it is interpreted by Sozomen, 1, 17. The phrase, which is literally "of middling character," is translated by *Molz.* and others as if it meant "mild" or "modest," as if it referred in some way to the doctrine of the mean.

younger, and in the prime of mental vigor; and some had but recently entered on the course of their ministry. For the maintenance of all ample provision was daily furnished by the emperor's command.

Chapter X.—*Council in the Palace. Constantine, entering, took his Seat in the Assembly.*

Now when the appointed day arrived on which the council met for the final solution of the questions in dispute, each member was present for this in the central building of the palace,³²⁴⁶ which appeared to exceed the rest in magnitude. On each side of the interior of this were many seats disposed in order, which were occupied by those who had been invited to attend, according to their rank. As soon, then, as the whole assembly had seated themselves with becoming orderliness, a general silence prevailed, in expectation of the emperor's arrival. And first of all, three of his immediate family entered in succession, then others also preceded his approach, not of the soldiers or guards who usually accompanied him, but only friends in the faith. And now, all rising at the signal which indicated the emperor's entrance, at last he himself proceeded through the midst of the assembly, like some heavenly messenger of God, clothed in raiment which glittered as it were with rays of light, reflecting the glowing radiance of a purple robe, and adorned with the brilliant splendor of gold and precious stones. Such was the external appearance of his person; and with regard to his mind, it was evident that he was distinguished by piety and godly fear. This was indicated by his downcast eyes, the blush on his countenance, and his gait. For the rest of his personal excellencies, he surpassed all present in height of stature and beauty of form, as well as in majestic dignity of mien, and invincible strength and vigor. All these graces, united to a suavity of manner, and a serenity becoming his imperial station, declared the excellence of his mental qualities to be above all praise.³²⁴⁷ As soon as he had advanced to the upper end of the seats, at first he remained standing, and when a low chair of wrought gold had been set for him, he waited until the bishops had beckoned to him, and then sat down, and after him the whole assembly did the same.

Chapter XI.—*Silence of the Council, after Some Words by the Bishop Eusebius.*

³²⁴⁶ [Hence it seems probable that this was the last day of the Council; the entire session of which occupied more than two months, and which was originally held in a church.—*Bag.*] The exact dates of the Council are controverted, but it seems that it ended August 25, having probably begun June 14.

³²⁴⁷ Compare Prolegomena, under *Physical and Mental Characteristics*.

The bishop who occupied the chief place in the right division of the assembly³²⁴⁸ then rose, and, addressing the emperor, delivered a concise speech, in a strain of thanksgiving to Almighty God on his behalf. When he had resumed his seat, silence ensued, and all regarded the emperor with fixed attention; on which he looked serenely round on the assembly with a cheerful aspect, and, having collected his thoughts, in a calm and gentle tone gave utterance to the following words.



Chapter XII.—*Constantine's Address to the Council concerning Peace.*³²⁴⁹

“It was once my chief desire, dearest friends, to enjoy the spectacle of your united presence; and now that this desire is fulfilled, I feel myself bound to render thanks to God the universal King, because, in addition to all his other benefits, he has granted me a blessing higher than all the rest, in permitting me to see you not only all assembled together, but all united in a common harmony of sentiment. I pray therefore that no malignant adversary may henceforth interfere to mar our happy state; I pray that, now the impious hostility of the tyrants has been forever removed by the power of God our Saviour, that spirit who delights in evil may devise no other means for exposing the divine law to blasphemous calumny; for, in my judgment, intestine strife within the Church of God, is far more evil and dangerous than any kind of war or conflict; and these our differences appear to me more grievous than any outward trouble. Accordingly, when, by the will and with the co-operation of God, I had been victorious over my enemies, I thought that nothing more remained but to render thanks to him, and sympathize in the joy of those whom he had restored to freedom through my instrumentality; as soon as I heard that intelligence which I had least expected to receive, I mean the news of your dissension, I judged it to be of no secondary importance, but with the earnest desire that a remedy for this evil also might be found through my means, I immediately sent to require your presence. And now I rejoice in beholding your assembly; but I feel that my desires will be most completely fulfilled when I can see you all united in one judgment, and that common spirit of peace and concord prevailing amongst you all, which it becomes you, as consecrated to the service of God, to commend to others. Delay not, then, dear friends: delay not, ye ministers of God, and faithful servants of him who is our common Lord and Saviour: begin from this moment to discard the causes of that disunion which has existed among you, and remove the perplexities of controversy by embracing the principles of peace. For by such conduct you will at the same time be acting in a manner most pleasing to the supreme God, and you will confer an exceeding favor on me who am your fellow-servant.”

³²⁴⁸ [The authority of Sozomen and other writers seems to decide that this was Eusebius himself.—*Bag.*]

³²⁴⁹ The earnest desire of Constantine to promote peace in the church makes one judge with leniency the rather arbitrary and very mechanical method he often took to secure it. As over against the unity of form or the unity of compromise, there is one only real unity—a unity in the truth, being one in *the* Truth. The secret of peace is reason with right.

Chapter XIII.—*How he led the Dissident Bishops to Harmony of Sentiment.*

As soon as the emperor had spoken these words in the Latin tongue, which another interpreted, he gave permission to those who presided in the council to deliver their opinions. On this some began to accuse their neighbors, who defended themselves, and recriminated in their turn. In this manner numberless assertions were put forth by each party, and a violent controversy arose at the very commencement. Notwithstanding this, the emperor gave patient audience to all alike, and received every proposition with steadfast attention, and by occasionally assisting the argument of each party in turn, he gradually disposed even the most vehement disputants to a reconciliation. At the same time, by the affability of his address to all, and his use of the Greek language, with which he was not altogether unacquainted, he appeared in a truly attractive and amiable light, persuading some, convincing others by his reasonings, praising those who spoke well, and urging all to unity of sentiment, until at last he succeeded in bringing them to one mind and judgment respecting every disputed question.

Chapter XIV.—*Unanimous Declaration of the Council concerning Faith, and the Celebration of Easter.*

The result was that they were not only united as concerning the faith, but that the time for the celebration of the salutary feast of Easter was agreed on by all. Those points also which were sanctioned by the resolution of the whole body were committed to writing, and received the signature of each several member.³²⁵⁰ Then the emperor, believing that he had thus obtained a second victory over the adversary of the Church, proceeded to solemnize a triumphal festival in honor of God.

Chapter XV.—*How Constantine entertained the Bishops on the Occasion of His Vicennalia.*

About this time he completed the twentieth year of his reign.³²⁵¹ On this occasion public festivals were celebrated by the people of the provinces generally, but the emperor himself invited and feasted with those ministers of God whom he had reconciled, and thus offered as it were through them a suitable sacrifice to God. Not one of the bishops was wanting at the imperial banquet,³²⁵² the circumstances of which were splendid beyond description. Detachments of the body-guard and

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³²⁵⁰ The extant signatures are of doubtful authenticity. Compare Hefele, p. 269.

³²⁵¹ Compare Prolegomena, *Life*.

³²⁵² At the risk of seeming trivial in sober and professedly condensed annotation, one cannot help noting that the human nature of ancient and modern councils is the same,—much controversy and more or less absenteeism, but all present at dinner.

other troops surrounded the entrance of the palace with drawn swords, and through the midst of these the men of God proceeded without fear into the innermost of the imperial apartments, in which some were the emperor's own companions at table, while others reclined on couches arranged on either side.³²⁵³ One might have thought that a picture of Christ's kingdom was thus shadowed forth, and a dream rather than reality.

Chapter XVI.—*Presents to the Bishops, and Letters to the People generally.*

After the celebration of this brilliant festival, the emperor courteously received all his guests, and generously added to the favors he had already bestowed by personally presenting gifts to each individual according to his rank. He also gave information of the proceedings of the synod to those who had not been present, by a letter in his own hand-writing. And this letter also I will inscribe as it were on some monument by inserting it in this my narrative of his life. It was as follows:

Chapter XVII.—*Constantine's Letter to the Churches respecting the Council at Nicæa.*

“Constantinus Augustus, to the Churches.

“Having had full proof, in the general prosperity of the empire, how great the favor of God has been towards us, I have judged that it ought to be the first object of my endeavors, that unity of faith, sincerity of love, and community of feeling in regard to the worship of Almighty God, might be preserved among the highly favored multitude who compose the Catholic Church. And, inasmuch as this object could not be effectually and certainly secured, unless all, or at least the greater number of the bishops were to meet together, and a discussion of all particulars relating to our most holy religion to take place; for this reason as numerous an assembly as possible has been convened, at which I myself was present, as one among yourselves (and far be it from me to deny that which is my greatest joy, that I am your fellow-servant), and every question received due and full examination, until that judgment which God, who sees all things, could approve, and which tended to unity and concord, was brought to light, so that no room was left for further discussion or controversy in relation to the faith.

Chapter XVIII.—*He speaks of their Unanimity respecting the Feast of Easter, and against the Practice of the Jews.*

³²⁵³ For notice of these couches, see Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.*, article *Lectica*.

“At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Easter was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present, that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day. For what can be more becoming or honorable to us than that this feast from which we date our hopes of immortality, should be observed unfailingly by all alike, according to one ascertained order and arrangement? And first of all, it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. For we have it in our power, if we abandon their custom, to prolong the due observance of this ordinance to future ages, by a truer order, which we have preserved from the very day of the passion until the present time. Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way. A course at once legitimate and honorable lies open to our most holy religion. Beloved brethren, let us with one consent adopt this course, and withdraw ourselves from all participation in their baseness.³²⁵⁴ For their boast is absurd indeed, that it is not in our power without instruction from them to observe these things. For how should they be capable of forming a sound judgment, who, since their parricidal guilt in slaying their Lord, have been subject to the direction, not of reason, but of ungoverned passion, and are swayed by every impulse of the mad spirit that is in them? Hence it is that on this point as well as others they have no perception of the truth, so that, being altogether ignorant of the true adjustment of this question, they sometimes celebrate Easter twice in the same year. Why then should we follow those who are confessedly in grievous error? Surely we shall never consent to keep this feast a second time in the same year. But supposing these reasons were not of sufficient weight, still it would be incumbent on your Sagacities³²⁵⁵ to strive and pray continually that the purity of your souls may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men. We must consider, too, that a discordant judgment in a case of such importance, and respecting such religious festival, is wrong. For our Saviour has left us one feast in commemoration of the day of our deliverance, I mean the day of his most holy passion; and he has willed that his Catholic Church should be one, the members of which, however scattered in many and diverse places, are yet cherished by one pervading spirit, that is, by the will of God. And let your Holinesses’ sagacity reflect how grievous and scandalous it is that on the self-same days some should be engaged in fasting, others in festive enjoyment; and again, that after the days of Easter some should be present at banquets and amusements, while others are fulfilling the appointed fasts.

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³²⁵⁴ [The idea seems to be (as explained by Valesius) that if they joined the Jews in celebrating this feast they would seem to consent to their crime in crucifying the Lord.—*Bag.*] He carried out his reprobation of the Jews in his actions in discriminating laws at least, and perhaps in actual persecution.

³²⁵⁵ [Ἀγχινοια. This word is one of a class of expressions frequently used by Eusebius, and which, being intended as *titles of honor*, like “Excellency,” &c., should, where possible, be thus rendered. In the present instance it is applied to the heads of the churches collectively.—*Bag.*] More probably in this case it is not the title, but means “your sagacity.”

It is, then, plainly the will of Divine Providence (as I suppose you all clearly see), that this usage should receive fitting correction, and be reduced to one uniform rule.

Chapter XIX.—*Exhortation to follow the Example of the Greater Part of the World.*

“Since, therefore, it was needful that this matter should be rectified, so that we might have nothing in common with that nation of parricides who slew their Lord: and since that arrangement is consistent with propriety which is observed by all the churches of the western, southern, and northern parts of the world, and by some of the eastern also: for these reasons all are unanimous on this present occasion in thinking it worthy of adoption. And I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your Sagacities,³²⁵⁶ in the hope that your Wisdoms³²⁵⁷ will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome, and in Africa; throughout Italy, and in Egypt, in Spain, the Gauls, Britain, Libya, and the whole of Greece; in the dioceses of Asia and Pontus, and in Cilicia, with entire unity of judgment. And you will consider not only that the number of churches is far greater in the regions I have enumerated than in any other, but also that it is most fitting that all should unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to demand, and in avoiding all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews.³²⁵⁸ In fine, that I may express my meaning in as few words as possible, it has been determined by the common judgment of all, that the most holy feast of Easter should be kept on one and the same day. For on the one hand a discrepancy of opinion on so sacred a question is unbecoming, and on the other it is surely best to act on a decision which is free from strange folly and error.

Chapter XX.—*Exhortation to obey the Decrees of the Council.*

“Receive, then, with all willingness this truly Divine injunction, and regard it as in truth the gift of God. For whatever is determined in the holy assemblies of the bishops is to be regarded as indicative of the Divine will. As soon, therefore, as you have communicated these proceedings to all our beloved brethren, you are bound from that time forward to adopt for yourselves, and to enjoin on others the arrangement above mentioned, and the due observance of this most sacred day; that whenever I come into the presence of your love, which I have long desired, I may have it in my power to celebrate the holy feast with you on the same day, and may rejoice with you on

³²⁵⁶ Rather “sagacity” and “wisdom.”

³²⁵⁷ Rather “sagacity” and “wisdom.”

³²⁵⁸ [Valesius explains this as referring to the conduct of the Jews in professing to acknowledge God as their king, and yet denying him by saying, “We have no king but Cæsar.”—*Bag.*]

all accounts, when I behold the cruel power of Satan removed by Divine aid through the agency of our endeavors, while your faith, and peace, and concord everywhere flourish. God preserve you, beloved brethren!”

The emperor transmitted a faithful copy³²⁵⁹ of this letter to every province, wherein they who read it might discern as in a mirror the pure sincerity of his thoughts, and of his piety toward God.

Chapter XXI.—*Recommendation to the Bishops, on their Departure, to Preserve Harmony.*

And now, when the council was on the point of being finally dissolved, he summoned all the bishops to meet him on an appointed day, and on their arrival addressed them in a farewell speech, in which he recommended them to be diligent in the maintenance of peace, to avoid contentious disputations, amongst themselves and not to be jealous, if any one of their number should appear pre-eminent for wisdom and eloquence, but to esteem the excellence of one a blessing common to all. On the other hand he reminded them that the more gifted should forbear to exalt themselves to the prejudice of their humbler brethren, since it is God’s prerogative to judge of real superiority. Rather should they considerately condescend to the weaker, remembering that absolute perfection in any case is a rare quality indeed. Each then, should be willing to accord indulgence to the other for slight offenses, to regard charitably and pass over mere human weaknesses; holding mutual harmony in the highest honor, that no occasion of mockery might be given by their dissensions to those who are ever ready to blaspheme the word of God: whom indeed we should do all in our power to save, and this cannot be unless our conduct seems to them attractive. But you are well aware of the fact that testimony is by no means productive of blessing to all, since some who hear are glad to secure the supply of their mere bodily necessities, while others court the patronage of their superiors; some fix their affection on those who treat them with hospitable kindness, others again, being honored with presents, love their benefactors in return; but few are they who really desire the word of testimony, and rare indeed is it to find a friend of truth. Hence the necessity of endeavoring to meet the case of all, and, physician-like, to administer to each that which may tend to the health of the soul, to the end that the saving doctrine may be fully honored by all. Of this kind was the former part of his exhortation;³²⁶⁰ and in conclusion he enjoined them to offer diligent supplications to God on his behalf. Having thus taken leave of them, he gave them all permission to return to their respective countries; and this they did with joy, and thenceforward that unity of judgment at which they had arrived in the emperor’s presence continued to prevail, and those who had long been divided were bound together as members of the same body.



³²⁵⁹ This *Hein.* regards as the correct meaning, although “equally valid,” or “authoritative,” has been regarded as possible.

³²⁶⁰ Or “such were the injunctions which the emperor laid especially on their consciences.”

Chapter XXII.—*How he dismissed Some, and wrote Letters to Others; also his Presents.*

Full of joy therefore at this success, the emperor presented as it were pleasant fruits in the way of letters to those who had not been present at the council. He commanded also that ample gifts of money should be bestowed on all the people, both in the country and the cities, being pleased thus to honor the festive occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his reign.

Chapter XXIII.—*How he wrote to the Egyptians, exhorting them to Peace.*

And now, when all else were at peace, among the Egyptians alone an implacable contention still raged,³²⁶¹ so as once more to disturb the emperor's tranquillity, though not to excite his anger. For indeed he treated the contending parties with all respect, as fathers, nay rather, as prophets of God; and again he summoned them to his presence, and again patiently acted as mediator between them, and honored them with gifts, and communicated also the result of his arbitration by letter. He confirmed and sanctioned the decrees of the council, and called on them to strive earnestly for concord, and not to distract and rend the Church, but to keep before them the thought of God's judgment. And these injunctions the emperor sent by a letter written with his own hand.

Chapter XXIV.—*How he wrote Frequent Letters of a Religious Character to the Bishops and People.*

But besides these, his writings are very numerous on kindred subjects, and he was the author of a multitude of letters, some to the bishops, in which he laid injunctions on them tending to the advantage of the churches of God; and sometimes the thrice blessed one addressed the people of the churches generally, calling them his own brethren and fellow-servants. But perhaps we may hereafter find leisure to collect these despatches in a separate form, in order that the integrity of our present history may not be impaired by their insertion.

Chapter XXV.—*How he ordered the Erection of a Church at Jerusalem, in the Holy Place of our Saviour's Resurrection.*

³²⁶¹ Continuation of the Arian controversy.



After these things, the pious emperor addressed himself to another work truly worthy of record, in the province of Palestine. What then was this work? He judged it incumbent on him to render the blessed locality of our Saviour's resurrection an object of attraction and veneration to all. He issued immediate injunctions, therefore, for the erection in that spot of a house of prayer: and this he did, not on the mere natural impulse of his own mind, but being moved in spirit by the Saviour himself.

