

**Eusebius of Caesarea**  
**The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine**

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**BOOK I.**

10 CHAPTER I: Preface. - Of the Death of Constantine.  
 ALREADY 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  
 15 ministers, and greeted him with the due mead of praise on the twentieth anniversary of his reign: 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.  
 But now, while I desire 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  
 20 extraordinary spectacle before me. For to whatever quarter I direct my view, whether to the east, or to the west, or over the 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, and himself still living and  
 25 powerful, and governing all the affairs of men more completely than ever before,

being multiplied in the succession of his children. They had indeed previously the dignity of Caesars; 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.

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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. 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 thought 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 saying.

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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, 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.

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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 painting; some have carved statues from lifeless blocks of wood; while others, by engraving their inscriptions deep on tablets 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.

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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 him at the commencement, during the course, 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.

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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. 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 giants 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

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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.

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, and yet retained his power, undisturbed, to the very close of his life.

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, 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.

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. 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.

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 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, governors, 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

160 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.

165 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  
170 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 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  
175 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  
180 acquaintance and society?

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  
185 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. 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  
190 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.

195 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  
200 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.

205 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 opportunity for celebrating in every way the praises of  
this truly blessed prince, which hitherto we have been unable to do, on the ground  
210 that we are forbidden to judge any one blessed before his death, 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.

215 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  
220 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  
225 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,  
230 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. 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,  
but young as he was did not share the manner of life of the ungodly: for from that  
235 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 Constantius (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  
240 particulars, which tell to the honor of his son.

CHAPTER XIII: Of Constantius his Father, who refused to imitate Diocletian, Maximian,  
and Maxentius, in their Persecution of the Christians.

AT a time when four emperors shared the administration of the Roman empire,  
245 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, he kept his hands pure  
from their abominable impiety, and never in any respect resembled them. They polluted  
250 their provinces by the indiscriminate slaughter of godly men and women; but he kept  
his soul free from the stain of this crime. The 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  
255 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  
260 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,  
265 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  
270 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  
275 nations under his dominion, 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  
280 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 emperor 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  
285 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

290 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.

295 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. 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.

305 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.  
310 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.

330 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, he passed the remainder of his life in remarkable repose and tranquility, in the enjoyment of what is counted blessedness, - neither molesting others nor being molested ourselves.

340 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 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, it was not allowable to have any dealings with the worshipers of God, even so far as to exchange a word with them.

350 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.  
355 From that time Constantius alone received the honors of chief Augustus, having been

previously, indeed, distinguished by the diadem of the imperial Caesars, 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  
360 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,  
365 and ready to receive the imperial power from his hands.

CHAPTER XIX: Of his Son Constantine, who in his Youth accompanied Diocletian into Palestine.

THE latter had been with his father's imperial colleagues, and had passed his life among them, as we have said, like God's ancient prophet. And even in the very  
370 earliest period of his youth he 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, 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  
375 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 mental qualities than for his superior physical endowments; being gifted in the first place with a sound judgment, and having also reaped the advantages of a liberal education. He was also  
380 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.

THE emperors then in power, observing his manly and vigorous figure and superior  
385 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; in this respect again keeping up his resemblance to the great prophet Moses. Indeed, in every  
390 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.

IMMEDIATELY, therefore, on his escape from the plots which had been thus insidiously  
395 laid for him, he made his way with all haste to his father, and arrived at length at the very time that he was lying at the point of death. 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  
400 thanks to God, saying that he now thought death better than the longest life, 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, to his eldest son, and breathed his last.

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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  
410 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  
415 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. 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  
420 filled with joy and inexpressible gladness at not being even for a moment deprived of the benefits of a well ordered government.

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.

425 CHAPTER XXIII: A Brief Notice of the Destruction of the Tyrants.

430 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, 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.

435 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.

440 CHAPTER XXV: Victories of Constantine over the and the Britons.

445 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. 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, which lie in the very bosom of the ocean. These he 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.

455 [De Griekse tekst I, 26-31 kan gelezen worden op

[http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/main/eusebiusofcaes/constantine\\_and\\_the\\_sign\\_of\\_the\\_cross.shtml](http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/main/eusebiusofcaes/constantine_and_the_sign_of_the_cross.shtml)]

CHAPTER XXVI: How he resolved to deliver Rome from Maxentius.

460 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, he said that life was without enjoyment to him as long as he saw the imperial city thus afflicted, and prepared himself for the overthrow of the tyranny.

470 CHAPTER XXVII: That after reflecting on the Dawn fall of those who had worshiped Idols, he made Choice of Christianity.

475 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, 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 inquiry, 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 formal I 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 to him, on the other hand, manifestations of his power and very many tokens: and considering farther that those who had already  
490 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 them had shamefully retreated from the contest without a blow, and the other, being slain in the midst of his own troops, became, as it were, the mere sport of death);  
495 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  
500 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  
505 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, 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-  
510 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.

CHAPTER XXIX: How the Christ of God appeared to him in his Sleep, and commanded him  
515 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  
520 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.  
525 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.