Chapter XXVI.—*That the Holy Sepulchre had been covered with Rubbish and with Idols by the Ungodly.*

For it had been in time past the endeavor of impious men (or rather let me say of the whole race of evil spirits through their means), to consign to the darkness of oblivion that divine monument of immortality to which the radiant angel had descended from heaven, and rolled away the stone for those who still had stony hearts, and who supposed that the living One still lay among the dead; and had declared glad tidings to the women also, and removed their stony-hearted unbelief by the conviction that he whom they sought was alive. This sacred cave, then, certain impious and godless persons had thought to remove entirely from the eyes of men, supposing in their folly that thus they should be able effectually to obscure the truth. Accordingly they brought a quantity of earth from a distance with much labor, and covered the entire spot; then, having raised this to a moderate height, they paved it with stone, concealing the holy cave beneath this massive mound. Then, as though their purpose had been effectually accomplished, they prepare on this foundation a truly dreadful sepulchre of souls, by building a gloomy shrine of lifeless idols to the impure spirit whom they call Venus, and offering detestable oblations therein on profane and accursed altars. For they supposed that their object could not otherwise be fully attained, than by thus burying the sacred cave beneath these foul pollutions. Unhappy men! they were unable to comprehend how impossible it was that their attempt should remain unknown to him who had been crowned with victory over death, any more than the blazing sun, when he rises above the earth, and holds his wonted course through the midst of heaven, is unseen by the whole race of mankind. Indeed, his saving power, shining with still greater brightness, and illumining, not the bodies, but the souls of men, was already filling the world with the effulgence of its own light. Nevertheless, these devices of impious and wicked men against the truth had prevailed for a long time, nor had any one of the governors, or military commanders, or even of the emperors themselves ever yet appeared, with ability to abolish these daring impieties, save only that one who enjoyed the favor of the King of kings. And now, acting as he did under the guidance of the divine Spirit, he could not consent to see the sacred spot of which we have spoken, thus buried, through the devices of the adversaries, under every kind of impurity, and abandoned to forgetfulness and neglect; nor would he yield to the malice of those who had contracted this guilt, but calling on the divine aid, gave orders that the place should be

thoroughly purified, thinking that the parts which had been most polluted by the enemy ought to receive special tokens, through his means, of the greatness of the divine favor. As soon, then, as his commands were issued, these engines of deceit were cast down from their proud eminence to the very ground, and the dwelling-places of error, with the statues and the evil spirits which they represented, were overthrown and utterly destroyed.

Chapter XXVII.—*How Constantine commanded the Materials of the Idol Temple, and the Soil itself, to be removed at a Distance.*

Nor did the emperor's zeal stop here; but he gave further orders that the materials of what was thus destroyed, both stone and timber, should be removed and thrown as far from the spot as possible; and this command also was speedily executed. The emperor, however, was not satisfied with having proceeded thus far: once more, fired with holy ardor, he directed that the ground itself should be dug up to a considerable depth, and the soil which had been polluted by the foul impurities of demon worship transported to a far distant place.

Chapter XXVIII.—*Discovery of the Most Holy Sepulchre.*³²⁶²

This also was accomplished without delay. But as soon as the original surface of the ground, beneath the covering of earth, appeared, immediately, and contrary to all expectation, the venerable and hollowed monument of our Saviour's resurrection was discovered. Then indeed did this most holy cave present a faithful similitude of his return to life, in that, after lying buried in darkness, it again emerged to light, and afforded to all who came to witness the sight, a clear and visible proof of the wonders of which that spot had once been the scene, a testimony to the resurrection of the Saviour clearer than any voice could give.

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Chapter XXIX.—*How he wrote concerning the Erection of a Church, both to the Governors of the Provinces, and to the Bishop Macarius.*

³²⁶² On the site of the sepulchre, compare Besant, *Sepulchre, the Holy*, in Smith and Cheetham, 2 (1880), 1881–1888. He discusses (a) Is the present site that fixed upon by the officers of Constantine? and (b) Was that site certainly or even probably the true spot where our Lord was buried? Compare also reports of the Palestine Exploration Fund Survey, *Jerusalem*, 1884, p. 429–435 (Conder).

Immediately after the transactions I have recorded, the emperor sent forth injunctions which breathed a truly pious spirit, at the same time granting ample supplies of money, and commanding that a house of prayer worthy of the worship of God should be erected near the Saviour's tomb on a scale of rich and royal greatness. This object he had indeed for some time kept in view, and had foreseen, as if by the aid of a superior intelligence, that which should afterwards come to pass. He laid his commands, therefore, on the governors of the Eastern provinces, that by an abundant and unsparing expenditure they should secure the completion of the work on a scale of noble and ample magnificence. He also despatched the following letter to the bishop who at that time presided over the church at Jerusalem, in which he clearly asserted the saving doctrine of the faith, writing in these terms.

Chapter XXX.—*Constantine's Letter to Macarius respecting the Building of the Church of our Saviour.*

“Victor Constantius, Maximus Augustus, to Macarius.

“Such is our Saviour's grace, that no power of language seems adequate to describe the wondrous circumstance to which I am about to refer. For, that the monument of his most holy Passion, so long ago buried beneath the ground, should have remained unknown for so long a series of years, until its reappearance to his servants now set free through the removal of him³²⁶³ who was the common enemy of all, is a fact which truly surpasses all admiration. For if all who are accounted wise throughout the world were to unite in their endeavors to say somewhat worthy of this event, they would be unable to attain their object in the smallest degree. Indeed, the nature of this miracle as far transcends the capacity of human reason as heavenly things are superior to human affairs. For this cause it is ever my first, and indeed my only object, that, as the authority of the truth is evincing itself daily by fresh wonders, so our souls may all become more zealous, with all sobriety and earnest unanimity, for the honor of the Divine law. I desire, therefore, especially, that you should be persuaded of that which I suppose is evident to all beside, namely, that I have no greater care than how I may best adorn with a splendid structure that sacred spot, which, under Divine direction, I have disencumbered as it were of the heavy weight of foul idol worship; a spot which has been accounted holy from the beginning in God's judgment, but which now appears holier still, since it has brought to light a clear assurance of our Saviour's passion.

³²⁶³ [Licinius appears to be meant, whose death had occurred a.d. 326, in which year the alleged discovery of the Lord's sepulchre took place.—*Bag.*]

Chapter XXXI.—*That the Building should surpass all the Churches in the World in the Beauty of its Walls, its Columns, and Marbles.*

“It will be well, therefore, for your sagacity to make such arrangements and provision of all things needful for the work, that not only the church itself as a whole may surpass all others whatsoever in beauty, but that the details of the building may be of such a kind that the fairest structures in any city of the empire may be excelled by this. And with respect to the erection and decoration of the walls, this is to inform you that our friend Dracilianus, the deputy of the Prætorian Præfects, and the governor of the province, have received a charge from us. For our pious directions to them are to the effect that artificers and laborers, and whatever they shall understand from your sagacity to be needful for the advancement of the work, shall forthwith be furnished by their care. And as to the columns and marbles, whatever you shall judge, after actual inspection of the plan, to be especially precious and serviceable, be diligent to send information to us in writing, in order that whatever quantity or sort of materials we shall esteem from your letter to be needful, may be procured from every quarter, as required, for it is fitting that the most marvelous place in the world should be worthily decorated.

Chapter XXXII.—*That he instructed the Governors concerning the Beautifying of the Roof; also concerning Workmen, and Materials.*

“With respect to the ceiling³²⁶⁴ of the church, I wish to know from you whether in your judgment it should be panel-ceiled,³²⁶⁵ or finished with any other kind of workmanship. If the panel ceiling be adopted, it may also be ornamented with gold. For the rest, your Holiness will give information as early as possible to the before-mentioned magistrates how many laborers and artificers, and what expenditure of money is required. You will also be careful to send us a report without delay, not only respecting the marbles and columns, but the paneled ceiling also, should this appear to you to be the most beautiful form. God preserve you, beloved brother!”

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³²⁶⁴ The word used is the technical “camera,” meaning properly a certain style of vaulted ceiling, but here it is perhaps the generic ceiling if the specific word below means panel ceiling.

³²⁶⁵ This is the word for the Lacunaria or panel ceilings, a style of ceiling where “planks were placed across these beams at certain intervals leaving hollow spaces” “which were frequently covered with gold and ivory and sometimes with paintings.” Compare article *Domus*, in Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.* The passage may mean either “with respect to the ceiling...whether...wainscoted” or “with respect to the Camera...whether panel ceiled.”

Chapter XXXIII.—*How the Church of our Saviour, the New Jerusalem prophesied of in Scripture, was built.*

This was the emperor's letter; and his directions were at once carried into effect. Accordingly, on the very spot which witnessed the Saviour's sufferings, a new Jerusalem was constructed, over against the one so celebrated of old, which, since the foul stain of guilt brought on it by the murder of the Lord, had experienced the last extremity of desolation, the effect of Divine judgment on its impious people. It was opposite this city that the emperor now began to rear a monument to the Saviour's victory over death, with rich and lavish magnificence. And it may be that this was that second and new Jerusalem spoken of in the predictions of the prophets,³²⁶⁶ concerning which such abundant testimony is given in the divinely inspired records.

First of all, then, he adorned the sacred cave itself, as the chief part of the whole work, and the hallowed monument at which the angel radiant with light had once declared to all that regeneration which was first manifested in the Saviour's person.

Chapter XXXIV.—*Description of the Structure of the Holy Sepulchre.*

This monument, therefore, first of all, as the chief part of the whole, the emperor's zealous magnificence beautified with rare columns, and profusely enriched with the most splendid decorations of every kind.

Chapter XXXV.—*Description of the Atrium and Porticos.*

The next object of his attention was a space of ground of great extent, and open to the pure air of heaven. This he adorned with a pavement of finely polished stone, and enclosed it on three sides with porticos of great length.

Chapter XXXVI.—*Description of the Walls, Roof, Decoration, and Gilding of the Body of the Church.*

³²⁶⁶ [Apparently referring (says Valesius) to Rev. xxi. 2: "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven" &c.; an extraordinary, nay, almost ludicrous application of Scripture, though perhaps characteristic of the author's age.—*Bag.*] And it may be said characteristic of Eusebius himself, for it is not his only sin in this regard.

For at the side opposite to the cave, which was the eastern side, the church itself was erected; a noble work rising to a vast height, and of great extent both in length and breadth. The interior of this structure was floored with marble slabs of various colors; while the external surface of the walls, which shone with polished stones exactly fitted together, exhibited a degree of splendor in no respect inferior to that of marble. With regard to the roof, it was covered on the outside with lead, as a protection against the rains of winter. But the inner part of the roof, which was finished with sculptured panel work, extended in a series of connected compartments, like a vast sea, over the whole church;³²⁶⁷ and, being overlaid throughout with the purest gold, caused the entire building to glitter as it were with rays of light.

Chapter XXXVII.—*Description of the Double Porticos on Either Side, and of the Three Eastern Gates.*

Besides this were two porticos on each side, with upper and lower ranges of pillars,³²⁶⁸ corresponding in length with the church itself; and these also had their roofs ornamented with gold. Of these porticos, those which were exterior to the church were supported by columns of great size, while those within these rested on piles³²⁶⁹ of stone beautifully adorned on the surface. Three gates, placed exactly east, were intended to receive the multitudes who entered the church.



Chapter XXXVIII.—*Description of the Hemisphere, the Twelve Columns, and their Bowls.*

Opposite these gates the crowning part of the whole was the hemisphere,³²⁷⁰ which rose to the very summit of the church. This was encircled by twelve columns (according to the number of the apostles of our Saviour), having their capitals embellished with silver bowls of great size, which the emperor himself presented as a splendid offering to his God.

³²⁶⁷ It would seem from this description that the paneling was like that of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome, a horizontal surface rather than the pointed roof paneled.

³²⁶⁸ Whether this means two series, one underground and one above (*Molz.* and many), or not, is fully discussed by Heinichen in a separate note (*Eusebius*, vol. 3, p. 520–521).

³²⁶⁹ [These inner porticos seem to have rested on massy piles, because they adjoined the sides of the church, and had to bear its roof, which was loftier than any of the rest.—*Bag.*] Translated by *Molz.* “Quadrangular supports.” “In Architecture *a cubic mass of building*, to serve for bearings.”—*Liddell and Scott.*

³²⁷⁰ [Apparently the altar, which was of a hemispherical, or rather hemicylindrical form—*Bag.*] Also a much-discussed question. Compare Heinichen, vol. 3, p. 521–522.

Chapter XXXIX.—*Description of the Inner Court, the Arcades and Porches.*

In the next place he enclosed the atrium which occupied the space leading to the entrances in front of the church. This comprehended, first the court, then the porticos on each side, and lastly the gates of the court. After these, in the midst of the open market-place,³²⁷¹ the general entrance-gates, which were of exquisite workmanship, afforded to passers-by on the outside a view of the interior which could not fail to inspire astonishment.

Chapter XL.—*Of the Number of his Offerings.*

This temple, then, the emperor erected as a conspicuous monument of the Saviour's resurrection, and embellished it throughout on an imperial scale of magnificence. He further enriched it with numberless offerings of inexpressible beauty and various materials,—gold, silver, and precious stones, the skillful and elaborate arrangement of which, in regard to their magnitude, number, and variety, we have not leisure at present to describe particularly.³²⁷²

Chapter XLI.—*Of the Erection of Churches in Bethlehem, and on the Mount of Olives.*

In the same country he discovered other places, venerable as being the localities of two sacred caves: and these also he adorned with lavish magnificence. In the one case, he rendered due honor to that which had been the scene of the first manifestation of our Saviour's divine presence, when he submitted to be born in mortal flesh; while in the case of the second cavern he hallowed the remembrance of his ascension to heaven from the mountain top. And while he thus nobly testified his reverence for these places, he at the same time eternized the memory of his mother,³²⁷³ who had been the instrument of conferring so valuable a benefit on mankind.

³²⁷¹ [In front of the larger churches there was generally a street, or open space, where a market was held on the festival of the Martyr to whom the church was dedicated. Regard was also had, in this arrangement, to architectural effect, the object being that nothing should interfere with the view of the front of the church. *Vide Valesius in loc.—Bag.*]

³²⁷² Some idea of various features of this building may be gathered from the cuts and descriptions of other basilicas in Fergusson, *History of Architecture*, 1 (1874), 400 sq.; Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, 1 (Lpg. 1875), 229 sq.; Langl.'s series of *Bilder zur Geschichte*, &c.

³²⁷³ Compare Prolegomena, p. 411.

Chapter XLII.—*That the Empress Helena,³²⁷⁴Constantine's Mother, having visited this Locality for Devotional Purposes, built these Churches.*

For she, having resolved to discharge the duties of pious devotion to the God, the King of kings, and feeling it incumbent on her to render thanksgivings with prayers on behalf both of her own son, now so mighty an emperor, and of his sons, her own grandchildren, the divinely favored Cæsars, though now advanced in years, yet gifted with no common degree of wisdom, had hastened with youthful alacrity to survey this venerable land; and at the same time to visit the eastern provinces, cities, and people, with a truly imperial solicitude. As soon, then, as she had rendered due reverence to the ground which the Saviour's feet had trodden, according to the prophetic word which says³²⁷⁵ "Let us worship at the place whereon his feet have stood," she immediately bequeathed the fruit of her piety to future generations.

Chapter XLIII.—*A Farther Notice of the Churches at Bethlehem.*

For without delay she dedicated two churches to the God whom she adored, one at the grotto which had been the scene of the Saviour's birth; the other on the mount of his ascension. For he who was "God with us" had submitted to be born even in a cave³²⁷⁶ of the earth, and the place of his nativity was called Bethlehem by the Hebrews. Accordingly the pious empress honored with rare memorials the scene of her travail who bore this heavenly child, and beautified the sacred cave with all possible splendor. The emperor himself soon after testified his reverence for the spot by princely offerings, and added to his mother's magnificence by costly presents of silver and gold, and embroidered hangings. And farther, the mother of the emperor raised a stately structure on the Mount of Olives also, in memory of his ascent to heaven who is the Saviour of mankind, erecting a sacred church and temple on the very summit of the mount. And indeed authentic history informs us that in this very cave the Saviour imparted his secret revelations to his disciples.³²⁷⁷ And here also the emperor testified his reverence for the King of kings, by diverse and costly offerings. Thus did Helena Augusta, the pious mother of a pious emperor, erect over the two mystic caverns these

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³²⁷⁴ Compare Wordsworth, *Helena*, in Smith and Wace, *Dict.* 2 (1880), 881 sq. That she was made empress is shown also by the coins. Cf. coins in Eckhel.

³²⁷⁵ [Ps. cxxxii. 7. Septuagint.—*Bag.*] Engl. Vers. Ps. cxxxii. 7, "We will worship at his footstool."

³²⁷⁶ [Literally, beneath the earth. It seems to have been characteristic of the age of Eusebius to invest the more prominent circumstances connected with the Lord's life on earth with a degree of romance and mystery equally inconsistent with Scripture and with probability. It is obvious that Scripture furnishes no authority for the caves either of the nativity or ascension. See ch. 41, *supra*.—*Bag.*] Compare discussion by Andrews, *Cave of the Nativity* in his *Life of our Lord* (N.Y.), 77–83.

³²⁷⁷ [Alluding probably, to the discourse in Matt. xxiv., delivered by our Lord to the disciples on the Mount of Olives.—*Bag.*]

two noble and beautiful monuments of devotion, worthy of everlasting remembrance, to the honor of God her Saviour, and as proofs of her holy zeal, receiving from her son the aid of his imperial power. Nor was it long ere this aged woman reaped the due reward of her labors. After passing the whole period of her life, even to declining age, in the greatest prosperity, and exhibiting both in word and deed abundant fruits of obedience to the divine precepts, and having enjoyed in consequence an easy and tranquil existence, with unimpaired powers of body and mind, at length she obtained from God an end befitting her pious course, and a recompense of her good deeds even in this present life.

Chapter XLIV.—*Of Helena's Generosity and Beneficent Acts.*

For on the occasion of a circuit which she made of the eastern provinces, in the splendor of imperial authority, she bestowed abundant proofs of her liberality as well on the inhabitants of the several cities collectively, as on individuals who approached her, at the same time that she scattered largesses among the soldiery with a liberal hand. But especially abundant were the gifts she bestowed on the naked and unprotected poor. To some she gave money, to others an ample supply of clothing: she liberated some from imprisonment, or from the bitter servitude of the mines; others she delivered from unjust oppression, and others again, she restored from exile.

Chapter XLV.—*Helena's Pious Conduct in the Churches.*

While, however, her character derived luster from such deeds as I have described, she was far from neglecting personal piety toward God.³²⁷⁸ She might be seen continually frequenting his Church, while at the same time she adorned the houses of prayer with splendid offerings, not overlooking the churches of the smallest cities. In short, this admirable woman was to be seen, in simple and modest attire, mingling with the crowd of worshipers, and testifying her devotion to God by a uniform course of pious conduct.

Chapter XLVI.—*How she made her Will, and died at the Age of Eighty Years.*

³²⁷⁸ According to some apocryphal accounts Constantine owed his conversion to his mother (compare the apocryphal letters mentioned under *Writings*, in the Prolegomena), but Eusebius, below (ch. 47), seems to reverse the fact.

And when at length at the close of a long life, she was called to inherit a happier lot, having arrived at the eightieth year of her age, and being very near the time of her departure, she prepared and executed her last will in favor of her only son, the emperor and sole monarch of the world, and her grandchildren, the Cæsars his sons, to whom severally she bequeathed whatever property she possessed in any part of the world. Having thus made her will, this thrice blessed woman died in the presence of her illustrious son, who was in attendance at her side, caring for her and held her hands: so that, to those who rightly discerned the truth, the thrice blessed one seemed not to die, but to experience a real change and transition from an earthly to a heavenly existence, since her soul, remoulded as it were into an incorruptible and angelic essence,³²⁷⁹ was received up into her Saviour's presence.³²⁸⁰



Chapter XLVII.—*How Constantine buried his Mother, and how he honored her during her Life.*

Her body, too, was honored with special tokens of respect, being escorted on its way to the imperial city by a vast train of guards, and there deposited in a royal tomb. Such were the last days of our emperor's mother, a person worthy of being had in perpetual remembrance, both for her own practical piety, and because she had given birth to so extraordinary and admirable an offspring. And well may his character be styled blessed, for his filial piety as well as on other grounds. He rendered her through his influence so devout a worshiper of God, (though she had not previously been such,) that she seemed to have been instructed from the first by the Saviour of mankind: and besides this, he had honored her so fully with imperial dignities, that in every province, and in the very ranks of the soldiery, she was spoken of under the titles of Augusta and empress, and her likeness was impressed on golden coins.³²⁸¹ He had even granted her authority over the imperial treasures, to use and dispense them according to her own will and discretion in every case: for this enviable distinction also she received at the hands of her son. Hence it is that among the qualities which shed a luster on his memory, we may rightly include that surpassing degree of filial affection whereby he rendered full obedience to the Divine precepts which enjoin due honor from children to their parents. In this manner, then, the emperor executed in Palestine the noble works I have

³²⁷⁹ [These words seem to savor of Origen's doctrine, to which Eusebius was much addicted. Origen believed that, in the resurrection, bodies would be changed into souls, and souls into angels, according to the testimony of Jerome. See Valesius *in loc.*—*Bag.*]

³²⁸⁰ The date of Helena's death is usually placed in 327 or 328. Compare Wordsworth, l.c. Since she was eighty years old at the time of her death she must have been about twenty-five when Constantine was born.

³²⁸¹ Compare note above. It is said (Wordsworth) that while silver and copper coins have been found with her name, none of gold have yet come to light.

above described: and indeed in every province he raised new churches on a far more imposing scale than those which had existed before his time.

Chapter XLVIII.—*How he built Churches in Honor of Martyrs, and abolished Idolatry at Constantinople.*

And being fully resolved to distinguish the city which bore his name with especial honor, he embellished it with numerous sacred edifices, both memorials of martyrs on the largest scale, and other buildings of the most splendid kind, not only within the city itself, but in its vicinity: and thus at the same time he rendered honor to the memory of the martyrs, and consecrated his city to the martyrs' God. Being filled, too, with Divine wisdom, he determined to purge the city which was to be distinguished by his own name from idolatry of every kind, that henceforth no statues might be worshiped there in the temples of those falsely reputed to be gods, nor any altars defiled by the pollution of blood: that there might be no sacrifices consumed by fire, no demon festivals, nor any of the other ceremonies usually observed by the superstitious.

Chapter XLIX.—*Representation of the Cross in the Palace, and of Daniel at the Public Fountains.*

On the other hand one might see the fountains in the midst of the market place graced with figures representing the good Shepherd, well known to those who study the sacred oracles, and that of Daniel also with the lions, forged in brass, and resplendent with plates of gold. Indeed, so large a measure of Divine love possessed the emperor's soul, that in the principal apartment of the imperial palace itself, on a vast tablet³²⁸² displayed in the center of its gold-covered paneled ceiling, he caused the symbol of our Saviour's Passion to be fixed, composed of a variety of precious stones richly inwrought with gold. This symbol he seemed to have intended to be as it were the safeguard of the empire itself.

Chapter L.—*That he erected Churches in Nicomedia, and in Other Cities.*

³²⁸² Perhaps the largest "panel." The restored church of St. Paul, outside the walls at Rome, has a paneled ceiling with a very large central panel.

Having thus embellished the city which bore his name, he next distinguished the capital of Bithynia³²⁸³ by the erection of a stately and magnificent church, being desirous of raising in this city also, in honor of his Saviour and at his own charges, a memorial of his victory over his own enemies and the adversaries of God. He also decorated the principal cities of the other provinces with sacred edifices of great beauty; as, for example, in the case of that metropolis of the East which derived its name from Antiochus, in which, as the head of that portion of the empire, he consecrated to the service of God a church of unparalleled size and beauty. The entire building was encompassed by an enclosure of great extent, within which the church itself rose to a vast elevation, being of an octagonal form, and surrounded on all sides by many chambers, courts, and upper and lower apartments; the whole richly adorned with a profusion of gold, brass, and other materials of the most costly kind.



Chapter LI.—*That he ordered a Church to be built at Mambre.*

Such was the principal sacred edifices erected by the emperor's command. But having heard that the self-same Saviour who erewhile had appeared on earth³²⁸⁴ had in ages long since past afforded a manifestation of his Divine presence to holy men of Palestine near the oak of Mambre,³²⁸⁵ he ordered that a house of prayer should be built there also in honor of the God who had thus appeared. Accordingly the imperial commission was transmitted to the provincial governors by letters addressed to them individually, enjoining a speedy completion of the appointed work. He sent moreover to the writer of this history an eloquent admonition, a copy of which I think it well to insert in the present work, in order to convey a just idea of his pious diligence and zeal. To express, then, his displeasure at the evil practices which he had heard were usual in the place just referred to, he addressed me in the following terms.

³²⁸³ [Nicomedia, where Constantine had besieged Licinius, and compelled him to surrender; in memory of which event he built this church.—*Bag.*]

³²⁸⁴ This doctrine, which appears again and again in Eusebius and in Constantine, has a curiously interesting bearing at present theological controversies in America, and England for that matter. It may be called the doctrine of the “eternal Christ,” as over against the doctrine of the “essential Christ,” or that which seems to make his existence begin with his incarnation—the “historical Christ.” He had historical existence from the beginning, both as the indwelling and as the objective, and one might venture to think that advocates of these two views could find a meeting-ground, or solution of difficulty at least, in this phrase which represents him who was in the beginning with God and is and ever shall be, who has made all things which have been made, and is in all parts of the universe and the world, among Jews and Gentiles.

³²⁸⁵ [The English version in this passage (*Gen. xviii. 1*), and others, has “plains,” though the Septuagint and ancient interpreters generally render it, as here, by “oak,” some by “terebinth” (turpentine tree), the Vulgate by “convallis.”—*Bag.*] The Revised Version (1881–1885) has “oaks.”

Chapter LII.—*Constantine's Letter to Eusebius concerning Mambre.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Macarius, and the rest of the bishops in Palestine.³²⁸⁶

“One benefit, and that of no ordinary importance, has been conferred on us by my truly pious mother-in-law,³²⁸⁷ in that she has made known to us by letter that abandoned folly of impious men which has hitherto escaped detection by you: so that the criminal conduct thus overlooked may now through our means obtain fitting correction and remedy, necessary though tardy. For surely it is a grave impiety indeed, that holy places should be defiled by the stain of unhallowed impurities. What then is this, dearest brethren, which, though it has eluded your sagacity, she of whom I speak was impelled by a pious sense of duty to disclose?

Chapter LIII.—*That the Saviour appeared in this Place to Abraham.*

“She assures me, then, that the place which takes its name from the oak of Mambre, where we find that Abraham dwelt, is defiled by certain of the slaves of superstition in every possible way. She declares that idols³²⁸⁸ which should be utterly destroyed have been erected on the site of that tree; that an altar is near the spot; and that impure sacrifices are continually performed. Now since it is evident that these practices are equally inconsistent with the character of our times, and unworthy the sanctity of the place itself, I wish your Gravities³²⁸⁹ to be informed that the illustrious Count Acacius, our friend, has received instructions by letter from me, to the effect that every idol which shall be found in the place above-mentioned shall immediately be consigned to the flames; that the altar be utterly demolished; and that if any one, after this our mandate, shall be guilty of impiety of any kind in this place, he shall be visited with condign punishment. The place itself we have directed to be adorned with an unpolluted structure, I mean a church; in order that it may become a fitting place of assembly for holy men. Meantime, should any breach of these our commands occur, it should be made known to our clemency without the least delay by letters from you, that we may direct the person detected to be dealt with, as a transgressor of the law, in the severest manner. For you are not ignorant that the Supreme God first appeared to Abraham, and conversed with him, in that place. There it was that the observance of the Divine law first began; there first the Saviour himself, with the two angels, vouchsafed to Abraham a manifestation of his presence;

³²⁸⁶ The writer of this history says the letter was addressed to him, while it is really to Macarius. On this ground the Eusebian authorship of the book has been challenged, but of course Eusebius is among “the rest of the bishops.”

³²⁸⁷ [Eutropia, mother of his empress Fausta.—*Bag.*]

³²⁸⁸ [These objects of idolatrous worship were probably figures intended to represent the angels who had appeared to Abraham.—*Bag.*] More probably they were some form of images obscenely worshiped.

³²⁸⁹ Better “Reverences,” and so throughout.



there God first appeared to men; there he gave promise to Abraham concerning his future seed, and straightway fulfilled that promise; there he foretold that he should be the father of a multitude of nations. For these reasons, it seems to me right that this place should not only be kept pure through your diligence from all defilement, but restored also to its pristine sanctity; that nothing hereafter may be done there except the performance of fitting service to him who is the Almighty God, and our Saviour, and Lord of all. And this service it is incumbent on you to care for with due attention, if your Gravities be willing (and of this I feel confident) to gratify my wishes, which are especially interested in the worship of God. May he preserve you, beloved brethren!”

Chapter LIV.—*Destruction of Idol Temples and Images everywhere.*

All these things the emperor diligently performed to the praise of the saving power of Christ, and thus made it his constant aim to glorify his Saviour God. On the other hand he used every means to rebuke the superstitious errors of the heathen. Hence the entrances of their temples in the several cities were left exposed to the weather, being stripped of their doors at his command; the tiling of others was removed, and their roofs destroyed. From others again the venerable statues of brass, of which the superstition of antiquity had boasted for a long series of years, were exposed to view in all the public places of the imperial city: so that here a Pythian, there a Sminthian Apollo, excited the contempt of the beholder: while the Delphic tripods were deposited in the hippodrome and the Muses of Helicon in the palace itself. In short, the city which bore his name was everywhere filled with brazen statues of the most exquisite workmanship, which had been dedicated in every province, and which the deluded victims of superstition had long vainly honored as gods with numberless victims and burnt sacrifices, though now at length they learnt to renounce their error, when the emperor held up the very objects of their worship to be the ridicule and sport of all beholders. With regard to those images which were of gold, he dealt with them in a different manner. For as soon as he understood that the ignorant multitudes were inspired with a vain and childish dread of these bugbears of error, wrought in gold and silver, he judged it right to remove these also, like stumbling-stones thrown in the way of men walking in the dark, and henceforward to open a royal road, plain and unobstructed to all. Having formed this resolution, he considered no soldiers or military force of any sort needful for the suppression of the evil: a few of his own friends sufficed for this service, and these he sent by a simple expression of his will to visit each several province. Accordingly, sustained by confidence in the emperor’s pious intentions and their own personal devotion to God, they passed through the midst of numberless tribes and nations, abolishing this ancient error in every city and country. They ordered the priests themselves, amidst general laughter and scorn, to bring their gods from their dark recesses to the light of day: they then stripped them of their ornaments, and exhibited to the gaze of all the unsightly reality which had been hidden beneath a painted exterior. Lastly, whatever part of the material appeared valuable they scraped

off and melted in the fire to prove its worth, after which they secured and set apart whatever they judged needful for their purpose, leaving to the superstitious worshipers that which was altogether useless, as a memorial of their shame. Meanwhile our admirable prince was himself engaged in a work similar to what we have described. For at the same time that these costly images of the dead were stripped, as we have said, of their precious materials, he also attacked those composed of brass; causing those to be dragged from their places with ropes and as it were carried away captive, whom the dotage of mythology had esteemed as gods.

Chapter LV.—*Overthrow of an Idol Temple, and Abolition of Licentious Practices, at Aphaca in Phœnicia.*

The emperor's next care was to kindle, as it were, a brilliant torch, by the light of which he directed his imperial gaze around, to see if any hidden vestiges of error might still exist. And as the keen-sighted eagle in its heavenward flight is able to descry from its lofty height the most distant objects on the earth, so did he, while residing in the imperial palace of his own fair city, discover as from a watch-tower a hidden and fatal snare of souls in the province of Phœnicia. This was a grove and temple, not situated in the midst of any city, nor in any public place, as for splendor of effect is generally the case, but apart from the beaten and frequented road, at Aphaca, on part of the summit of Mount Lebanon, and dedicated to the foul demon known by the name of Venus. It was a school of wickedness for all the votaries of impurity, and such as destroyed their bodies with effeminacy. Here men undeserving of the name forgot the dignity of their sex, and propitiated the demon by their effeminate conduct; here too unlawful commerce of women and adulterous intercourse, with other horrible and infamous practices, were perpetrated in this temple as in a place beyond the scope and restraint of law. Meantime these evils remained unchecked by the presence of any observer, since no one of fair character ventured to visit such scenes. These proceedings, however, could not escape the vigilance of our august emperor, who, having himself inspected them with characteristic forethought, and judging that such a temple was unfit for the light of heaven, gave orders that the building with its offerings should be utterly destroyed. Accordingly, in obedience to the imperial command, these engines of an impure superstition were immediately abolished, and the hand of military force was made instrumental in purging the place. And now those who had heretofore lived without restraint learned self-control through the emperor's threat of punishment, as likewise those superstitious Gentiles wise in their own conceit, who now obtained experimental proof of their own folly.

Chapter LVI.—*Destruction of the Temple of Æsculapius at Ægæ.*³²⁹⁰

For since a wide-spread error of these pretenders to wisdom concerned the demon worshiped in Cilicia, whom thousands regarded with reverence as the possessor of saving and healing power, who sometimes appeared to those who passed the night in his temple, sometimes restored the diseased to health, though on the contrary he was a destroyer of souls, who drew his easily deluded worshipers from the true Saviour to involve them in impious error, the emperor, consistently with his practice, and desire to advance the worship of him who is at once a jealous God and the true Saviour, gave directions that this temple also should be razed to the ground. In prompt obedience to this command, a band of soldiers laid this building, the admiration of noble philosophers, prostrate in the dust, together with its unseen inmate, neither demon nor god, but rather a deceiver of souls, who had seduced mankind for so long a time through various ages. And thus he who had promised to others deliverance from misfortune and distress, could find no means for his own security, any more than when, as is told in myth, he was scorched by the lightning's stroke.³²⁹¹ Our emperor's pious deeds, however, had in them nothing fabulous or feigned; but by virtue of the manifested power of his Saviour, this temple as well as others was so utterly overthrown, that not a vestige of the former follies was left behind.

Chapter LVII.—*How the Gentiles abandoned Idol Worship, and turned to the Knowledge of God.*

Hence it was that, of those who had been the slaves of superstition, when they saw with their own eyes the exposure of their delusion, and beheld the actual ruin of the temples and images in every place, some applied themselves to the saving doctrine of Christ; while others, though they declined to take this step, yet reprobated the folly which they had received from their fathers, and laughed to scorn what they had so long been accustomed to regard as gods. Indeed, what other feelings could possess their minds, when they witnessed the thorough uncleanness concealed beneath the fair exterior of the objects of their worship? Beneath this were found either the bones of dead men or dry skulls, fraudulently adorned by the arts of magicians,³²⁹² or filthy rags full of abominable impurity, or a bundle of hay or stubble. On seeing all these things heaped together within their lifeless images, they denounced their fathers' extreme folly and their own, especially when neither in the secret recesses of the temples nor in the statues themselves could any inmate be found; neither demon, nor utterer of oracles, neither god nor prophet, as they had heretofore supposed: nay, not

³²⁹⁰ [On the coast of Cilicia, near Issus.—*Bag.*]

³²⁹¹ [By Jupiter, for restoring Hippolytus to life, at Diana's request.—*Bag.*]

³²⁹² Through another reading translated by *Val.*, 1709, *Bag.*, "stolen by impostors." Stroth has "impiously employed for magicians arts."

even a dim and shadowy phantom could be seen. Accordingly, every gloomy cavern, every hidden recess, afforded easy access to the emperor's emissaries: the inaccessible and secret chambers, the innermost shrines of the temples, were trampled by the soldiers' feet; and thus the mental blindness which had prevailed for so many ages over the gentile world became clearly apparent to the eyes of all.