CHAPTER XXXI: A Description of the Standard of the Cross, which the Romans now call  
530 the Labarum. 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  
535 whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this, 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: and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period. From the cross-  
540 bar of the spear was suspended a cloth, 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, bore a golden half-length portrait of the pious emperor and his children on its upper  
545 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.

CHAPTER XXXII: How Constantine received Instruction, and read the Sacred Scriptures.  
550 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 inquired who that God was, and what was intended by

555 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, 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  
560 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.  
565 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.

570 FOR the who had tyrannically possessed himself of the imperial city, 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  
575 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. 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 lives to death than yield their persons to be defiled by  
580 him.

CHAPTER XXXIV: How the Wife of a Prefect slew herself for Chastity's Sake.

585 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  
590 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.

595 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  
600 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,  
605 multitudes of them suffered death.

CHAPTER XXXVI: Magic Arts of Maxentius against Constantine; and Famine at Rome.

610 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  
615 such as our contemporaries do not remember ever before to have existed at Rome.

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



620 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.

625 And whereas, Maxentius, trusting more in his magic arts than in the affection of his subjects, dared not even advance outside the city gates, but had guarded every place and district and city subject to his tyranny, with large bodies of soldiers, 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, and made his way into the very interior of Italy.

630 CHAPTER XXXVIII: Death of Maxentius on the Bridge of the Tiber.

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 secret cords, a long way outside the gates. And now those  
635 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  
640 chariot-captains are drowned in the Red Sea," - so at this time Maxentius, and the soldiers and guards with him, "went down into the depths like stone," 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 ca-snaring thereby  
645 him who was beloved by God. For his God stood by the one to protect him, while the other, godless, 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." Thus, in the present instance, under  
650 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. 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." So that they who thus obtained  
655 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 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  
660 wonders?"

CHAPTER XXXIX: Constantine's Entry into Rome.

HAVING then at this time sung these and suchlike praises to God, the Ruler of all and  
665 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,  
670 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:but, being sensible that he had received help from God, he immediately rendered a thanksgiving to him as the Author of his victory.

675 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 engraved in indelible  
680 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 engraved on it in the Latin language: BY VIRTUE OF THIS SALUTARY SIGN, WHICH IS THE TRUE TEST OF VALOR, I  
685 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.

CHAPTER XLI: Rejoicings throughout the Provinces; and Constantine's Acts of Grace.

690 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  
695 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  
700 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.

705 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  
710 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, and embellishing the august sanctuaries of the church with  
715 abundant offerings.

CHAPTER XLIII: Constantine's Liberality to the Poor.

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  
720 on him; 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,  
725 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  
730 first bestowing on the brides such portions as it was fitting they should bring to  
the communion of marriage. 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  
735 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.

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  
740 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  
745 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 and conciliatory temper, received his high approbation, for he  
evidently delighted in a general harmony of sentiment; while he regarded the  
750 unyielding wills aversion.

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. 755 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; some evil spirit, as it seems probable, being jealous of the present 760 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 765 madmen is as great folly as to sympathize with their condition is supreme philanthropy.

CHAPTER XLVI: Victories over the Barbarians.

THUS the emperor in all his actions honored God, the Controller of all things, and exercised an unwearied oversight over His churches. And God requited him, by subduing 770 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. 775

CHAPTER XLVII: Death of Maximin, who 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 780 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. 785 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 790 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 795 thanksgiving to God, the King of all, as sacrifices without flame or smoke. And from this employment he derived much pleasure: not so from the tidings he received of the ravages committed in the Eastern provinces. 800

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 805 pious emperor: so that the Roman empire, divided into two parts, seemed to all men to resemble night and day; since darkness overspread the 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 connection 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 810 eyes, rather than to maintain amicable relations with him who was his superior. 815

CHAPTER I: How Licinius attempted a Conspiracy against Constantine.

820 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. But  
825 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,  
830 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.

835

CHAPTER LI: Intrigues of Licinius against the Bishops, and his Prohibition of Synods.

840 AND at first he made secret inquiry 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 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  
845 of affairs of common interest, 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  
850 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.

855 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,  
860 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  
865 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.

CHAPTER LIII: Edict that Women should not meet with the Men in the Churches.

870 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  
875 churches. He ordered that the usual congregations of the people should be held in 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.

880 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

885 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  
890 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  
895 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.

CHAPTER LV: The Lawless Conduct and Covetousness of Licinius.

900 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  
905 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  
910 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 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  
915 enlarge on these subjects, since the enormity of his last actions causes the former  
to appear trifling and of little moment.

CHAPTER LVI: At length he undertakes to raise a Persecution.

920 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  
925 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.

930 CHAPTER LVII: That Maximian, 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  
935 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,  
940 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, at the  
945 same time enjoining them to perform their customary worship, and to offer up prayers  
on his behalf.

CHAPTER LVIII: That Maximian, who had persecuted the Christians, was compelled to fly, and conceal himself in the Disguise of a Slave.

950 SUCH was the punishment which he underwent who had commenced the persecution. He, 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. The latter had indeed  
955 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  
960 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  
965 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.

He afterwards lurked about the fields and villages in the habit of a slave, hoping he  
970 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  
975 skeleton-like appearance.

CHAPTER LIX: That Maximian, blinded by Disease, issued an Edict in Favor of the Christians.

980 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  
985 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  
990 of error, persisted in the same evil course.

## BOOK II.

CHAPTER I: Secret Persecution by Licinius, who causes Same Bishops to be put to Death at Amasia of Pontus.

995 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  
1000 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  
1005 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  
1010 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  
1015 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.  
1020 These servile governors 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 cause 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  
1025 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: and he would have accomplished his purpose, nor could anything have  
1030 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  
1040 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  
1045 his subjects would only be likely to increase; while, on the other hand, those who suffered from his oppression would thus be forever deprived of all hope of deliverance.

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  
1050 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.  
1060 Now, as soon as the tyrant understood that Constantine's victories over his enemies were secured to him by no other means than the co-operation 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.  
1065 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, inquired 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  
1070 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 priests 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  
1075 for battle.

CHAPTER V: What Licinius, while sacrificing in a Grove, said concerning Idols, and concerning Christ.

1080 AND when he was now ready to engage, he desired the most approved of his body-guard 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:

1085 "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

1090 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

1095 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

1100 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. And as soon as he had

1105 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.

1110 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 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

1115 coming to pass. For as soon as the armies were ready to engage, he who had broken through the ties of friendly alliance 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.

1125 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 charm against disasters: at which the combatants were divinely inspired, as it were, with fresh strength and courage, and immediate victory was the result.

1130 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 intrusted 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

1135 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.

1140 CHAPTER IX: That One of the Cross-bearers, who fled from his Post, was slain: while Another, who faithfully stood his Ground, was preserved.

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



1145 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  
1150 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,  
1155 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, too, I am indebted to the emperor's own  
1155 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: Furious Battles, and Constantine's Victories.

1160 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,  
1165 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.

#### CHAPTER XI: Flight, and Magic Arts of Licinius.

1170 IN these circumstances their commander, finding himself bereft of the aid of his  
followers, 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  
1175 escape, and secured his personal safety, for the pious emperor had forbidden his  
soldiers to follow him too closely, 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  
1180 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  
1185 heart.

#### 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  
1190 the tabernacle of the cross 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. He was attended only by a few, whose faith and pious  
devotion he highly esteemed. And this custom he continued to observe whenever he  
1195 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  
1200 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.

1205 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

1210 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  
1215 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.

1220 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  
1225 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.

CHAPTER XV: Treacherous Friendship, and Idolatrous Practices of Licinius.

1230 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, 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  
1235 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 his  
standard, 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  
1240 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.

1245 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  
1250 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  
1255 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  
1260 be the first to commence the contest.

CHAPTER XVII: Constantine's Victory.

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  
1265 single charge 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.

1270 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

1275 true and only God.

CHAPTER XIX: Rejoicings and Festivities.

1280 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, 1285 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, 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 1290 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 1295 countenances, and looks expressive of their inward joy. With processions and hymns of praise they first of all, as they 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 Caesars, 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 1300 future.

CHAPTER XX: Constantine's Enactments in Favor of the Confessors.

1305 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 1310 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 1315 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 1320 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, he likewise freed with the rest.

CHAPTER XXI: His Laws concerning Martyrs, and concerning Ecclesiastical Property.

1325 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 1330 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 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 1335 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.

1340 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]

1345 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.

1350 CHAPTER XXIII: That he declared God to be the Author of his Prosperity: and concerning his Rescripts.

1355 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 expression 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.

1365 CHAPTER XXIV: Law of Constantine respecting Piety towards God, and the Christian Religion.

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS to the inhabitants of the province of Palestine.

1370 "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.

1385 CHAPTER XXV: An Illustration from Ancient Times.

1390 "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?

1400 CHAPTER XXVI: Of Persecuted and Persecutors.

1405 "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

1410 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 suffer-rags. With regard,  
on the other hand, to those who have either dishonorably slighted the principles of  
1415 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  
1420 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.

1420 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  
1425 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. 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  
1430 of punishment in the future world.

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  
1435 disease, and therefore needing powerful and effectual aid; what was the relief, and  
what the remedy which the Divinity 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  
1440 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  
1445 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.

1450 "I said, 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  
1455 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  
1460 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  
1465 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.

1470 CHAPTER XXX: A Law granting Release from Exile, from Service in the Courts, and from  
the Confiscation of Property.

"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  
1475 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  
1480 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.

1485 "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 rill 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  
1490 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  
1495 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.

1500 "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, let them hasten back every one to the  
1505 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.

CHAPTER XXXIII: Concerning those Confessors engaged in Military Service.

1510 "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 tranquility. For it is fair and  
1515 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.

1520 "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 apartments  
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  
1525 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, 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  
1530 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.

CHAPTER XXXV: Of the Inheritance of the Property of Martyrs and Confessors, also of  
those who had suffered Banishment or Confiscation of Property.