Chapter LVIII.—*How he destroyed the Temple of Venus at Heliopolis, and built the First Church in that City.*

Such actions as I have described may well be reckoned among the emperor's noblest achievements, as also the wise arrangements which he made respecting each particular province. We may instance the Phœnician city Heliopolis, in which those who dignify licentious pleasure with a distinguishing title of honor, had permitted their wives and daughters to commit shameless fornication. But now a new statute, breathing the very spirit of modesty, proceeded from the emperor, which peremptorily forbade the continuance of former practices. And besides this he sent them also written exhortations, as though he had been especially ordained by God for this end, that he might instruct all men in the principles of chastity. Hence, he disdained not to communicate by letter even with these persons, urging them to seek diligently the knowledge of God. At the same time he followed up his words by corresponding deeds, and erected even in this city a church of great size and magnificence: so that an event unheard of before in any age, now for the first time came to pass, namely, that a city which had hitherto been wholly given up to superstition now obtained the privilege of a church of God, with presbyters and deacons, and its people were placed under the presiding care of a bishop consecrated to the service of the supreme God. And further, the emperor, being anxious that here also as many as possible might be won to the truth, bestowed abundant provision for the necessities of the poor, desiring even thus to invite them to seek the doctrines of salvation, as though he were almost adopting the words of him who said, "Whether in pretense, or in truth, let Christ be preached."³²⁹³

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Chapter LIX.—*Of the Disturbance at Antioch by Eustathius.*

In the midst, however, of the general happiness occasioned by these events, and while the Church of God was every where and every way flourishing throughout the empire, once more that spirit of envy, who ever watches for the ruin of the good, prepared himself to combat the greatness of our prosperity, in the expectation, perhaps, that the emperor himself, provoked by our tumults

³²⁹³ Phil. i. 18. But "is preached," not "let Christ be preached."

and disorders, might eventually become estranged from us. Accordingly, he kindled a furious controversy at Antioch, and thereby involved the church in that place in a series of tragic calamities, which had well-nigh occasioned the total overthrow of the city. The members of the Church were divided into two opposite parties; while the people, including even the magistrates and soldiery, were roused to such a pitch, that the contest would have been decided by the sword, had not the watchful providence of God, as well as dread of the emperor's displeasure, controlled the fury of the multitude. On this occasion, too, the emperor, acting the part of a preserver and physician of souls, applied with much forbearance the remedy of persuasion to those who needed it. He gently pleaded, as it were by an embassy, with his people, sending among them one of the best approved and most faithful of those who were honored with the dignity of Count;³²⁹⁴ at the same time that he exhorted them to a peaceable spirit by repeated letters, and instructed them in the practice of true godliness. Having prevailed by these remonstrances, he excused their conduct in his subsequent letters, alleging that he had himself heard the merits of the case from him on whose account the disturbance had arisen.³²⁹⁵ And these letters of his, which are replete with learning and instruction of no ordinary kind, I should have inserted in this present work, were it not that they might affix a mark of dishonor to the character of the persons accused. I will therefore omit these, being unwilling to revive the memory of past grievances, and will only annex those to my present narrative which he wrote to testify his satisfaction at the re-establishment of peace and concord among the rest. In these letters, he cautioned them against any desire to claim the ruler of another district,³²⁹⁶ through whose intervention peace had been restored, as their own, and exhorted them, consistently with the usage of the Church, to choose him as their bishop, whom the common Saviour of all should point out as suited for the office. His letter, then, is addressed to the people and to the bishops, severally, in the following terms.

Chapter LX.—*Constantine's Letter to the Antiochians, directing them not to withdraw Eusebius from Cæsarea, but to seek some one else.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to the people of Antioch.

“How pleasing to the wise and intelligent portion of mankind is the concord which exists among you! And I myself, brethren, am disposed to love you with an enduring affection, inspired both by

³²⁹⁴ “Believed to have been Strategus Musonius” (*Venables*).

³²⁹⁵ [Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, whose deposition, on the ground of a charge of immorality, by the partisans of Eusebius of Nicomedia, had occasioned the disturbances alluded to in the text.—*Bag.*] There is a view that this whole trouble was the result of an intrigue of Eusebius to get the better of Eustathius, who was in a sense a rival. Compare for very vigorous expression of this view, *Venables, Eustathius of Antioch*, in Smith and Wace, *Dict.*

³²⁹⁶ This is rather literal, and the paraphrase of *Molz.* may be better, “no foreign bishops.”

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religion, and by your own manner of life and zeal on my behalf. It is by the exercise of right understanding and sound discretion, that we are enabled really to enjoy our blessings. And what can become you so well as this discretion? No wonder, then, if I affirm that your maintenance of the truth has tended rather to promote your security than to draw on you the hatred of others. Indeed, amongst brethren, whom the selfsame disposition to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness promises, through the favor of God, to register among his pure and holy family, what can be more honorable than gladly to acquiesce in the prosperity of all men? Especially since the precepts of the divine law prescribe a better direction to your proposed intention, and we ourselves desire that your judgment should be confirmed by proper sanction.³²⁹⁷ It may be that you are surprised, and at a loss to understand the meaning of this introduction to my present address. The cause of it I will not hesitate to explain without reserve. I confess, then, that on reading your records I perceived, by the highly eulogistic testimony which they bear to Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, whom I have myself long well known and esteemed for his learning and moderation, that you are strongly attached to him, and desire to appropriate him as your own. What thoughts, then, do you suppose that I entertain on this subject, desirous as I am to seek for and act on the strict principles of right? What anxiety do you imagine this desire of yours has caused me? O holy faith, who givest us in our Saviour's words and precepts a model, as it were, of what our life should be, how hardly wouldst thou thyself resist the sins of men, were it not that thou refusest to subserve the purposes of gain! In my own judgment, he whose first object is the maintenance of peace, seems to be superior to Victory herself; and where a right and honorable course lies open to one's choice, surely no one would hesitate to adopt it. I ask then, brethren, why do we so decide as to inflict an injury on others by our choice? Why do we covet those objects which will destroy the credit of our own reputation? I myself highly esteem the individual whom ye judge worthy of your respect and affection: notwithstanding, it cannot be right that those principles should be entirely disregarded which should be authoritative and binding on all alike, so that each should not be content with his own circumstances, and all enjoy their proper privileges: nor can it be right, in considering the claims of rival candidates, to suppose but that not one only, but many, may appear worthy of comparison with this person. For as long as no violence or harshness are suffered to disturb the dignities of the church, they continue to be on an equal footing, and worthy of the same consideration everywhere. Nor is it reasonable that an inquiry into the qualifications of this one should be made to the detriment of others; since the judgment of all churches, whether reckoned of greater or less importance in themselves, is equally capable of receiving and maintaining the divine ordinances, so that one is in no way inferior to another, if we will but boldly declare the truth, in regard to that standard of practice which is common to all. If this be so, we must say that you will be chargeable, not with retaining this prelate, but with wrongfully removing him; your conduct will be characterized rather by violence than justice; and whatever may be generally thought by others, I dare clearly and boldly

³²⁹⁷ To the various and controverted translations of this passage it may be ventured to add one, "we ourselves desire your judgment to be fortified by good counsels."

affirm that this measure will furnish ground of accusation against you, and will provoke factious disturbances of the most mischievous kind: for even timid flocks can show the use and power of their teeth, when the watchful care of their shepherd declines, and they find themselves bereft of his accustomed guidance. If this then be really so, if I am not deceived in my judgment, let this, brethren, be your first consideration, for many and important considerations will immediately present themselves, whether, should you persist in your intention, that mutual kindly feeling and affection which should subsist among you will suffer no diminution? In the next place, remember that he, who came among you for the purpose of offering disinterested counsel,³²⁹⁸ now enjoys the reward which is due to him in the judgment of heaven; for he has received no ordinary recompense in the high testimony you have borne to his equitable conduct. Lastly, in accordance with your usual sound judgment, do ye exhibit a becoming diligence in selecting the person of whom you stand in need, carefully avoiding all factious and tumultuous clamor; for such clamor is always wrong, and from the collision of discordant elements both sparks and flame will arise. I protest, as I desire to please God and you, and to enjoy a happiness commensurate with your kind wishes, that I love you, and the quiet haven of your gentleness, now that you have cast from you that which defiled,³²⁹⁹ and received in its place at once sound morality and concord, firmly planting in the vessel the sacred standard, and guided, as one may say, by a helm of iron in your course onward to the light of heaven. Receive then on board that merchandise which is incorruptible, since, as it were, all bilge water has been drained from the vessel; and be careful henceforth so to secure the enjoyment of all your present blessing, that you may not seem at any future time either to have determined any measure on the impulse of inconsiderate or ill-directed zeal, or in the first instance rashly to have entered on an inexpedient course. May God preserve you, beloved brethren!”

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Chapter LXI.—*The Emperor’s Letter to Eusebius praising him for refusing the Bishopric of Antioch.*

The Emperor’s Letter to me on my refusing the Bishopric of Antioch.

³²⁹⁸ The other point of view has been alluded to. It seems on the face of it, in this unanimous endorsement by the church, as if Eusebius had had the right of it in his quarrel with Eustathius; but on the other hand, it is to be remembered that this wonderful harmony in the church had come about from the fact that Eustathius and all who sympathized with him had withdrawn, and only the party of Eusebius was left. It would be like a “unanimous” vote in Parliament with all the opposition benches empty. The endorsement of his own party does not count for much.

³²⁹⁹ [Alluding to the deposition of Eustathius, who had been charged with the crime of seduction. The reader who consults the original of this chapter, especially the latter part of it, may judge of the difficulty of eliciting any tolerable sense from an obscure, and possibly corrupted, text.—*Bag.*] The translator (*Bag.*) shows ingenuity in this extracting of the general sense from the involved Greek of the writing of Constantine or the translation as it supposably is. But the very fact of the obscurity shown in this and in his oration alike is conclusive against any thought that the literary work ascribed to Constantine was written by Eusebius.

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Eusebius.

“I have most carefully perused your letter, and perceive that you have strictly conformed to the rule enjoined by the discipline of the Church. Now to abide by that which appears at the same time pleasing to God, and accordant with apostolical tradition, is a proof of true piety. You have reason to deem yourself happy on this behalf, that you are counted worthy, in the judgment, I may say, of all the world, to have the oversight of any church. For the desire which all feel to claim you for their own, undoubtedly enhances your enviable fortune in this respect. Notwithstanding, your Prudence whose resolve it is to observe the ordinances of God and the apostolic canon of the Church,³³⁰⁰ has done excellently well in declining the bishopric of the church at Antioch, and desiring to continue in that church of which you first received the oversight by the will of God. I have written on this subject to the people of Antioch, and also to your colleagues in the ministry who had themselves consulted me in regard to this question; on reading which letters, your Holiness will easily discern, that, inasmuch as justice itself opposed their claims, I have written to them under divine direction. It will be necessary that your Prudence should be present at their conference, in order that this decision may be ratified in the church at Antioch. God preserve you, beloved brother!”

Chapter LXII.—*Constantine’s Letter to the Council, depreciating the Removal of Eusebius from Cæsarea.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Theodotus, Theodorus, Narcissus, Aëtius, Alpheus, and the rest of the bishops who are at Antioch.

“I have perused the letters written by your Prudences, and highly approve of the wise resolution of your colleague in the ministry, Eusebius. Having, moreover, been informed of the circumstances of the case, partly by your letters, partly by those of our illustrious counts,³³⁰¹ Acacius and Strategius, after sufficient investigation I have written to the people of Antioch, suggesting the course which will be at once pleasing to God and advantageous for the Church. A copy of this I have ordered to be subjoined to this present letter, in order that ye yourselves may know what I thought fit, as an advocate of the cause of justice, to write to that people: since I find in your letter this proposal, that, in consonance with the choice of the people, sanctioned by your own desire, Eusebius the holy bishop of Cæsarea should preside over and take the charge of the church at Antioch. Now the letters of Eusebius himself on this subject appeared to be strictly accordant with the order prescribed by the Church. Nevertheless it is expedient that your Prudences should be made acquainted with my opinion also. For I am informed that Euphronius the presbyter, who is a citizen of Cæsarea in

³³⁰⁰ Canon 15 (or 14) of the “Apostolical Canons.” Cf. ed. Bruns. 1 (Berol. 1839), 3.

³³⁰¹ The word has thus generally been rendered by *Bag.*, and does probably refer to their official title, although in this case and occasionally he translates “friends.”

Cappadocia, and George of Arethusa, likewise a presbyter, and appointed to that office by Alexander at Alexandria,³³⁰² are men of tried faith. It was right, therefore, to intimate to your Prudences, that in proposing these men and any others whom you may deem worthy the episcopal dignity, you should decide this question in a manner conformable to the tradition of the apostles. For in that case, your Prudences will be able, according to the rule of the Church and apostolic tradition, to direct this election in the manner which true ecclesiastical discipline shall prescribe. God preserve you, beloved brethren!”

Chapter LXIII.—*How he displayed his Zeal for the Extirpation of Heresies.*

Such were the exhortations to do all things to the honor of the divine religion which the emperor addressed to the rulers of the churches. Having by these means banished dissension, and reduced the Church of God to a state of uniform harmony, he next proceeded to a different duty, feeling it incumbent on him to extirpate another sort of impious persons, as pernicious enemies of the human race. These were pests of society, who ruined whole cities under the specious garb of religious decorum; men whom our Saviour’s warning voice somewhere terms false prophets and ravenous wolves: “Beware of false prophets, which will come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them.”³³⁰³ Accordingly, by an order transmitted to the governors of the several provinces, he effectually banished all such offenders. In addition to this ordinance he addressed to them personally a severely awakening admonition, exhorting them to an earnest repentance, that they might still find a haven of safety in the true Church of God. Hear, then, in what manner he addressed them in this letter.

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Chapter LXIV.—*Constantine’s Edict against the Heretics.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to the heretics.

³³⁰² [George (afterwards bishop of Laodicea) appears to have been degraded from the office of presbyter on the ground of impiety, by the same bishop who had ordained him. Both George and Euphronius were of the Arian party, of which fact it is possible that Constantine was ignorant.—*Bag.*] Georgius was at one time or another Arian, semi-Arian, and Anomoean, and is said to have been called by Athanasius “the most wicked of all the Arians” (Venables in Smith and Wace, *Dict.* 2. 637). He was constantly pitted against Eustathius, which accounts for his appearance at this time. Euphronius was the one chosen at this time. Compare Bennett, *Euphronius*, in Smith and Wace, *Dict.* 2. 297.

³³⁰³ [Matt. vii. 15, 16.] Quoted perhaps from memory, or else this text is defective, for this reads, “will come” where all N.T. mss. have “come.”

“Understand now, by this present statute, ye Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulians, ye who are called Cataphrygians,³³⁰⁴ and all ye who devise and support heresies by means of your private assemblies, with what a tissue of falsehood and vanity, with what destructive and venomous errors, your doctrines are inseparably interwoven; so that through you the healthy soul is stricken with disease, and the living becomes the prey of everlasting death. Ye haters and enemies of truth and life, in league with destruction! All your counsels are opposed to the truth, but familiar with deeds of baseness; full of absurdities and fictions: and by these ye frame falsehoods, oppress the innocent, and withhold the light from them that believe. Ever trespassing under the mask of godliness, ye fill all things with defilement: ye pierce the pure and guileless conscience with deadly wounds, while ye withdraw, one may almost say, the very light of day from the eyes of men. But why should I particularize, when to speak of your criminality as it deserves demands more time and leisure than I can give? For so long and unmeasured is the catalogue of your offenses, so hateful and altogether atrocious are they, that a single day would not suffice to recount them all. And, indeed, it is well to turn one’s ears and eyes from such a subject, lest by a description of each particular evil, the pure sincerity and freshness of one’s own faith be impaired. Why then do I still bear with such abounding evil; especially since this protracted clemency is the cause that some who were sound are become tainted with this pestilent disease? Why not at once strike, as it were, at the root of so great a mischief by a public manifestation of displeasure?”

Chapter LXV.—*The Heretics are deprived of their Meeting Places.*

“Forasmuch, then, as it is no longer possible to bear with your pernicious errors, we give warning by this present statute that none of you henceforth presume to assemble yourselves together.³³⁰⁵ We have directed, accordingly, that you be deprived of all the houses in which you are accustomed to hold your assemblies: and our care in this respect extends so far as to forbid the holding of your superstitious and senseless meetings, not in public merely, but in any private house or place whatsoever. Let those of you, therefore, who are desirous of embracing the true and pure religion, take the far better course of entering the catholic Church, and uniting with it in holy fellowship,

³³⁰⁴ Sufficiently good general accounts of these various heresies may be found in Blunt. *Dict. of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties, and Schools of Religious Thought*, Lond. 1874, p. 382–389, Novatians; p. 612–614, Valentinians; p. 296–298, Marcionites; p. 515–517, Samosatenes (Paulians); p. 336–341, Montanists (Cataphrygians). Or see standard Encyclopædias.

³³⁰⁵ There is throughout this Life a curious repetition in the details of action against heretics of precisely the same things which Christians complained of as having been done to them. The idea of toleration then seems to have been much as it was in pre-reformation times, or, not to judge other times when there is a beam in our own eye, as it is in America and England to-day,—the largest toleration for every one who thinks as we do, and for the others a temporary suspension of the rule to “judge not,” with an amended prayer, “Lord, condemn them, for they know not what they do,” and a vigorous attempt to force the divine judgment.

whereby you will be enabled to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. In any case, the delusions of your perverted understandings must entirely cease to mingle with and mar the felicity of our present times: I mean the impious and wretched double-mindedness of heretics and schismatics. For it is an object worthy of that prosperity which we enjoy through the favor of God, to endeavor to bring back those who in time past were living in the hope of future blessing, from all irregularity and error to the right path, from darkness to light, from vanity to truth, from death to salvation. And in order that this remedy may be applied with effectual power, we have commanded, as before said, that you be positively deprived of every gathering point for your superstitious meetings, I mean all the houses of prayer, if such be worthy of the name, which belong to heretics, and that these be made over without delay to the catholic Church; that any other places be confiscated to the public service, and no facility whatever be left for any future gathering; in order that from this day forward none of your unlawful assemblies may presume to appear in any public or private place. Let this edict be made public.”

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Chapter LXVI.—*How on the Discovery of Prohibited Books among the Heretics, Many of them return to the Catholic Church.*

Thus were the lurking-places of the heretics broken up by the emperor's command, and the savage beasts they harbored (I mean the chief authors of their impious doctrines) driven to flight. Of those whom they had deceived, some, intimidated by the emperor's threats, disguising their real sentiments, crept secretly into the Church. For since the law directed that search should be made for their books, those of them who practiced evil and forbidden arts were detected, and these were ready to secure their own safety by dissimulation of every kind.³³⁰⁶ Others, however, there were, who voluntarily and with real sincerity embraced a better hope. Meantime the prelates of the several churches continued to make strict inquiry, utterly rejecting those who attempted an entrance under the specious disguise of false pretenses, while those who came with sincerity of purpose were proved for a time, and after sufficient trial numbered with the congregation. Such was the treatment of those who stood charged with rank heresy: those, however, who maintained no impious doctrine, but had been separated from the one body through the influence of schismatic advisers, were received without difficulty or delay. Accordingly, numbers thus revisited, as it were, their own country after an absence in a foreign land, and acknowledged the Church as a mother from whom they had wandered long, and to whom they now returned with joy and gladness. Thus the members of the entire body became united, and compacted in one harmonious whole; and the one catholic Church, at unity with itself, shone with full luster, while no heretical or schismatic body anywhere

³³⁰⁶ Here again it is worth noting, for history and for edification, that books were prohibited and heretics treated just as the Christians did not like to “be done by,” by the heathen.

continued to exist.³³⁰⁷ And the credit of having achieved this mighty work our Heaven-protected emperor alone, of all who had gone before him, was able to attribute to himself.



Book IV.