1535 "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

1540 of their fortunes; or if the same has 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  
1545 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.

1550 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  
1555 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  
1560 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  
1565 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  
1570 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  
1575 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  
1580 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  
1585 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  
1590 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,  
1595 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  
1600 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

1605 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  
1610 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.

1615 "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  
1620 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.

1625 "AND now, since it appears by the clearest and most convincing evidence, that the  
miseries which ere while 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  
1630 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  
1635 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."

1640

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  
1645 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.

CHAPTER XLIV: That he promoted Christians to Offices of Government, and forbade  
Gentiles in Such Stations to offer Sacrifice.

1650 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  
1655 provincial governors in rank and dignity, and even to those who occupied the highest  
station, and held the authority of the Praetorian Praefecture. If they were  
Christians, they were free to act consistently with their profession; if otherwise,  
the law required them to abstain from idolatrous sacrifices.

1660 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  
1665 way. 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  
1670 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.

1675

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.

1680

"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.

1685

"But now, that liberty is restored, and that serpent 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.

1695

"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 Praetorian Praefect. 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.

1700

CHAPTER XLVII: That he wrote a Letter in Condemnation of Idolatry.

1705

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 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.

1710

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.

1715

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to the people of the Eastern provinces.

1720

"Whatever is comprehended under the sovereign 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 useless 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.

1725

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

1730

CHAPTER XLIX: Concerning Constantine's Pious Father, and the Persecutors Diocletian and Maximian.

1735

"THE former emperors I have been accustomed to regard as those with whom I could have no sympathy, 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 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.

1740

CHAPTER L: That the Persecution originated an Account of the Oracle of Apollo, who, it was said, could not give Oracles because of "the Righteous Men."

1745

"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, and mourned the evils which the loss of the oracular spirit would entail on mankind. But let us mark the consequences of this.

1750

CHAPTER LI: That Constantine, when a Youth, heard from him who wrote the Persecution Edict that "the Righteous Men" were the Christians.

1755

"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 inquiry 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.

1760

CHAPTER LII: The Manifold Forms of Torture and Punishment practiced against the Christians.

1765

"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 character 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.

1770

1775

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 cruel 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.

1780

CHAPTER LIV: What Vengeance overtook those who on Account of the Oracle raised the Persecution.

1785

"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.

1790

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

1795

"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 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

1800

1805 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.

1810 "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 tranquility 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  
1815 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 temples of lies: we have the glorious edifice of thy truth, which thou hast given us as our native home. We pray, however, that they too may receive the same blessing, and thus experience  
1820 that heartfelt joy which unity of sentiment inspires.

CHAPTER LVII: He gives Glory to God, who has given Light by his Son to those who were in Error.

1825 "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  
1830 testimony to all men concerning thyself.

CHAPTER LVIII: He glorifies him again for his Government of the Universe.

1835 "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, 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.

1840 "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  
1845 strife 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.

1850 "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  
1855 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.

CHAPTER LX: An Admonition at the Close of the Edict, that No One should trouble his Neighbor.

1860 "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  
1865 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.  
1870 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."

1875 CHAPTER LXI: How Controversies originated at Alexandria through Matters relating to  
Arius.

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  
superstitious error, and encouraging them in the pursuit of true godliness. But in  
1880 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  
1885 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  
1890 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 in the Alexandrian church, 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  
1895 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.

1900 CHAPTER LXII: Concerning the Same Arius, and the Melitians.

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.  
1905 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.

1910 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  
1915 approved for the sobriety and genuineness of his faith, and who had before this time  
distinguished himself by the boldness of his religious profession, and sent him to  
negotiate peace 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  
1920 may be well to introduce into this our narrative of his life. Its purport was as  
follows.

CHAPTER LXIV: Constantine's Letter to Alexander the Bishop, and Arius the Presbyter.

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Alexander and Arius.  
1925 "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.

1930 "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

1935 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.

1940 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  
1945 some of yourselves to aid in restoring mutual harmony among the disputants, after I  
had removed that common enemy of mankind who had interposed his lawless sentence for  
the prohibition of your holy synods.

CHAPTER LXVII: That Religion began in the East.  
1950 "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 inquiry to seek your aid. As  
1955 soon, therefore, as I had secured my decisive victory and unquestionable triumph over  
my enemies, my first inquiry was concerning that object which I felt to be of  
paramount interest and importance.

CHAPTER LXVIII: Being grieved by the Dissension, he counsels Peace.  
1960 "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 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 inquiry into the  
1965 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 unanimity 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  
1970 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  
1975 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.  
1980 "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, or rather, I should say, that you  
asked them something connected with an unprofitable question, then you, Arius,  
inconsiderately insisted on what ought never to have been conceived at all, or if  
conceived, should have been buried in profound silence. Hence it was that a  
1985 dissension arose between you, fellowship was withdrawn, 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, 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  
1990 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 in trusted to the general ear. For how very few are there  
1995 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,  
2000 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.

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CHAPTER LXX: An Exhortation to Unanimity.

"LET therefore both the unguarded question and the inconsiderate answer receive your mutual forgiveness. 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: you may therefore well join in communion and fellowship.

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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.

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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 tranquility of mind? And I will give you a

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2070 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  
2075 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.

2080 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 man 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  
2085 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.

2090 **BOOK III.**

CHAPTER I: A Comparison of Constantine's Piety with the Wickedness of the  
Persecutors.

2095 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  
2100 had been lately guilty, 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, that these bad but an imaginary existence, and  
exhorted them to acknowledge the only true God. They had derided his Christ with  
2105 words of blasphemy: he assumed that as his safeguard 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  
2110 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  
2115 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 at the  
charge of the imperial treasury. They had strictly forbidden the prelates, anywhere  
2120 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  
2125 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 of his holy martyrs in constant veneration.  
2130 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  
2135 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 magistrates in every province were governed rather by paternal authority than by any constraining.  
2140 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.

2145 CHAPTER II: Father 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.  
2150 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  
2155 rather desired to make it manifest to all that he regarded this as his highest honor, now impressing on his face the salutary sign, and now glorying in it as the trophy which led him on to victory.

CHAPTER III: Of his Picture surmounted by a Cross and having beneath it a Dragon.

2160 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  
2165 sacred oracles in the books of God's prophets have described him as a dragon and a crooked serpent; and for this reason the emperor thus publicly displayed a painted 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  
2170 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  
2175 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." 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.

2180 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 city bishops were engaged in obstinate  
2185 conflict with bishops, and people rising against people; and almost like the fabled Symplegades, 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  
2190 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.  
2195 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, 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  
2200 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  
2205 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  
2210 was disturbing the peace of the Church.

Zie voor de Griekse en Latijnse teksten van de 20 canons van Nicaea  
[http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/main/nicaea/canons\\_of\\_nicaea\\_01.shtml](http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/main/nicaea/canons_of_nicaea_01.shtml)

2215 CHAPTER VI: How he ordered a Council to be held at Nicaea.  
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  
2220 effect: for he allowed some the use of the public means of conveyance, while he afforded to others an ample supply of horses for their transport. The place, too, selected for the synod, the city Nicaea in Bithynia (named from "Victory"), was appropriate to the occasion. As soon then as the imperial injunction was generally made known, all with the utmost willingness hastened thither, as though they would  
2225 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  
2230 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.

2235 CHAPTER VII: Of the General Council, at which Bishops from all Nations were Present.  
IN effect, the most distinguished of God's ministers from all the churches which abounded in Europe, Lybia, and Asia were here assembled. And a single house of prayer, as though divinely enlarged, sufficed to contain at once Syrians and Cilicians, Phoenicians and Arabians, delegates from Palestine, and others from Egypt; Thebans and Libyans, with those who came from the region of Mesopotamia. A Persian  
2240 bishop too was present at this conference, nor was even a Scythian found wanting to the number. Pontus, Galatia, and Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Phrygia, furnished their most distinguished prelates; while those who dwelt in the remotest districts of Thrace 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  
2245 the great assembly. The prelate of the imperial city 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  
2250 apostolic company.

CHAPTER VIII: That the Assembly was composed, as in the days of the Apostles, of  
Individuals from Various Nations.  
FOR it is said that in the Apostles' age, there were gathered "devout men from every  
2255 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  
2260 not all who composed it were ministers of God; but in the present company, the number of bishops exceeded two hundred and fifty, 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.

2265 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. There were among them men whose years demanded  
2270 veneration: others were 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.

2275 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, 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  
2280 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  
2285 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  
2290 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. As soon as he had advanced to the upper end of the seats, at first he  
2295 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.

2300 THE bishop who occupied the chief place in the right division of the assembly 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  
2305 thoughts, in a calm and gentle tone gave utterance to the following words.

CHAPTER XII: Constantine's Address to the Council concerning Peace.

"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  
2310 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  
2315 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,  
2320 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  
2325 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

2330 consecrated to the service of God, to commend to others. Delay not, then, dear  
2335 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."

CHAPTER XIII: How he led the Dissident Bishops to Harmony of Sentiment.

2340 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  
2345 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  
2350 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.

2355 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. Then the emperor,  
believing that he had thus obtained a second victory over the adversary of the  
2360 Church, proceeded to solemnize a triumphal festival in honor of God.

CHAPTER XV: How Constantine entertained the Bishops on the Occasion of his  
Vicennalia.

2365 ABOUT this time he completed the twentieth year of his reign. 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, the circumstances of which were splendid  
beyond description. Detachments of the body-guard and other troops surrounded the  
2370 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. 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.

2380 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 Nicaea.

2385 "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  
2390 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

2395 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.

2400 CHAPTER XVIII: He speaks of their Unanimity respecting the Feast of Easter, and  
against the Practice of the Jews.

"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  
2405 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,  
2410 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  
2415 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. 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,  
2420 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  
2425 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 Sagacities 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  
2430 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'  
2435 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. It is, then, plainly the will of Divine Providence  
(as I suppose you all clearly see), that this usage should receive fitting  
2440 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  
2445 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, in the hope that your Wisdoms will  
2450 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  
2455 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. 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  
2460 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.