Chapter I.—*How he honored Many by Presents and Promotions.*

While thus variously engaged in promoting the extension and glory of the church of God, and striving by every measure to commend the Saviour's doctrine, the emperor was far from neglecting secular affairs; but in this respect also he was unwearied in bestowing benefits of every kind and in quick succession on the people of every province. On the one hand he manifested a paternal anxiety for the general welfare of his subjects; on the other he would distinguish individuals of his own acquaintance with various marks of honor; conferring his benefits in every instance in a truly noble spirit. No one could request a favor from the emperor, and fail of obtaining what he sought: no one expected a boon from him, and found that expectation vain.³³⁰⁸ Some received presents in money, others in land; some obtained the Prætorian præfecture, others senatorial, others again consular rank: many were appointed provincial governors: others were made counts of the first, second, or third order: in numberless instances the title of Most Illustrious and many other distinctions were conferred; for the emperor devised new dignities, that he might invest a larger number with the tokens of his favor.

Chapter II.—*Remission of a Fourth Part of the Taxes.*

The extent to which he studied the general happiness and prosperity may be understood from a single instance most beneficial and universal in its application, and still gratefully remembered. He remitted a fourth part of the yearly tribute paid for land, and bestowed it on the owners of the soil; so that if we compute this yearly reduction, we shall find that the cultivators enjoyed their

³³⁰⁷ This famous "church unity," for which Constantine has been blessed or execrated, as the case might be, in all the ages since, was hardly more complete than modern unified churches where all the members held different pet doctrines and are prepared to fight for them to the bitter end.

³³⁰⁸ Compare Prolegomena, under *Character*, for the criticism of this conduct from those who viewed it from another point of view.

produce free of tribute every fourth year.³³⁰⁹ This privilege being established by law, and secured for the time to come, has given occasion for the emperor's beneficence to be held, not merely by the then present generation, but by their children and descendants, in perpetual remembrance.

Chapter III.—*Equalization of the More Oppressive Taxes.*

And whereas some persons found fault with the surveys of land which had been made under former emperors, and complained that their property was unduly burdened; acting in this case also on the principles of justice, he sent commissioners to equalize the tribute, and to secure immunity to those who had made this appeal.

Chapter IV.—*His Liberality, from His Private Resources, to the Losers in Suits of a Pecuniary Nature.*

In cases of judicial arbitration, in order that the loser by his decision might not quit his presence less contented than the victorious litigant, he himself bestowed, and from his own private means, in some cases lands, in other money, on the defeated party. In this manner he took care that the loser, as having appeared in his presence, should be as well satisfied as the gainer of the cause; for he considered that no one ought in any case to retire dejected and sorrowful from an interview with such a prince.³³¹⁰ Thus it happened that both parties returned from the scene of trial with glad and cheerful countenances, while the emperor's noble-minded liberality excited universal admiration.

Chapter V.—*Conquest of the Scythians defeated through the Sign of Our Saviour.*

And why should I relate even briefly and incidentally, how he subjected barbarous nations to the Roman power; how he was the first who subjugated the Scythian³³¹¹ and Sarmatian tribes, which had never learned submission, and compelled them, how unwilling soever, to own the sovereignty of Rome? For the emperors who preceded him had actually rendered tribute to the Scythians: and



³³⁰⁹ For directly contrary account of his taxations, compare Prolegomena, under *Character*.

³³¹⁰ In reality it may have been less childish than Eusebius makes it appear, for it probably refers to cases where it was a matter of just equalization of claims, where each party thought his claim just.

³³¹¹ [Probably the Goths are meant, as in Socrates' *Eccles. Hist.* Bk. I. ch. 18.—*Bag.*] Compare for his Gothic wars, references in Prolegomena, under *Life*.

Romans, by an annual payment, had confessed themselves servants to barbarians; an indignity which our emperor could no longer bear, nor think it consistent with his victorious career to continue the payment his predecessors had made. Accordingly, with full confidence in his Saviour's aid, he raised his conquering standard against these enemies also, and soon reduced them all to obedience; coercing by military force those who fiercely resisted his authority, while, on the other hand, he conciliated the rest by wisely conducted embassies, and reclaimed them to a state of order and civilization from their lawless and savage life. Thus the Scythians at length learned to acknowledge subjection to the power of Rome.

Chapter VI.—*Conquest of the Sarmatians, consequent on the Rebellion of their Slaves.*

With respect to the Sarmatians, God himself brought them beneath the rule of Constantine, and subdued a nation swelling with barbaric pride in the following manner. Being attacked by the Scythians, they had entrusted their slaves with arms, in order to repel the enemy. These slaves first overcame the invaders and then, turning their weapons against their masters, drove them all from their native land. The expelled Sarmatians found that their only hope of safety was in Constantine's protection: and he, whose familiar habit it was to save men's lives, received them all within the confines of the Roman empire.³³¹² Those who were capable of serving he incorporated with his own troops: to the rest he allotted lands to cultivate for their own support: so that they themselves acknowledged that their past misfortune had produced a happy result, in that they now enjoyed Roman liberty in place of savage barbarism. In this manner God added to his dominions many and various barbaric tribes.

Chapter VII.—*Ambassadors from Different Barbarous Nations receive Presents from the Emperor.*

Indeed, ambassadors were continually arriving from all nations, bringing for his acceptance their most precious gifts. So that I myself have sometimes stood near the entrance of the imperial palace, and observed a noticeable array of barbarians in attendance, differing from each other in costume and decorations, and equally unlike in the fashion of their hair and beard. Their aspect truculent and terrible, their bodily stature prodigious: some of a red complexion, others white as snow, others again of an intermediate color. For in the number of those I have referred to might be seen specimens of the Blemmyan tribes, of the Indians, and the Ethiopians,³³¹³ “that widely-divided

³³¹² To the number of 300,000, according to *Anonymus Valesianus*. This was in the year 334.

³³¹³ [Αἰφίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαΐαται, ἕσχατοι ἀνδρῶν,

race, remotest of mankind.” All these in due succession, like some painted pageant, presented to the emperor those gifts which their own nation held in most esteem; some offering crowns of gold, others diadems set with precious stones; some bringing fair-haired boys, others barbaric vestments embroidered with gold and flowers: some appeared with horses, others with shields and long spears, with arrows and bows, thereby offering their services and alliance for the emperor’s acceptance. These presents he separately received and carefully laid aside, acknowledging them in so munificent a manner as at once to enrich those who bore them. He also honored the noblest among them with Roman offices of dignity; so that many of them thenceforward preferred to continue their residence among us, and felt no desire to revisit their native land.

Chapter VIII.—*That he wrote also to the King of Persia,³³¹⁴ who had sent him an Embassy, on Behalf of the Christians in his Realm.*

The king of the Persians also having testified a desire to form an alliance with Constantine, by sending an embassy and presents as assurances of peace and friendship, the emperor, in negotiating this treaty, far surpassed the monarch who had first done him honor, in the magnificence with which he acknowledged his gifts. Having heard, too, that there were many churches of God in Persia, and that large numbers there were gathered into the fold of Christ, full of joy at this intelligence, he resolved to extend his anxiety for the general welfare to that country also, as one whose aim it was to care for all alike in every nation.



Chapter IX.—*Letter of Constantine Augustus to Sapor, King of the Persians, containing a truly Pious Confession of God and Christ.*

Copy of his Letter to the King of Persia.

“By keeping the Divine faith, I am made a partaker of the light of truth: guided by the light of truth, I advance in the knowledge of the Divine faith. Hence it is that, as my actions themselves evince, I profess the most holy religion; and this worship I declare to be that which teaches me deeper acquaintance with the most holy God; aided by whose Divine power, beginning from the

Οἱ μὲν δυσσομένου ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος.

—*Odyss.* 1. 23, 24.—*Bag.*]

³³¹⁴ Sapor II. (310–381) called the Great, one of the Sassanidæ and afterwards the persistent enemy of the sons of Constantine. He was at various times a bitter persecutor of the Christians, and it is said (Plate) that “no Persian king had ever caused such terror to Rome as this monarch.” Compare article by Plate on the Sassanidæ in Smith, *Dict. of Gr. and R. Biog. and Mythol.*

very borders of the ocean, I have aroused each nation of the world in succession to a well-grounded hope of security; so that those which, groaning in servitude to the most cruel tyrants and yielding to the pressure of their daily sufferings, had well nigh been utterly destroyed, have been restored through my agency to a far happier state. This God I confess that I hold in unceasing honor and remembrance; this God I delight to contemplate with pure and guileless thoughts in the height of his glory.

Chapter X.—*The Writer denounces Idols, and glorifies God.*

“This God I invoke with bended knees, and recoil with horror from the blood of sacrifices, from their foul and detestable odors, and from every earth-born magic fire:³³¹⁵ for the profane and impious superstitions which are defiled by these rites have cast down and consigned to perdition many, nay, whole nations of the Gentile world. For he who is Lord of all cannot endure that those blessings which, in his own loving-kindness and consideration of the wants of men, he has revealed for the use of all, should be perverted to serve the lusts of any. His only demand from man is purity of mind and an undefiled spirit; and by this standard he weighs the actions of virtue and godliness. For his pleasure is in works of moderation and gentleness: he loves the meek, and hates the turbulent spirit: delighting in faith, he chastises unbelief: by him all presumptuous power is broken down, and he avenges the insolence of the proud. While the arrogant and haughty are utterly overthrown, he requires the humble and forgiving with deserved rewards: even so does he highly honor and strengthen with his special help a kingdom justly governed, and maintains a prudent king in the tranquillity of peace.

Chapter XI.—*Against the Tyrants and Persecutors; and on the Captivity of Valerian.*

“I cannot, then, my brother believe that I err in acknowledging this one God, the author and parent of all things: whom many of my predecessors in power, led astray by the madness of error, have ventured to deny, but who were all visited with a retribution so terrible and so destructive, that all succeeding generations have held up their calamities as the most effectual warning to any who desire to follow in their steps. Of the number of these I believe him³³¹⁶ to have been, whom the lightning-stroke of Divine vengeance drove forth from hence, and banished to your dominions and whose disgrace contributed to the fame of your celebrated triumph.

³³¹⁵ [Referring to the luminous appearances produced by the Pagan priests in the celebration of their mysteries.—*Bag.*]

³³¹⁶ [Valerian, who had been a persecutor of the Christians, and whose expedition against the Persians had terminated in his own captivity, and subjection to every kind of insult and cruelty from the conquerors.—*Bag.*]

Chapter XII.—*He declares that, having witnessed the Fall of the Persecutors, he now rejoices at the Peace enjoyed by the Christians.*

“And it is surely a happy circumstance that the punishment of such persons as I have described should have been publicly manifested in our own times. For I myself have witnessed the end of those who lately harassed the worshipers of God by their impious edict. And for this abundant thanksgivings are due to God that through his excellent Providence all men who observe his holy laws are gladdened by the renewed enjoyment of peace. Hence I am fully persuaded that everything is in the best and safest posture, since God is vouchsafing, through the influence of their pure and faithful religious service, and their unity of judgment respecting his Divine character, to gather all men to himself.

Chapter XIII.—*He bespeaks his Affectionate Interest for the Christians in his Country.*

“Imagine, then, with what joy I heard tidings so accordant with my desire, that the fairest districts of Persia are filled with those men on whose behalf alone I am at present speaking, I mean the Christians. I pray, therefore, that both you and they may enjoy abundant prosperity, and that your blessings and theirs may be in equal measure;³³¹⁷ for thus you will experience the mercy and favor of that God who is the Lord and Father of all. And now, because your power is great, I commend these persons to your protection; because your piety is eminent, I commit them to your care. Cherish them with your wonted humanity and kindness; for by this proof of faith you will secure an immeasurable benefit both to yourself and us.”

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Chapter XIV.—*How the Zealous Prayers of Constantine procured Peace to the Christians.*

Thus, the nations of the world being everywhere guided in their course as it were by the skill of a single pilot, and acquiescing in the administration of him who governed as the servant of God, the peace of the Roman empire continued undisturbed, and all classes of his subjects enjoyed a life of tranquillity and repose. At the same time the emperor, who was convinced that the prayers of godly men contributed powerfully to the maintenance of the public welfare, felt himself constrained zealously to seek such prayers and not only himself implored the help and favor of God, but charged the prelates of the churches to offer supplications on his behalf.

³³¹⁷ [The sense given above of this passage (which in the text is corrupt), is founded on the reading restored by Valesius from Theodoritus and Nicephorus.—*Bag.*] Stroth translates (*Hein.*), “So I desire for you the greatest prosperity; and for them, too, I wish that it may prosper as with you.”

Chapter XV.—*He causes himself to be represented on his Coins, and in his Portraits, in the Attitude of Prayer.*

How deeply his soul was impressed by the power of divine faith may be understood from the circumstance that he directed his likeness to be stamped on the golden coin of the empire with the eyes uplifted as in the posture of prayer to God: and this money became current throughout the Roman world. His portrait also at full length was placed over the entrance gates of the palaces in some cities, the eyes upraised to heaven, and the hands outspread as if in prayer.

Chapter XVI.—*He forbids by Law the Placing his Likeness in Idol Temples.*

In this manner he represented himself, even through the medium of painting, as habitually engaged in prayer to God. At the same time he forbade, by an express enactment, the setting up of any resemblance of himself in any idol temple, that not even the mere lineaments of his person might receive contamination from the error of forbidden superstition.

Chapter XVII.—*Of his Prayers in the Palace, and his Reading the Holy Scriptures.*

Still nobler proofs of his piety might be discerned by those who marked how he modeled as it were his very palace into a church of God, and himself afforded a pattern of zeal to those assembled therein: how he took the sacred scriptures into his hands, and devoted himself to the study of those divinely inspired oracles; after which he would offer up regular prayers with all the members of his imperial court.

Chapter XVIII.—*He enjoins the General Observance of the Lord's Day, and the Day of Preparation.*

He ordained, too, that one day should be regarded as a special occasion for prayer: I mean that which is truly the first and chief of all, the day of our Lord and Saviour. The entire care of his household was entrusted to deacons and other ministers consecrated to the service of God, and distinguished by gravity of life and every other virtue: while his trusty body guard, strong in affection and fidelity to his person, found in their emperor an instructor in the practice of piety, and like him held the Lord's salutary day in honor and performed on that day the devotions which he loved. The same observance was recommended by this blessed prince to all classes of his subjects: his earnest desire being gradually to lead all mankind to the worship of God. Accordingly he enjoined on all the subjects of the Roman empire to observe the Lord's day, as a day of rest, and also to honor the

day which precedes the Sabbath; in memory, I suppose, of what the Saviour of mankind is recorded to have achieved on that day.³³¹⁸ And since his desire was to teach his whole army zealously to honor the Saviour's day (which derives its name from light, and from the sun),³³¹⁹ he freely granted to those among them who were partakers of the divine faith, leisure for attendance on the services of the Church of God, in order that they might be able, without impediment, to perform their religious worship.



Chapter XIX.—*That he directed even his Pagan Soldiers to pray on the Lord's Day.*

With regard to those who were as yet ignorant of divine truth, he provided by a second statute that they should appear on each Lord's day on an open plain near the city, and there, at a given signal, offer to God with one accord a prayer which they had previously learnt. He admonished them that their confidence should not rest in their spears, or armor, or bodily strength, but that they should acknowledge the supreme God as the giver of every good, and of victory itself; to whom they were bound to offer their prayers with due regularity, uplifting their hands toward heaven, and raising their mental vision higher still to the king of heaven, on whom they should call as the Author of victory, their Preserver, Guardian, and Helper. The emperor himself prescribed the prayer to be used by all his troops, commanding them, to pronounce the following words in the Latin tongue:

Chapter XX.—*The Form of Prayer given by Constantine to his Soldiers.*

“We acknowledge thee the only God: we own thee, as our King and implore thy succor. By thy favor have we gotten the victory: through thee are we mightier than our enemies. We render thanks for thy past benefits, and trust thee for future blessings. Together we pray to thee, and beseech thee long to preserve to us, safe and triumphant, our emperor Constantine and his pious sons.” Such was the duty to be performed on Sunday by his troops, and such the prayer they were instructed to offer up to God.

³³¹⁸ [That is, Friday. The passage is not very intelligible. Does it mean that Constantine ordered this day to be distinguished in some way from others, as the day of the Lord's crucifixion?—*Bag.*]

³³¹⁹ [The decree of Constantine for the general observance of Sunday appears to have been issued a.d. 321, before which time both “the old and new sabbath” were observed by Christians.

“Constantine (says Gibbon, ch. 20, note 8) styles the Lord's day *Dies solis*, a name which could not offend the ears of his Pagan subjects.”—*Bag.*] This has been urged as ground for saying that Constantine did not commit himself to Christianity until the end of life, but it only shows his tact and care in treating the diverse elements of his empire.

Chapter XXI.—*He orders the Sign of the Saviour's Cross to be engraven on his Soldiers' Shields.*

And not only so, but he also caused the sign of the salutary trophy to be impressed on the very shields of his soldiers; and commanded that his embattled forces should be preceded in their march, not by golden images, as heretofore,³³²⁰ but only by the standard of the cross.

Chapter XXII.—*Of his Zeal in Prayer, and the Honor he paid to the Feast of Easter.*

The emperor himself, as a sharer in the holy mysteries of our religion, would seclude himself daily at a stated hour in the innermost chambers of his palace; and there in solitary converse with his God, would kneel in humble supplication, and entreat the blessings of which he stood in need. But especially at the salutary feast of Easter, his religious diligence was redoubled; he fulfilled as it were the duties of a hierophant with every energy of his mind and body, and outvied all others in the zealous celebration of this feast. He changed, too, the holy night vigil into a brightness like that of day, by causing waxen tapers of great length to be lighted throughout the city: besides which, torches everywhere diffused their light, so as to impart to this mystic vigil a brilliant splendor beyond that of day.³³²¹ As soon as day itself returned, in imitation of our Saviour's gracious acts, he opened a liberal hand to his subjects of every nation, province, and people, and lavished abundant bounties on all.

Chapter XXIII.—*How he forbade Idolatrous Worship, but honored Martyrs and the Church Festivals.*

Such were his sacred ministrations in the service of his God. At the same time, his subjects, both civil and military, throughout the empire, found a barrier everywhere opposed against idol worship, and every kind of sacrifice forbidden.³³²² A statute was also passed, enjoining the due observance of the Lord's day, and transmitted to the governors of every province, who undertook, at the emperor's command, to respect the days commemorative of martyrs, and duly to honor the

³³²⁰ Compare for these, Yates, article *Signa Militaria* in Smith, *Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.*, where there is given cut of the arch of Constantine showing such standards.

³³²¹ Compare Venables, *Easter, Ceremonies of*, in Smith and Cheetham, *Dict.*, for account of the customs of the day.

³³²² [This prohibition must be limited to private sacrifices. See Bk. II., ch. 45, note.—*Bag.*]

festal seasons in the churches:³³²³ and all these intentions were fulfilled to the emperor's entire satisfaction.



Chapter XXIV.—*That he described himself to be a Bishop, in Charge of Affairs External to the Church.*

Hence it was not without reason that once, on the occasion of his entertaining a company of bishops, he let fall the expression, “that he himself too was a bishop,” addressing them in my hearing in the following words: “You are bishops whose jurisdiction is within the Church: I also am a bishop, ordained by God to overlook whatever is external to the Church.”³³²⁴ And truly his measures corresponded with his words: for he watched over his subjects with an episcopal care, and exhorted them as far as in him lay to follow a godly life.

Chapter XXV.—*Prohibition of Sacrifices, of Mystic Rites, Combats of Gladiators, also the Licentious Worship of the Nile.*

Consistently with this zeal he issued successive laws and ordinances, forbidding any to offer sacrifice to idols, to consult diviners, to erect images, or to pollute the cities with the sanguinary combats of gladiators.³³²⁵ And inasmuch as the Egyptians, especially those of Alexandria, had been accustomed to honor their river through a priesthood composed of effeminate men, a further law was passed commanding the extermination of the whole class as vicious, that no one might thenceforward be found tainted with the like impurity. And whereas the superstitious inhabitants apprehended that the river would in consequence withhold its customary flood, God himself showed his approval of the emperor's law by ordering all things in a manner quite contrary to their expectation. For those who had defiled the cities by their vicious conduct were indeed seen no more; but the river, as if the country through which it flowed had been purified to receive it, rose

³³²³ “*Str.* rightly translates ‘and honored the festal days by public gatherings,’ while *Val.* [and *Bag.*] falsely renders ‘duly honored the festival seasons of the church.’” — *Hein.*

³³²⁴ This saying of Constantine has occasioned a deal of exegesis and conjecture. Compare monograph of Walch mentioned under *Literature* in the Prolegomena for discussion and references to other older literature.

³³²⁵ The most accessible reference for getting a glimpse of the legislation of Constantine in these and similar regards is the section, *The alteration in general and penal legislation* in Wordsworth's *Constantinus I.*, in Smith and Wace, *Dict.* 1 (1877). This section is on p. 636–7. Compare also the laws themselves as gathered in Migne, *Patrol. lat.* vol. 8. Compare also Prolegomena for general statement of the value of his legislation and his reputation as legislator.

higher than ever before, and completely overflowed the country with its fertilizing streams: thus effectually admonishing the deluded people to turn from impure men, and ascribe their prosperity to him alone who is the Giver of all good.

Chapter XXVI.—*Amendment of the Law in Force respecting Childless Persons, and of the Law of Wills.*

So numerous, indeed, were the benefits of this kind conferred by the emperor on every province, as to afford ample materials to any who might desire to record them. Among these may be instanced those laws which he entirely remodelled, and established on a more equitable basis: the nature of which reform may be briefly and easily explained. The childless were punished under the old law with the forfeiture of their hereditary property, a merciless statute, which dealt with them as positive criminals. The emperor annulled this, and decreed that those so circumstanced should inherit. He regulated the question on the principles of equity and justice, arguing willful transgressors should be chastised with the penalties their crimes deserve. But nature herself denies children to many, who long, perhaps, for a numerous offspring, but are disappointed of their hope by bodily infirmity. Others continue childless, not from any dislike of posterity, but because their ardent love of philosophy³³²⁶ renders them averse to the conjugal union. Women, too, consecrated to the service of God, have maintained a pure and spotless virginity, and have devoted themselves, soul and body to a life of entire chastity and holiness. What then? Should this conduct be deemed worthy of punishment, or rather of admiration and praise; since to desire this state is in itself honorable, and to maintain it surpasses the power of unassisted nature? Surely those whose bodily infirmity destroys their hope of offspring are worthy of pity, not of punishment: and he who devotes himself to a higher object calls not for chastisement, but especial admiration. On such principles of sound reason did the emperor rectify the defects of this law. Again, with regard to the wills of dying persons, the old laws had ordained that they should be expressed, even at the latest breath, as it were, in certain definite words, and had prescribed the exact form and terms to be employed. This practice had

³³²⁶ [The word "philosophy," here and in the 28th chapter, plainly indicates that virginity which was so highly honored in the earlier ages of Christianity, and the undue exaltation of which was productive, necessarily, of evils which it is scarcely possible to estimate at their full extent.—*Bag.*] On the growing prevalence of the practice of virginity compare Hatch, *Virgins*, in Smith and Cheetham, *Dict.* But this note belongs rather to the paragraph below; for the author does not refer to Christian virginity but primarily to philosophical celibacy in this instance. The Neo-Platonic philosophy of the times, through its doctrine of the purification of the soul by its liberation from the body or sensuous things, taught celibacy and ascetic practices generally. So Plotinus (d. 270 a.d.) practiced and taught to a degree, and Porphyry (d. 301+) more explicitly. Compare rich literature on Neo-Platonism, and conveniently Zeller, *Outlines of Gr. Philos.* Lond., 1886, p. 326–43, *passim*.



occasioned many fraudulent attempts to hinder the intentions of the deceased from being carried into full effect. As soon as our emperor was aware of these abuses, he reformed this law likewise, declaring that a dying man ought to be permitted to indicate his last wishes in as few words as possible, and in whatever terms he pleased; and to set forth his will in any written form; or even by word of mouth, provided it were done in the presence of proper witnesses, who might be competent faithfully to discharge their trust.

Chapter XXVII.—*Among Other Enactments, he decrees that no Christian shall slave to a Jew, and affirms the Validity of the Decisions of Councils.*

He also passed a law to the effect that no Christian should remain in servitude to a Jewish master, on the ground that it could not be right that those whom the Saviour had ransomed should be subjected to the yoke of slavery by a people who had slain the prophets and the Lord himself. If any were found hereafter in these circumstances, the slave was to be set at liberty, and the master punished by a fine.

He likewise added the sanction of his authority to the decisions of bishops passed at their synods, and forbade the provincial governors to annul any of their decrees: for he rated the priests of God at a higher value than any judge whatever. These and a thousand similar provisions did he enact for the benefit of his subjects; but there is not time now to give a special description of them, such as might convey an accurate idea of his imperial wisdom in these respects: nor need I now relate at length, how, as a devoted servant of the Supreme God, he employed himself from morning until night in seeking objects for his beneficence, and how equally and universally kind he was to all.

Chapter XXVIII.—*His Gifts to the Churches, and Bounties to Virgins and to the Poor.*

His liberality, however, was most especially exercised on behalf of the churches of God. In some cases he granted lands, in others he issued supplies of food for the support of the poor, of orphan children, and widows; besides which, he evinced much care and forethought in fully providing the naked and destitute with clothing. He distinguished, however, with most special honor those who had devoted their lives to the practice of Divine philosophy. Hence his respect, little short of veneration, for God's most holy and ever virgin choir: for he felt assured that the God to whom such persons devoted themselves was himself an inmate of their souls.

Chapter XXIX.—*Of Constantine's Discourses and Declamations.*³³²⁷

For himself, he sometimes passed sleepless nights in furnishing his mind with Divine knowledge: and much of his time was spent in composing discourses, many of which he delivered in public; for he conceived it to be incumbent on him to govern his subjects by appealing to their reason, and to secure in all respects a rational obedience to his authority. Hence he would sometimes himself evoke an assembly, on which occasions vast multitudes attended, in the hope of hearing an emperor sustain the part of a philosopher. And if in the course of his speech any occasion offered of touching on sacred topics, he immediately stood erect, and with a grave aspect and subdued tone of voice seemed reverently to be initiating his auditors in the mysteries of the Divine doctrine: and when they greeted him with shouts of acclamation, he would direct them by his gestures to raise their eyes to heaven, and reserve their admiration for the Supreme King alone, and honor him with adoration and praise. He usually divided the subjects of his address, first thoroughly exposing the error of polytheism, and proving the superstition of the Gentiles to be mere fraud, and a cloak for impiety. He then would assert the sole sovereignty of God: passing thence to his Providence, both general and particular. Proceeding next to the dispensation of salvation, he would demonstrate its necessity, and adaptation to the nature of the case; entering next in order on the doctrine of the Divine judgment.³³²⁸ And here especially he appealed most powerfully to the consciences of his hearers, while he denounced the rapacious and violent, and those who were slaves to an inordinate thirst of gain. Nay, he caused some of his own acquaintance who were present to feel the severe lash of his words, and to stand with downcast eyes in the consciousness of guilt, while he testified against them in the clearest and most impressive terms that they would have an account to render of their deeds to God. He reminded them that God himself had given him the empire of the world, portions of which he himself, acting on the same Divine principle, had intrusted to their government; but that all would in due time be alike summoned to give account of their actions to the Supreme Sovereign of all. Such was his constant testimony; such his admonition and instruction. And he himself both felt and uttered these sentiments in the genuine confidence of faith: but his hearers were little disposed to learn, and deaf to sound advice; receiving his words indeed with loud applause, but induced by insatiable cupidity practically to disregard them.

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Chapter XXX.—*That he marked out before a Covetous Man the Measure of a Grave, and so put him to Shame.*

³³²⁷ Compare Prolegomena, under *Character and Writings*.

³³²⁸ Compare Prolegomena, and the Oration appended to this work.

On one occasion he thus personally addressed one of his courtiers: “How far, my friend, are we to carry our inordinate desires?” Then drawing the dimensions of a human figure with a lance which he happened to have in his hand, he continued: “Though thou couldst obtain the whole wealth of this world, yea, the whole world itself, thou wilt carry with thee at last no more than this little spot which I have marked out, if indeed even that be thine.”³³²⁹ Such were the words and actions of this blessed prince; and though at the time he failed to reclaim any from their evil ways, yet notwithstanding the course of events afforded evident proof that his admonitions were more like Divine prophecies than mere words.

Chapter XXXI.—*That he was derided because of his Excessive Clemency.*³³³⁰

Meantime, since there was no fear of capital punishment to deter from the commission of crime, for the emperor himself was uniformly inclined to clemency, and none of the provincial governors visited offenses with their proper penalties, this state of things drew with it no small degree of blame on the general administration of the empire; whether justly or not, let every one form his own judgment: for myself, I only ask permission to record the fact.

Chapter XXXII.—*Of Constantine’s Oration which he wrote to the Assembly of the Saints.*³³³¹

The emperor was in the habit of composing his orations in the Latin tongue, from which they were translated into Greek by interpreters appointed for this special service. One of the discourses thus translated I intend to annex, by way of specimen, to this present work, that one, I mean, which he inscribed “To the assembly of the saints,” and dedicated to the Church of God, that no one may have ground for deeming my testimony on this head mere empty praise.

Chapter XXXIII.—*How he listened standing to Eusebius’ Declamation in Honor of our Saviour’s Sepulchre.*

³³²⁹ [Since it is uncertain whether thou wilt be buried in the ground, or consumed by fire, or drowned in the sea, or devoured by wild beasts (Valesius in loc.).—*Bag.*]

³³³⁰ Compare Prolegomena, under *Character*.

³³³¹ Compare the Oration itself following this work.

One act, however, I must by no means omit to record, which this admirable prince performed in my own presence. On one occasion, emboldened by the confident assurance I entertained of his piety, I had begged permission to pronounce a discourse on the subject of our Saviour's sepulchre in his hearing. With this request he most readily complied, and in the midst of a large number of auditors, in the interior of the palace itself, he stood and listened with the rest. I entreated him, but in vain, to seat himself on the imperial throne which stood near: he continued with fixed attention to weigh the topics of my discourse, and gave his own testimony to the truth of the theological doctrines it contained. After some time had passed, the oration being of considerable length, I was myself desirous of concluding; but this he would not permit, and exhorted me to proceed to the very end. On my again entreating him to sit, he in his turn was displeased and said that it was not right to listen in a careless manner to the discussion of doctrines relating to God; and again, that this posture was good and profitable to himself, since it was reverent to stand while listening to sacred truths. Having, therefore, concluded my discourse, I returned home, and resumed my usual occupations.

Chapter XXXIV.—*That he wrote to Eusebius respecting Easter, and respecting Copies of the Holy Scriptures.*

Ever careful for the welfare of the churches of God, the emperor addressed me personally in a letter on the means of providing copies of the inspired oracles, and also on the subject of the most holy feast of Easter. For I had myself dedicated to him an exposition of the mystical import of that feast; and the manner in which he honored me with a reply may be understood by any one who reads the following letter.



Chapter XXXV.—*Constantine's Letter to Eusebius, in praise of his Discourse concerning Easter.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Eusebius.

“It is indeed an arduous task, and beyond the power of language itself, worthily to treat of the mysteries of Christ, and to explain in a fitting manner the controversy respecting the feast of Easter, its origin as well as its precious and toilsome accomplishment.³³² For it is not in the power even of those who are able to apprehend them, adequately to describe the things of God. I am, notwithstanding, filled with admiration of your learning and zeal, and have not only myself read your work with pleasure, but have given directions, according to your own desire, that it be communicated to many sincere followers of our holy religion. Seeing, then, with what pleasure we

³³² [i.e. through the sufferings and resurrection of Christ.—*Bag.*]

receive favors of this kind from your Sagacity, be pleased to gladden us more frequently with those compositions, to the practice of which, indeed, you confess yourself to have been trained from an early period, so that I am urging a willing man, as they say, in exhorting you to your customary pursuits. And certainly the high and confident judgment we entertain is a proof that the person who has translated your writings into the Latin tongue is in no respect incompetent to the task, impossible though it be that such version should fully equal the excellence of the works themselves. God preserve you, beloved brother.” Such was his letter on this subject: and that which related to the providing of copies of the Scriptures for reading in the churches was to the following purport.

Chapter XXXVI.—*Constantine’s Letter to Eusebius on the Preparation of Copies of the Holy Scriptures.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Eusebius.

“It happens, through the favoring providence of God our Saviour, that great numbers have united themselves to the most holy church in the city which is called by my name. It seems, therefore, highly requisite, since that city is rapidly advancing in prosperity in all other respects, that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you, therefore, receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church, to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art.³³³³ The catholicus³³³⁴ of the diocese has also received instructions by letter from our Clemency to be careful to furnish all things necessary for the preparation of such copies; and it will be for you to take

³³³³ Molz.in a note regards these as lectionaries, but they are usually thought to have been regular copies of the Scriptures in Greek—Septuagint and N.T., and the Codex Sinaiticus has been thought to be one of them. It dates from not earlier than the time of Eusebius, as it contains the Eusebian Canons, but yet from the fourth century. Altogether it is not impossible that it was one of these, and at all events a description of it, extracted from Scriveners (*Introduction*, 1883, p. 88 sq.), will be a fair illustration. “13½ inches in length by 14-7/8 inches high.” “Beautiful vellum.” “Each page comprises four columns, with 48 lines in each column.” “Continuous noble uncials.” “Arranged in quires of four or three sheets.” It is evident from comparison of several quotations of Eusebius that the copy of the New Testament which he himself used was not closely related with the Sinaitic text, unless the various readings headed by this ms. are all mistakes originating with it. Compare allusions in the notes to such different readings. The last clause, although in the text of Heinichen, is of doubtful authority.

³³³⁴ This word is a transcription, rendered “Procurator” by *Bag.*, and is perhaps corresponding to that official (cf. Long, article *Fiscus*, in Smith, *Dict. Gr. and R. Ant.*). But this transcription is recognized (cf. Ffoulkes, *Catholicus*, in Smith and Cheetham, *Dict.*).

special care that they be completed with as little delay as possible.³³³⁵ You have authority also, in virtue of this letter, to use two of the public carriages for their conveyance, by which arrangement the copies when fairly written will most easily be forwarded for my personal inspection; and one of the deacons of your church may be intrusted with this service, who, on his arrival here, shall experience my liberality. God preserve you, beloved brother!”

Chapter XXXVII.—*How the Copies were provided.*

Such were the emperor’s commands, which were followed by the immediate execution of the work itself, which we sent him in magnificent and elaborately bound volumes of a threefold and fourfold form.³³³⁶ This fact is attested by another letter, which the emperor wrote in acknowledgment, in which, having heard that the city Constantia in our country, the inhabitants of which had been more than commonly devoted to superstition, had been impelled by a sense of religion to abandon their past idolatry, he testified his joy, and approval of their conduct.



Chapter XXXVIII.—*How the Market-Town of Gaza was made a City for its Profession of Christianity, and received the Name of Constantia.*

For in fact the place now called Constantia, in the province of Palestine, having embraced the saving religion, was distinguished both by the favor of God, and by special honor from the emperor, being now for the first time raised to the rank of a city, and receiving the more honored name of his pious sister in exchange for its former appellation.

Chapter XXXIX.—*That a Place in Phœnicia also was made a City, and in Other Cities Idolatry was abolished, and Churches built.*

A similar change was effected in several other cities; for instance, in that town of Phœnicia which received its name from that of the emperor, and the inhabitants of which committed their innumerable idols to the flames, and adopted in their stead the principles of the saving faith.

³³³⁵ The fact that the Sinaiticus exhibits two or three hands suggests that it was prepared with rapidity, and the having various scribes was a way to speed.

³³³⁶ [The parchment copies were usually arranged in quaternions, i.e. four leaves made up together, as the ternions consisted of three leaves. The quaternions each contained sixteen pages, the ternions twelve (Valesius in loc.).—*Bag.*] So probably, although the three-columned form of the Sinaiticus and the four of the Vaticanus suggest a possible other meaning.

Numbers, too, in the other provinces, both in the cities and the country, became willing inquirers after the saving knowledge of God; destroyed as worthless things the images of every kind which they had heretofore held most sacred; voluntarily demolished the lofty temples and shrines which contained them; and, renouncing their former sentiments, or rather errors, commenced and completed entirely new churches. But since it is not so much my province to give a circumstantial detail of the actions of this pious prince, as it is theirs who have been privileged to enjoy his society at all times, I shall content myself with briefly recording such facts as have come to my own personal knowledge, before I proceed to notice the last days of his life.

Chapter XL.—*That having conferred the Dignity of Cæsars on his Three Sons at the Three Decennial Periods of his Reign, he dedicated the Church at Jerusalem.*

By this time the thirtieth year of his reign was completed. In the course of this period, his three sons had been admitted at different times as his colleagues in the empire. The first, Constantinus, who bore his father's name, obtained this distinction about the tenth year of his reign. Constantius, the second son, so called from his grandfather, was proclaimed Cæsar about the twentieth, while Constans, the third, whose name expresses the firmness and stability of his character, was advanced to the same dignity at the thirtieth anniversary of his father's reign.³³³⁷ Having thus reared a threefold offspring, a Trinity,³³³⁸ as it were, of pious sons, and having received them severally at each decennial period to a participation in his imperial authority, he judged the festival of his Tricennalia to be a fit occasion for thanksgiving to the Sovereign Lord of all, at the same time believing that the dedication of the church which his zealous magnificence had erected at Jerusalem might advantageously be performed.