2465 "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  
2470 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 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  
ever? where flourish. God preserve you, beloved brethren"  
2475 The emperor transmitted a faithful copy 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.

2480 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  
2485 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 considerably condescend to the weaker, remembering  
that absolute perfection in any case is a rare quality indeed. Each then, should be  
2490 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  
2495 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  
2500 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; and in conclusion he enjoined them to offer diligent supplications to  
2505 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.

2510 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  
2515 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.

2520 AND now, when all else were at peace, among the Egyptians alone an implacable  
contention still raged, so as once more to disturb the emperor's tranquility, 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  
2525 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.

2530 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  
2535 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 dispatches in a separate form, in order that the integrity of our present history may not be impaired by their insertion.

2540 CHAPTER XXV: How he ordered the Erection of a Church at Jerusalem, in the Holy Place of our Saviour's Resurrection.

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  
2545 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.

2550 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  
2555 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  
2560 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.

2575 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  
2580 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.

2590 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

2595 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.

2600 CHAPTER XXVIII: Discovery of the Most Holy Sepulchre.

2605 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.

2610 CHAPTER XXIX: How he wrote concerning the Erection of a Church, both to the Governors of the Provinces, and to the Bishop Macarius.

2615 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 dispatched 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.

2625 CHAPTER XXX: Constantine's Letter to Macarius respecting the Building of the Church of our Saviour.

"VICTOR CONSTANTIUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Macarius.

2630 "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 him 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.

2650 CHAPTER XXXI: That the Building should surpass all the Churches in the World in the Beauty of its Walls, its Columns, and Marbles.

2655 "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 Praetorian Praefects, 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

2660 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.

2665 CHAPTER XXXII: That he instructed the Governors concerning the Beautifying of the Roof; also concerning Workmen, and Materials.

"WITH respect to the ceiling of the church, I wish to know from you whether in your judgment it should be panel-ceiled, 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!"

2675 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, 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.

2690 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, anti profusely enriched with the most splendid decorations of every kind.

2695 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.

2700 CHAPTER XXXVI: Description of the Walls, Roof, Decoration, and Gilding of the Body of the Church.

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; and, being overlaid throughout with the purest gold, caused the entire building to glitter as it were with rays of light.

2715 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, 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 piles of stone beautifully adorned on the surface. Three gates, placed exactly east, were intended to receive the multitudes who entered the church.

2720 CHAPTER XXXVIII: Description of the Hemisphere, the Twelve Columns, and their Bowls. OPPOSITE these gates the crowning part of the whole was the hemisphere, which rose to



2725 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.

2730 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, 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.

2740 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.

2745 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, who had been the instrument of conferring so valuable a benefit on mankind.

2755 CHAPTER XLII: That the Empress Helena, Constantine'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 Caesars, 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 says "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.

2770 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 cave of the earth, and the place of his nativity was called Bethlehem by the Hebrews.

2775 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. 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 2785 the two mystic caverns these 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 2790 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.

2795 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.

2805 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. 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, 2810 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.

2815 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 Caesars his sons, 2820 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 2825 angelic essence, was received up into her Saviour's presence.

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 2830 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 2835 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. He had 2840 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 2845 honor from children to their parents. In this manner, then, the emperor executed in Palestine the noble works I have 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.

2850 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 2855 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,

2860 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.

2865 CHAPTER XLIX: Representation of the Cross in the Palace, and of Daniel at the Public Fountains.

2870 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 tablet 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.

2875 CHAPTER L: That he erected Churches in Nicomedia, and in Other Cities.

2880 HAVING thus embellished the city which bore his name, he next distinguished the capital of Bithynia 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.

2890 CHAPTER LI: That he ordered a Church to be built at Mambre.

2895 SUCH was the principal sacred edifices erected by the emperor's command. But having heard that the self-same Saviour who ere while had appeared on earth had in ages long since past afforded a manifestation of his Divine presence to holy men of Palestine near the oak of Mambre, 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.

2905 CHAPTER LII: Constantine's Letter to Eusebius concerning Mambre.

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Macarius, and the rest of the bishops in Palestine.

2910 "One benefit, and that of no ordinary importance, has been conferred on us by my truly pious mother-in-law, 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?

2915 CHAPTER LIII: That the Saviour appeared in this Place to Abraham.

2920 "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 idols 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 Gravities 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; 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 learned 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 Phoenicia.

2990 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  
2995 a hidden and fatal snare of souls in the province of Phoenicia. 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  
3000 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  
3005 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  
3010 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.

3015 CHAPTER LVI: Destruction of the Temple of Aesculapius at Aegae.

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  
3020 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  
3025 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  
3030 security, any more than when, as is told in myth, he was scorched by the lightning's  
stroke. 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.

3035 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  
3040 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  
3045 dead men or dry skulls, fraudulently adorned by the arts of magicians, 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  
3050 utterer of oracles, neither god nor prophet, as they had heretofore supposed: nay,  
not 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

3055 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.

3060 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 Phoenician 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

3065 continuation 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

3070 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.

3075 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."

3080

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

3085 himself to combat the greatness of our prosperity, in the expectation, perhaps, that the emperor himself, provoked by our tumults 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

3090 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

3095 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; 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

3100 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. 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

3105 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, through whose intervention peace had been restored, as their own, and exhorted them, consistently

3110 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 Caesarea, but to seek some one else.

3115 "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 religion, and by your own manner of life and zeal on my

3120 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  
3125 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. It may be that you are surprised, and at a loss to  
3130 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 Caesarea, 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  
3135 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 refuseth to  
3140 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  
3145 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  
3150 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  
3155 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  
3160 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 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  
3165 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  
3170 he, who came among you for the purpose of offering disinterested counsel, 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  
3175 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, and received in its place at once sound morality  
3180 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  
3185 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!"

3190 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.

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Eusebius.

3195 "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.

3200 Notwithstanding, your Prudence whose resolve it is to observe the ordinances of God and the apostolic canon of the Church, 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

3205 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!"

3210 CHAPTER LXII: Constantine's Letter to the Council, depreciating the Removal of Eusebius from Caesarea.

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Theodotus, Theodorus, Narcissus, Aetius, Alpheus, and the rest of the bishops who are at Antioch.

3215 "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, Acacius and Strategius, after sufficient investigation I have written to the people of Antioch, suggesting the course which will be at once

3220 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 Caesarea should preside

3225 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 Caesarea in Cappadocia, and George of Arethusa, likewise a presbyter, and appointed to that office by Alexander at Alexandria, are men of tried faith. It

3230 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

3235 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.

3240 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

3245 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." 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

3250 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.

CHAPTER LXIV: Constantine's Edict against the Heretics.

3255 "VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to the heretics.  
"Understand now, by this present statute, ye Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites,  
Paulians, ye who are called Cataphrygians, and all ye who devise and support heresies  
by means of your private assemblies, with what a tissue of falsehood and vanity, with  
3260 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  
3265 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  
3270 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  
3275 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.

3280 "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. 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  
3285 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, 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  
3290 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  
3295 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  
3300 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."

CHAPTER LXVI: How on the Discovery of Prohibited Books among the Heretics, Many of them return to the Catholic Church.

3305 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  
3310 practiced evil and forbidden arts were detected, and, these were ready to secure  
their own safety by dissimulation of every kind. 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  
3315 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

3320 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  
compact in one harmonious whole; and the one catholic Church, at unity with itself,  
3325 shone with full luster, while no heretical or schismatic body anywhere continued to  
exist. 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.

##### 3330 CHAPTER I: How he honored Many by Presents and Promotions.

WHILE thus variously engaged in promoting 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  
3335 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.  
Some received presents in money, others in land; some obtained the Praetorian  
3340 praefecture, 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.

##### 3345 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,  
3350 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 produce free of tribute  
every fourth year. 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  
3355 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  
3360 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.

3365 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 in his  
presence, should be as well satisfied as the gainer of the cause; for he considered  
3370 that non one ought in any case to retire dejected and sorrowful from an interview  
with such a price. 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.

##### 3375 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 Scythian 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  
3380 had actually rendered tribute to the Scythians: and Romans, by an annual payment, had  
confessed themselves servants to barbarians; an indignity which our emperor could not

3385 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.

3390 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,  
3395 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. Those who were capable of serving he  
3400 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.

3405 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  
3410 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  
3415 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, that  
widely-divided 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 goldments embroidered with gold and flowers:  
3420 some appeared with horses, others with shields and long spears, with arrows and bows  
thereby offering their services and alliance for the emperors 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  
3425 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 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  
3430 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  
3435 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.  
3440 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  
3445 by whose Divine power, beginning from the 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

3450 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.

3455 "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: 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 rise of all, should be perverted to serve the lusts of any. His only demand from man is  
3460 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  
3465 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 tranquility of peace.

3470 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  
3475 up their calamities as the most effectual warning to any who desire to follow in their steps. Of the number of these I believe him 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.

3480 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  
3485 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  
3490 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  
3495 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; 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  
3500 them with your wonted humanity and kindness; for by this proof of faith you will secure an immeasurable benefit both to yourself and us."

CHAPTER XIV: How the Zealous Prayers of Constantine procured Peace to the Christians.

3505 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 tranquility 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  
3510 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.

CHAPTER XV: He causes himself to be represented on his Coins, and in his Portraits, in the Attitude of Prayer.

3515 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  
3520 heaven, and the hands outspread as if in prayer.

CHAPTER XVI: He forbids by Law the Plating his Likeness in Idol Temples.

3525 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.

3530 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.

3535

CHAPTER XVIII: He enjoins the General Observance of the Lord's Day, and the Day of Preparation.

3540 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  
3545 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  
3550 achieved on that day. 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), 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.