Chapter XLI.—*That in the meantime he ordered a Council to be convened at Tyre, because of Controversies raised in Egypt.*

Meanwhile that spirit of envy which is the enemy of all good, like a dark cloud intercepting the sun's brightest rays, endeavored to mar the joy of this festivity, by again raising contentions to disturb the tranquillity of the Egyptian churches. Our divinely favored emperor, however, once more convened a synod composed of many bishops, and set them as it were in armed array, like

³³³⁷ These are general dates; "about" the tenth, etc., would have been more exact. Compare Prolegomena, under *Life*.

³³³⁸ [Γριέδος λόγῳ. Well may the old English Translator remark on this, "An odd expression." We may go further, and denounce it as an instance of the senseless and profane adulation to which our author, perhaps in the spirit of his age, seems to have been but too much inclined.—*Bag.*]

the host of God, against this malignant spirit, having commanded their presence from the whole of Egypt and Libya, from Asia, and from Europe, in order, first, to decide the questions in dispute, and afterwards to perform the dedication of the sacred edifice above mentioned. He enjoined them, by the way, to adjust their differences at the capital city of Phœnicia, reminding them that they had no right, while harboring feelings of mutual animosity, to engage in the service of God, since his law expressly forbids those who are at variance to offer their gift until they have first become reconciled and mutually disposed to peace. Such were the salutary precepts which the emperor continually kept vividly before his own mind, and in accordance with which he admonished them to undertake their present duties in a spirit of perfect unanimity and concord, in a letter to the following purport.

Chapter XLII.—*Constantine's Letter to the Council at Tyre.*

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to the holy Council at Tyre.

“Surely it would best consist with and best become the prosperity of these our times, that the Catholic Church should be undivided, and the servants of Christ be at this present moment clear from all reproach. Since, however, there are those who, carried away by a baleful and furious spirit of contention (for I will not charge them with intentionally leading a life unworthy of their profession), are endeavoring to create that general confusion which, in my judgment, is the most pernicious of all evils; I exhort you, forward as you already are, to meet together and form a synod without delay: to defend those who need protection; to administer remedies to your brethren who are in peril; to recall the divided members to unity of judgment; to rectify errors while opportunity is yet allowed: that thus you may restore to so many provinces that due measure of concord which, strange and sad anomaly! the arrogance of a few individuals has destroyed. And I believed that all are alike persuaded that this course is at the same time pleasing to Almighty God (as well as the highest object of my own desires), and will bring no small honor to yourselves, should you be successful in restoring peace. Delay not, then, but hasten with redoubled zeal to terminate the present dissensions in a manner becoming the occasion, by assembling together in that spirit of true sincerity and faith which the Saviour whom we serve especially demands from us, I may almost say with an audible voice, on all occasions. No proof of pious zeal on my part shall be wanting. Already have I done all to which my attention was directed by your letters. I have sent to those bishops whose presence you desired, that they may share your counsels. I have despatched Dionysius, a man of consular rank, who will both remind those prelates of their duty who are bound to attend the Council with you, and will himself be there to superintend the proceedings, but especially to maintain good order. Meantime should any one, though I deem it most improbable, venture on this occasion to violate my command, and refuse his attendance, a messenger shall be despatched forthwith to banish that person in virtue of an imperial edict, and to teach him that it does not

become him to resist an emperor's decrees when issued in defense of truth. For the rest, it will be for your Holinesses, unbiased either by enmity or favor, but consistently with ecclesiastical and apostolic order, to devise a fitting remedy whether it be for positive offenses or for unpremeditated errors; in order that you may at once free the Church from all reproach, relieve my anxiety, and, by restoring the blessings of peace to those who are now divided, procure the highest honor for yourselves. God preserve you, beloved brethren!"³³³⁹

Chapter XLIII.—*Bishops from all the Provinces attended the Dedication of the Church at Jerusalem.*

No sooner had these injunctions been carried into effect, than another emissary arrived with despatches from the emperor, and an urgent admonition to the Council to hasten their journey to Jerusalem without delay.³³⁴⁰ Accordingly they all took their departure from the province of Phœnicia, and proceeded to their destination, availing themselves of the public means of transport. Thus Jerusalem became the gathering point for distinguished prelates from every province, and the whole city was thronged by a vast assemblage of the servants of God. The Macedonians had sent the bishop of their metropolis;³³⁴¹ the Pannonians and Mœsians the fairest of God's youthful flock among them. A holy prelate from Persia too was there, deeply versed in the sacred oracles; while Bithynian and Thracian bishops graced the Council with their presence; nor were the most illustrious from Cilicia wanting, nor the chief of the Cappadocians, distinguished above all for learning and eloquence. In short, the whole of Syria and Mesopotamia, Phœnicia and Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, and Libya, with the dwellers in the Thebaid, all contributed to swell the mighty concourse of God's ministers, followed as they were by vast numbers from every province. They were attended by an imperial escort,³³⁴² and officers of trust had also been sent from the palace itself, with instructions to heighten the splendor of the festival at the emperor's expense.

Chapter XLIV.—*Of their Reception by the Notary Marianus; the Distribution of Money to the Poor; and Offerings to the Church.*

The director and chief of these officers was a most useful servant of the emperor, a man eminent for faith and piety, and thoroughly acquainted with the Divine word, who had been honorably

³³³⁹ Compare on the Synod of Tyre (held 335 a.d.), Hefele, *Hist. of Councils*, 2 (1876), 17–26.

³³⁴⁰ Compare Hefele, 2. 26–7.

³³⁴¹ [Alexander, bishop of Thessalonica. By the Pannonian and Mœsian bishops are meant Ursacius and Valens, leaders of the Arian party; by the Bithynian and Thracian, Theogonius of Nicæa, and Theodorus of Perinthus (Valesius).—*Bag.*]

³³⁴² "The emperor showed himself very attentive to them."—*Molz.*



conspicuous by his profession of godliness during the time of the tyrants' power, and therefore was deservedly entrusted with the arrangement of the present proceedings. Accordingly, in faithful obedience to the emperor's commands, he received the assembly with courteous hospitality, and entertained them with feasts and banquets on a scale of great splendor. He also distributed lavish supplies of money and clothing among the naked and destitute, and the multitudes of both sexes who suffered from want of food and the common necessities of life. Finally, he enriched and beautified the church itself throughout with offerings of imperial magnificence, and thus fully accomplished the service he had been commissioned to perform.

Chapter XLV.—*Various Discourses by the Assembled Bishops; also by Eusebius, the Writer of this History.*

Meantime the festival derived additional luster both from the prayers and discourses of the ministers of God, some of whom extolled the pious emperor's willing devotion to the Saviour of mankind, and dilated on the magnificence of the edifice which he had raised to his memory. Others afforded, as it were, an intellectual feast to the ears of all present, by public disquisitions on the sacred doctrines of our religion. Others interpreted passages of holy Scripture, and unfolded their hidden meaning; while such as were unequal to these efforts presented a bloodless sacrifice and mystical service to God in the prayers which they offered for general peace, for the Church of God, for the emperor himself as the instrumental cause of so many blessings, and for his pious sons. I myself too, unworthy as I was of such a privilege, pronounced various public orations in honor of this solemnity, wherein I partly explained by a written description the details of the imperial edifice, and partly endeavored to gather from the prophetic visions apt illustrations of the symbols it displayed.³³⁴³ Thus joyfully was the festival of dedication celebrated in the thirtieth year of our emperor's reign.

Chapter XLVI.—*That Eusebius afterwards delivered his Description of the Church of the Saviour, and a Tricennial Oration before Constantine himself.*

³³⁴³ [Eusebius gives us no example of his application of Scripture in this case. His commentator Valesius refers to Zeph. iii. 8 (LXX), Διὲ τοῦτο ὑπόμεινόν με, λέγει Κύριος, εἰς ἡμέραν ἀναστῆσεώς μου εἰς μαρτύριον, and tells us that Cyril of Jerusalem, in his fourth Homily, explains this passage in Zephaniah of the Martyrium, of Basilica, which Constantine built on the spot of the Lord's resurrection. Let any one examine the whole passage (allowing for the mistake of one Hebrew word for another by the LXX), and say, if this be a fair specimen, what we are to think of the Fathers of the fourth century as interpreters of Scripture. See also Bk. 3, ch. 33, note.—*Bag.*] “Interpreted pertinent passages from the prophets.”—*Str.* and *Molz.*

The structure of the church of our Saviour, the form of his sacred cave, the splendor of the work itself, and the numberless offerings in gold, and silver, and precious stones, I have described to the best of my ability, and dedicated to the emperor in a separate treatise, which on a fitting opportunity I shall append to this present work. I shall add to it also that oration on his Tricennalia which shortly afterwards, having traveled to the city which bears his name, I delivered in the emperor's own presence.³³⁴⁴ This was the second opportunity afforded me of glorifying the Supreme God in the imperial palace itself: and on this occasion my pious hearer evinced the greatest joy, as he afterwards testified, when he entertained the bishops then present, and loaded them with distinctions of every kind.

Chapter XLVII.—*That the Council at Nicæa was held in the Twentieth, the Dedication of the Church at Jerusalem in the Thirtieth, Year of Constantine's Reign.*

This second synod the emperor convened at Jerusalem, being the greatest of which we have any knowledge, next to the first which he had summoned at the famous Bithynian city. That indeed was a triumphal assembly, held in the twentieth year of his reign, an occasion of thanksgiving for victory over his enemies in the very city which bears the name of victory.³³⁴⁵ The present meeting added luster to the thirtieth anniversary, during which the emperor dedicated the church at the sepulchre of our Saviour, as a peace-offering to God, the giver of all good.

Chapter XLVIII.—*That Constantine was displeased with one who praised him excessively.*

And now that all these ceremonies were completed, and the divine qualities of the emperor's character continued to be the theme of universal praise, one of God's ministers presumed so far as in his own presence to pronounce him blessed, as having been counted worthy to hold absolute and universal empire in this life, and as being destined to share the empire of the Son of God in the world to come. These words, however, Constantine heard with indignation, and forbade the speaker to hold such language, exhorting him rather to pray earnestly on his behalf, that whether in this life or in that which is to come, he might be found worthy to be a servant of God.³³⁴⁶

³³⁴⁴ The Oration is appended to this work.

³³⁴⁵ Nicæa.

³³⁴⁶ Yet Eusebius himself in his Oration uses language almost as obnoxious, and records that Constantine was much pleased with it. The difference was probably one of gracefulness.



Chapter XLIX.—*Marriage of his Son Constantius Cæsar.*

On the completion of the thirtieth year of his reign he solemnized the marriage of his second son,³³⁴⁷ having concluded that of his first-born long before. This was an occasion of great joy and festivity, the emperor himself attending on his son at the ceremony, and entertaining the guests of both sexes, the men and women in distinct and separate companies, with sumptuous hospitality. Rich presents likewise were liberally distributed among the cities and people.

Chapter L.—*Embassy and Presents from the Indians.*

About this time ambassadors from the Indians, who inhabit the distant regions of the East, arrived with presents consisting of many varieties of brilliant precious stones, and animals differing in species from those known to us. These offerings they presented to the emperor, thus allowing that his sovereignty extended even to the Indian Ocean, and that the princes of their country, who rendered homage to him both by paintings and statues, acknowledged his imperial and paramount authority. Thus the Eastern Indians now submitted to his sway, as the Britons of the Western Ocean had done at the commencement of his reign.

Chapter LI.—*That Constantine divided the Empire between his Three Sons, whom he had instructed in Politics and Religion.*

Having thus established his power in the opposite extremities of the world, he divided the whole extent of his dominions, as though he were allotting a patrimonial inheritance to the dearest objects of his regard, among his three sons. To the eldest he assigned his grandfather's portion; to the second, the empire of the East; to the third, the countries which lie between these two divisions.³³⁴⁸ And being desirous of furnishing his children with an inheritance truly valuable and salutary to their souls, he had been careful to imbue them with true religious principles, being himself their guide to the knowledge of sacred things, and also appointing men of approved piety to be their instructors. At the same time he assigned them the most accomplished teachers of secular learning,

³³⁴⁷ His second son by Fausta. Crispus seems now to be counted out. This was not the famous Eusebia who was his second wife.

³³⁴⁸ ["The younger Constantine was appointed to hold his court in Gaul; and his brother Constantius exchanged that department, the ancient patrimony of their father, for the more opulent, but less martial, countries of the East. Italy, the Western Illyricum, and Africa, were accustomed to revere Constans, the third of his sons, as the representative of the great Constantine" (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. 18).—*Bag.*] Compare Prolegomena, under *Life*.

by some of whom they were taught the arts of war, while they were trained by others in political, and by others again in legal science. To each moreover was granted a truly royal retinue, consisting of infantry, spearmen, and body guards, with every other kind of military force; commanded respectively by captains, tribunes, and generals³³⁴⁹ of whose warlike skill and devotion to his sons the emperor had had previous experience.

Chapter LII.—*That after they had reached Man's Estate he was their Guide in Piety.*

As long as the Cæsars were of tender years, they were aided by suitable advisers in the management of public affairs; but on their arrival at the age of manhood their father's instructions alone sufficed. When present he proposed to them his own example, and admonished them to follow his pious course: in their absence he furnished them by letter with rules of conduct suited to their imperial station, the first and greatest of which was an exhortation to value the knowledge and worship of the Sovereign Lord of all more than wealth, nay, more than empire itself. At length he permitted them to direct the public administration of the empire without control, making it his first request that they would care for the interests of the Church of God, and boldly profess themselves disciples of Christ. Thus trained, and excited to obedience not so much by precept as by their own voluntary desire for virtue, his sons more than fulfilled the admonitions of their father, devoting their earnest attention to the service of God, and observing the ordinances of the Church even in the palace itself, with all the members of their households.³³⁵⁰ For their father's forethought had provided that all the attendants of his son's should be Christians. And not only so, but the military officers of highest rank, and those who had the control of public business, were professors of the same faith: for the emperor placed confidence in the fidelity of men devoted to the service of God, as in a strong and sure defense. When our thrice blessed prince had completed these arrangements, and thus secured order and tranquillity throughout the empire, God, the dispenser of all blessings, judged it to be the fitting time to translate him to a better inheritance, and summoned him to pay the debt of nature.



Chapter LIII.—*Having reigned about Thirty-Two Years, and lived above Sixty, he still had a Sound Body.*

³³⁴⁹ Centurions, generals, tribunes.

³³⁵⁰ The expression is over strong. Constantius, e.g., was not baptized until just before his death.

He completed the time of his reign in two and thirty years, wanting a few months and days,³³⁵¹ and his whole life extended to about twice that period. At this age he still possessed a sound and vigorous body, free from all blemish, and of more than youthful vivacity; a noble mien, and strength equal to any exertion; so that he was able to join in martial exercises, to ride, endure the fatigues of travel, engage in battle, and erect trophies over his conquered enemies, besides gaining those bloodless victories by which he was wont to triumph over those who opposed him.³³⁵²

Chapter LIV.—*Of those who abused His Extreme Benevolence for Avarice and Hypocrisy.*

In like manner his mental³³⁵³ qualities reached the highest point of human perfection. Indeed he was distinguished by every excellence of character, but especially by benevolence; a virtue, however, which subjected him to censure from many, in consequence of the baseness of wicked men, who ascribed their own crimes to the emperor's forbearance. In truth I can myself bear testimony to the grievous evils which prevailed during these times; I mean the violence of rapacious and unprincipled men, who preyed on all classes of society alike, and the scandalous hypocrisy of those who crept into the Church, and assumed the name and character of Christians. His own benevolence and goodness of heart, the genuineness of his own faith, and his truthfulness of character, induced the emperor to credit the profession of these reputed Christians, who craftily preserved the semblance of sincere affection for his person. The confidence he reposed in such men sometimes forced him into conduct unworthy of himself, of which envy took advantage to cloud in this respect the luster of his character.³³⁵⁴

Chapter LV.—*Constantine employed himself in Composition of Various Kinds to the Close of his Life.*

These offenders, however, were soon over-taken by divine chastisement. To return to our emperor. He had so thoroughly trained his mind in the art of reasoning that he continued to the last to compose discourses on various subjects, to deliver frequent orations in public, and to instruct

³³⁵¹ [In his *Chronicon*, Eusebius gives the more correct period of thirty years and ten months. Constantine's reign began a.d. 306, and his death took place a.d. 337.—*Bag.*] Compare Prolegomena, also Clinton, *Fasti Rom.* an. 337.

³³⁵² Compare Prolegomena, under *Character*.

³³⁵³ "Psychical qualities"—including more than intellectual.

³³⁵⁴ Compare Prolegomena, *Character*. There is a striking touch of naturalness in this passage which tells for the historical trustworthiness of the biographer, and though exposing the fault of the emperor yet gives a rather pleasing glimpse of his character.

his hearers in the sacred doctrines of religion. He was also habitually engaged in legislating both on political and military questions;³³⁵⁵ in short, in devising whatever might be conducive to the general welfare of the human race. It is well worthy of remark, that, very shortly before his departure, he pronounced a funeral oration before his usual auditory, in which he spoke at length on the immortality of the soul, the state of those who had persevered in a life of godliness, and the blessings which God has laid up in store for them that love him. On the other hand he made it appear by copious and conclusive arguments what the end of those will be who have pursued a contrary career, describing in vivid language the final ruin of the ungodly. His powerful testimony on these subjects seemed so far to touch the consciences of those around him, that one of the self-imagined philosophers, of whom he asked his opinion of what he had heard, bore testimony to the truth of his words, and accorded a real, though reluctant, tribute of praise to the arguments by which he had exposed the worship of a plurality of gods. By converse such as this with his friends before his death, the emperor seemed as it were to smooth and prepare the way for his transition to a happier life.

Chapter LVI.—*How he took Bishops with him on an Expedition against the Persians, and took with him a Tent in the Form of a Church.*

It is also worthy of record that about the time of which I am at present writing, the emperor, having heard of an insurrection of some barbarians in the East, observed that the conquest of this enemy was still in store for him, and resolved on an expedition against the Persians. Accordingly he proceeded at once to put his forces in motion, at the same time communicating his intended march to the bishops who happened to be at his court, some of whom he judged it right to take with him as companions, and as needful coadjutors in the service of God. They, on the other hand, cheerfully declared their willingness to follow in his train, disclaiming any desire to leave him, and engaging to battle with and for him by supplication to God on his behalf. Full of joy at this answer to his request, he unfolded to them his projected line of march,³³⁵⁶ after which he caused a tent of great splendor, representing in shape the figure of a church, to be prepared for his own use in the approaching war. In this he intended to unite with the bishops in offering prayers to the God from whom all victory proceeds.

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³³⁵⁵ Compare remarks in Prolegomena, under *Writings and Character*.

³³⁵⁶ From this point to the end of the first sentence in ch. 58 is bracketed by Heinichen.

Chapter LVII.—*How he received an Embassy from the Persians and kept the Night Vigil with others at the Feast of Easter.*

In the meanwhile the Persians, hearing of the emperor's warlike preparations, and not a little terrified at the prospect of an engagement with his forces, dispatched an embassy to pray for conditions of peace. These overtures the emperor, himself a sincere lover of peace, at once accepted, and readily entered on friendly relations with that people. At this time, the great festival of Easter was at hand; on which occasion he rendered the tribute of his prayers to God, and passed the night in watching with the rest.

Chapter LVIII.—*Concerning the Building of a Church in Honor of the Apostles at Constantinople.*

After this he proceeded to erect a church in memory of the apostles, in the city which bears his name. This building he carried to a vast height, and brilliantly decorated by encasing it from the foundation to the roof with marble slabs of various colors. He also formed the inner roof of finely fretted work, and overlaid it throughout with gold. The external covering, which protected the building from the rain, was of brass instead of tiles; and this too was splendidly and profusely adorned with gold, and reflected the sun's rays with a brilliancy which dazzled the distant beholder. The dome was entirely encompassed by a finely carved tracery, wrought in brass and gold.

Chapter LIX.—*Farther Description of the same Church.*

Such was the magnificence with which the emperor was pleased to beautify this church. The building was surrounded by an open area of great extent, the four sides of which were terminated by porticos which enclosed the area and the church itself. Adjoining these porticos were ranges of stately chambers, with baths and promenades, and besides many apartments adapted to the use of those who had charge of the place.

Chapter LX.—*He also erected his own Sepulchral Monument in this Church.*

All these edifices the emperor consecrated with the desire of perpetuating the memory of the apostles of our Saviour. He had, however, another object in erecting this building: an object at first unknown, but which afterwards became evident to all. He had in fact made choice of this spot in the prospect of his own death, anticipating with extraordinary fervor of faith that his body would share their title with the apostles themselves, and that he should thus even after death become the

subject, with them, of the devotions which should be performed to their honor in this place. He accordingly caused twelve coffins to be set up in this church, like sacred pillars in honor and memory of the apostolic number, in the center of which his own was placed, having six of theirs on either side of it. Thus, as I said, he had provided with prudent foresight an honorable resting-place for his body after death, and, having long before secretly formed this resolution, he now consecrated this church to the apostles, believing that this tribute to their memory would be of no small advantage to his own soul. Nor did God disappoint him of that which he so ardently expected and desired. For after he had completed the first services of the feast of Easter, and had passed this sacred day of our Lord in a manner which made it an occasion of joy and gladness to himself and to all; the God through whose aid he performed all these acts, and whose zealous servant he continued to be even to the end of life, was pleased at a happy time to translate him to a better life.

Chapter LXI.—*His Sickness at Helenopolis, and Prayers respecting his Baptism.*

At first he experienced some slight bodily indisposition, which was soon followed by positive disease. In consequence of this he visited the hot baths of his own city; and thence proceeded to that which bore the name of his mother. Here he passed some time in the church of the martyrs, and offered up supplications and prayers to God. Being at length convinced that his life was drawing to a close, he felt the time was come at which he should seek purification from sins of his past career, firmly believing that whatever errors he had committed as a mortal man, his soul would be purified from them through the efficacy of the mystical words and the salutary waters of baptism.³³⁵⁷ Impressed with these thoughts, he poured forth his supplications and confessions to God, kneeling on the pavement in the church itself, in which he also now for the first time received the imposition of hands with prayer.³³⁵⁸ After this he proceeded as far as the suburbs of Nicomedia, and there, having summoned the bishops to meet him, addressed them in the following words.

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³³⁵⁷ Literally “salutary word of cleansing,” but the paraphrase of *Bag.* will stand well whichever of the readings, “salutary cleansing,” or “salutary word of cleansing,” is adopted.

³³⁵⁸ [These words seem to prove that the emperor now first became a catechumen. His postponement of baptism until his last illness (after having stood forward so long as the public advocate and protector of the Christian religion), and the superstitious reliance which he was encouraged to place on the late performance of this “mysterious” rite, afford an evidence of the melancholy obscuration of Christian truth at the very time when Christianity was ostensibly becoming the religion of the Roman Empire. There is probably too much truth in the following remarks of Gibbon: “The pride of Constantine, who refused the privileges of a catechumen, cannot easily be explained or excused: but the delay of his baptism maybe justified by the maxims and practice of ecclesiastical antiquity. The sacrament of baptism was supposed to contain a full and absolute expiation of sin; and the soul was instantly restored to its original purity, and entitled to the promise of eternal salvation. Among the proselytes of Christianity, there were many who judged it imprudent to precipitate a salutary rite, which could not be repeated; to throw away an inestimable

Chapter LXII.—*Constantine's Appeal to the Bishops, requesting them to confer upon him the Rite of Baptism.*

“The time is arrived which I have long hoped for, with an earnest desire and prayer that I might obtain the salvation of God. The hour is come in which I too may have the blessing of that seal which confers immortality; the hour in which I may receive the seal of salvation. I had thought to do this in the waters of the river Jordan, wherein our Saviour, for our example, is recorded to have been baptized: but God, who knows what is expedient for us, is pleased that I should receive this blessing here. Be it so, then, without delay:³³⁵⁹ for should it be his will who is Lord of life and death, that my existence here should be prolonged, and should I be destined henceforth to associate with the people of God, and unite with them in prayer as a member of his Church, I will prescribe to myself from this time such a course of life as befits his service.” After he had thus spoken, the prelates performed the sacred ceremonies in the usual manner, and, having given him the necessary instructions, made him a partaker of the mystic ordinance. Thus was Constantine the first of all sovereigns who was regenerated and perfected in a church dedicated to the martyrs of Christ; thus gifted with the Divine seal of baptism, he rejoiced in spirit, was renewed, and filled with heavenly light: his soul was gladdened by reason of the fervency of his faith, and astonished at the manifestation of the power of God. At the conclusion of the ceremony he arrayed himself in shining imperial vestments, brilliant as the light,³³⁶⁰ and reclined on a couch of the purest white, refusing to clothe himself with the purple any more.

Chapter LXIII.—*How after his Baptism he rendered Thanks to God.*

He then lifted his voice and poured forth a strain of thanksgiving to God; after which he added these words. “Now I know that I am truly blessed: now I feel assured that I am accounted worthy of immortality, and am made a partaker of Divine light.” He further expressed his compassion for

privilege, which could never be recovered,” &c. (*Decline and Fall*, ch. 20).—*Bag.*] On the forms of admission to the catechumenate, compare Marriott, *Baptism*, in Smith and Cheetham, *Dict.*

³³⁵⁹ Or “no hesitation.” On this clause a deal of controversy has hinged. “No hesitation shall longer prevail” is the rendering of *Molz.*, and Keim (*Uebertritt* C. p. 1) similarly gives “let all duplicity be banished.” In the view of this translation, Constantine had been hedging all his life, trying to be Christian to Christians and heathen to heathen. The basis of the hypothesis is too slight for it to have any weight in view of the overwhelming documentary evidence of the frequent public professions of Christianity by Constantine, for which see Prolegomena, under *Character*. Discussion of various points relating to his baptism will be found under *Literature*, under the names Busæus, Castelli, Dalhus, Frimelius Fuhrmann, Guidi, Halloix, Hynitzsch, Jacobus of Sarug, Nicolai, Polus, Schelstrate, Scultetus, Tentzel, Walther, Withof.

³³⁶⁰ [It was customary for neophytes to wear white garments, which they laid aside on the eighth day from their baptism.—*Bag.*]

the unhappy condition of those who were strangers to such blessings as he enjoyed: and when the tribunes and generals of his army appeared in his presence with lamentations and tears at the prospect of their bereavement, and with prayers that his days might yet be prolonged, he assured them in reply that he was now in possession of true life; that none but himself could know the value of the blessings he had received; so that he was anxious rather to hasten than to defer his departure to God. He then proceeded to complete the needful arrangement of his affairs, bequeathing an annual donation to the Roman inhabitants of his imperial city; apportioning the inheritance of the empire, like a patrimonial estate, among his own children; in short, making every disposition according to his own pleasure.³³⁶¹



Chapter LXIV.—*Constantine's Death at Noon on the Feast of Pentecost.*

All these events occurred during a most important festival, I mean the august and holy solemnity of Pentecost, which is distinguished by a period of seven weeks, and sealed with that one day on which the holy Scriptures attest, the ascension of our common Saviour into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit among men. In the course of this feast the emperor received the privileges I have described; and on the last day of all, which one might justly call the feast of feasts, he was removed about mid-day to the presence of his God, leaving his mortal remains to his fellow mortals, and carrying into fellowship with God that part of his being which was capable of understanding and loving him.³³⁶² Such was the close of Constantine's mortal life. Let us now attend to the circumstances which followed this event.

Chapter LXV.—*Lamentations of the Soldiery and their Officers.*

Immediately the assembled spearmen and body-guard rent their garments, and prostrated themselves on the ground, striking their heads, and uttering lamentations and cries of sorrow, calling on their imperial lord and master, or rather, like true children, on their father, while their tribunes and centurions addressed him as their preserver, protector, and benefactor. The rest of the soldiery also came in respectful order to mourn as a flock the removal of their good shepherd. The people meanwhile ran wildly throughout the city, some expressing the inward sorrow of their hearts by

³³⁶¹ The idea of ownership in empire which seems so strange in these days of republics, and is disallowed even by theoretical monarchists, seems to have been a most matter-of-course one in the mind of Constantine, and Eusebius was a true imperialist regarding "tyranies" and "republics" as in the same category. Whether it was by "divine right" or "natural right" they were quite sure it was a "right," and one to be freely exercised.

³³⁶² Compare Prolegomena, *Life, Last Years*; also for age at time of death, Prolegomena, p. 411, *note*.

loud cries, others appearing confounded with grief: each mourning the event as a calamity which had befallen himself, and bewailing his death as though they felt themselves bereft of a blessing common alike to all.

Chapter LXVI.—*Removal of the Body from Nicomedia to the Palace at Constantinople.*

After this the soldiers lifted the body from its couch, and laid it in a golden coffin, which they enveloped in a covering of purple, and removed to the city which was called by his own name. Here it was placed in an elevated position in the principal chamber of the imperial palace, and surrounded by candles burning in candlesticks of gold, presenting a marvelous spectacle, and such as no one under the light of the sun had ever seen on earth since the world itself began. For in the central apartment of the imperial palace, the body of the emperor lay in its elevated resting-place, arrayed in the symbols of sovereignty, the diadem and purple robe, and encircled by a numerous retinue of attendants, who watched around it incessantly night and day.

Chapter LXVII.—*He received the same Honors from the Counts and other Officers as before his Death.*

The military officers, too, of the highest rank, the counts, and the whole order of magistrates, who had been accustomed to do obeisance to their emperor before, continued to fulfill this duty without any change, even after his death entering the chamber at the appointed times, and saluting their coffined sovereign with bended knee, as though he were still alive. After them the senators appeared, and all who had been distinguished by any honorable office, and rendered the same homage. These were followed by multitudes of every rank, who came with their wives and children to witness the spectacle. These honors continued to be rendered for a considerable time, the soldiers having resolved thus to guard the body until his sons should arrive, and take on themselves the conduct of their father's funeral. No mortal had ever, like this blessed prince, continued to reign even after death, and to receive the same homage as during his life: he only, of all who have ever lived, obtained this reward from God: a suitable reward, since he alone of all sovereigns had in all his actions honored the Supreme God and his Christ, and God himself accordingly was pleased that even his mortal remains should still retain imperial authority among men; thus indicating to all who were not utterly devoid of understanding the immortal and endless empire which his soul was destined to enjoy. This was the course of events here.

Chapter LXVIII.—*Resolution of the Army to confer thence-forward the Title of Augustus on his Sons.*

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Meanwhile the tribunes selected from the troops under their command those officers whose fidelity and zeal had long been known to the emperor, and dispatched them to the Cæsars with intelligence of the late event. This service they accordingly performed. As soon, however, as the soldiery throughout the provinces received the tidings of the emperor's decease, they all, as if by a supernatural impulse, resolved with one consent, as though their great emperor had been yet alive, to acknowledge none other than his sons as sovereigns of the Roman world: and these they soon after determined should no longer retain the name of Cæsar, but should each be honored with the title of Augustus, a name which indicates the highest supremacy of imperial power. Such were the measures adopted by the army; and these resolutions they communicated to each other by letter, so that the unanimous desire of the legions became known at the same point of time throughout the whole extent of the empire.

Chapter LXIX.—*Mourning for Constantine at Rome; and the Honor paid him there through Paintings after his Death.*

On the arrival of the news of the emperor's death in the imperial city, the Roman senate and people felt the announcement as the heaviest and most afflictive of all calamities, and gave themselves up to an excess of grief. The baths and markets were closed, the public spectacles, and all other recreations in which men of leisure are accustomed to indulge, were interrupted. Those who had erewhile lived in luxurious ease, now walked the streets in gloomy sadness, while all united in blessing the name of the deceased, as the one who was dear to God, and truly worthy of the imperial dignity. Nor was their sorrow expressed only in words: they proceeded also to honor him, by the dedication of paintings to his memory, with the same respect as before his death. The design of these pictures embodied a representation of heaven itself, and depicted the emperor reposing in an ethereal mansion above the celestial vault. They too declared his sons alone to be emperors and Augusti, and begged with earnest entreaty that they might be permitted to receive the body of their emperor, and perform his obsequies in the imperial city.

Chapter LXX.—*His Burial by his Son Constantius at Constantinople.*

Thus did they there testify their respect for the memory of him who had been honored by God. The second of his sons, however, who had by this time arrived, proceeded to celebrate his father's funeral in the city which bears his name, himself heading the procession, which was preceded by

detachments of soldiers in military array, and followed by vast multitudes, the body itself being surrounded by companies of spearmen and heavy armed infantry. On the arrival of the procession at the church dedicated to the apostles of our Saviour, the coffin was there entombed. Such honor did the youthful emperor Constantius render to his deceased parent, both by his presence, and by the due performance of this sacred ceremony.

Chapter LXXI.—*Sacred Service in the Church of the Apostles on the Occasion of Constantine's Funeral.*

As soon as [Constantius] had withdrawn himself with the military train, the ministers of God came forward, with the multitude and the whole congregation of the faithful, and performed the rites of Divine worship with prayer. At the same time the tribute of their praises was given to the character of this blessed prince, whose body rested on a lofty and conspicuous monument, and the whole multitude united with the priests of God in offering prayers for his soul, not without tears,—nay, rather with much weeping; thus performing an office consonant with the desires of the pious deceased.³³⁶³ In this respect also the favor of God was manifested to his servant, in that he not only bequeathed the succession of the empire to his own beloved sons, but that the earthly tabernacle of his thrice blessed soul, according to his own earnest wish, was permitted to share the monument of the apostles; was associated with the honor of their name, and with that of the people of God; was honored by the performance of the sacred ordinances and mystic service; and enjoyed a participation in the prayers of the saints. Thus, too, he continued to possess imperial power even after death, controlling, as though with renovated life, a universal dominion, and retaining in his own name, as Victor, Maximus, Augustus, the sovereignty of the Roman world.³³⁶⁴

Chapter LXXII.—*Of the Phœnix.*

We cannot compare him with that bird of Egypt, the only one, as they say, of its kind, which dies, self-sacrificed, in the midst of aromatic perfumes, and, rising from its own ashes with new life, soars aloft in the same form which it had before. Rather did he resemble his Saviour, who, as the sown corn which is multiplied from a single grain, had yielded abundant increase through the blessing of God, and had overspread the whole world with his fruit. Even so did our thrice blessed prince become multiplied, as it were, through the succession of his sons. His statue was erected

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³³⁶³ [Alluding to his desire of being buried in the church of the apostles, and sharing their honors, as noticed in ch. 60.—*Bag.*]

³³⁶⁴ [It appears that an interregnum of about three months took place, during which all the laws and edicts continued to be issued in the name of Constantine, as before his death.—*Bag.*]

along with theirs in every province; and the name of Constantine was owned and honored even after the close of his mortal life.

Chapter LXXIII.—*How Constantine is represented on Coins in the Act of ascending to Heaven.*

A coinage was also struck which bore the following device. On one side appeared the figure of our blessed prince, with the head closely veiled: the reverse exhibited him sitting as a charioteer, drawn by four horses, with a hand stretched downward from above to receive him up to heaven.

Chapter LXXIV.—*The God whom he had honored deservedly honored him in Return.*

Such are the proofs by which the Supreme God has made it manifest to us, in the person of Constantine, who alone of all sovereigns had openly professed the Christian faith, how great a difference he perceives between those whose privilege it is to worship him and his Christ, and those who have chosen the contrary part, who provoked his enmity by daring to assail his Church, and whose calamitous end, in every instance, afforded tokens of his displeasure, as manifestly as the death of Constantine conveyed to all men an evident assurance of his Divine love.

Chapter LXXV.—*He surpassed all Preceding Emperors in Devotion to God.*

Standing, as he did, alone and pre-eminent among the Roman emperors as a worshiper of God; alone as the bold proclaimer to all men of the doctrine of Christ; having alone rendered honor, as none before him had ever done, to his Church; having alone abolished utterly the error of polytheism, and discountenanced idolatry in every form: so, alone among them both during life and after death, was he accounted worthy of such honors as none can say have been attained to by any other; so that no one, whether Greek or Barbarian, nay, of the ancient Romans themselves, has ever been presented to us as worthy of comparison with him.³³⁶⁵

³³⁶⁵ The sharp sarcasms of Julian's *Cæsars* seem almost to have taken their text from this challenge. He marshals the great emperors before the gods, where each presents his claim to greatness. Constantine is greatly ridiculed, and yet to choose between Julian and Eusebius, if regard is had to Constantine's real effect on world history, Eusebius is the truer judge, and is at least not so far wrong that his superlative enthusiasm for his imperial friend cannot be readily pardoned.