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CHAPTER XIX: That he directed even his Pagan Soldiers to pray on the Lord's Day.

3560 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 learned. 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 on whom they should call as the Author of victory, their Preserver, Guardian, and Helper. The emperor himself  
3565 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.

3570 "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." by his troops, and such the prayer they were instructed to offer up to God.

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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

3580 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, 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. 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. 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 emperors command, to respect the days commemorative of martyrs, and duly to emperorsentire 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 heating 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." And copal[?] 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. 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 rose higher than ever before, 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 stature, 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

3645 disappointed of their hope by bodily infirmity. Others continue childless, not from  
any dislike of posterity, but because their ardent love of philosophy 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  
3650 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  
3655 chastisement, but especial admiration. On such 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 occasioned many fraudulent attempts to hinder the  
intentions of the deceased from being carried into full effect. As soon as our  
3660 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.

3665 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  
3670 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  
3675 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  
3680 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  
3685 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  
3690 persons devoted themselves was himself an inmate of their souls.

CHAPTER XXIX: Of Constantine's Discourses and Declamations.

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  
3695 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  
3700 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  
3705 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  
3710 nature of the case; entering next in order on the doctrine of the Divine judgment.

3715 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.

3725 CHAPTER XXX: That he marked out before a Covetous Man the Measure of a Grave, and so put him to Shame.

3730 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." 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.

3740 CHAPTER XXXI: That he was derided because of his Excessive Clemency. 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.

3745 CHAPTER XXXII: Of Constantine's Oration which he wrote to the Assembly of the Saints. 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.

3755 CHAPTER XXXIII: How he listened standing to Eusebius' Declamation in Honor of our Saviour's Sepulchre.

3760 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.

3775 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.

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CHAPTER XXXV: Constantine's Letter to Eusebius, in praise of his Discourse concerning Easter.

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Eusebius.

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"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. 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

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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 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

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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.

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CHAPTER XXXVI: Constantine's Letter to Eusebius on the Preparation of Copies of the Holy Scriptures.

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"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

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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

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practiced in their art. The catholicus 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 special care that they be completed with as little delay as possible. You have authority also, in virtue of

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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!"

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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. 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.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII: How the Market-town of Gaza was made a City for its Profession of Christianity, and received the Name of Constantia.

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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.

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CHAPTER XXXIX: That a Place in Phoenicia also was made a City, and in Other Cities Idolatry was abolished, and Churches built.

3845 A SIMILAR change was effected in several other cities; for instance, in that town of Phoenicia 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. Numbers, too, in the other provinces, both in the cities and the country, became willing inquirers after the saving knowledge of God; 3850 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 3855 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 Caesars on his Three Sons at the Three Decennial Periods of his Reign, he dedicated the Church at Jerusalem.

3860 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 Caesar about the twentieth, while Constans, the 3865 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. Having thus reared a threefold offspring, a Trinity, 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 3870 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.

3875 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 tranquility of the Egyptian churches. Our divinely favored emperor, however, once more convened a synod composed of many 3880 bishops, and set them as it were in armed array, like 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 3885 Phoenicia, 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 3890 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.

3895 "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 3900 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 3905 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  
3910 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  
3915 presence you desired, that they may share your counsels. I have dispatched 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  
3920 his attendance, a messenger shall be dispatched 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  
3925 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!"

3930 CHAPTER XLIII: Bishops from all the Provinces attended the Dedication of the Church  
at Jerusalem.

NO sooner had these injunctions been carded into effect, than another emissary  
arrived with dispatches from the emperor, and an urgent admonition to the Council to  
hasten their journey to Jerusalem without delay. Accordingly they all took their  
3935 departure from the province of Phoenicia, 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; the Pannonians and Moesians the fairest of God's  
3940 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, Phoenicia and Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, and Libya,  
3945 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, 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.

3950 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  
3955 had been honorably 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  
3960 money and clothing among the naked and destitute, and the multitudes of both sexes  
who suffered from want of food and the common necessaries 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.

3965 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  
3970 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;

3975 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  
3980 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. Thus joyfully was the festival of dedication celebrated in the  
thirtieth year of our emperor's reign.

3985 CHAPTER XLVI: That Eusebius afterwards delivered his Description of the Church of the  
Saviour, and a Tricennial Oration before Constantine himself.

3990 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. 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  
3995 then present, and loaded them with distinctions of every kind.

CHAPTER XLVII: That the Council at Nicaea was held in the Twentieth, the Dedication  
of the Church at Jerusalem in the Thirtieth, Year of Constantine's Reign.

4000 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. The present meeting added luster to the thirtieth anniversary,  
during which the emperor dedicated the church at the sepulchre of our Saviour, as a  
4005 peace-offering to God, the giver of all good.

CHAPTER XLVIII: That Constantine was displeased with one who praised him excessively.

4010 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  
4015 life or in that which is to come, he might be found worthy to be a servant of God.

CHAPTER XLIX: Marriage of his Son Constantius Caesar.

4020 ON the completion of the thirtieth year of his reign he solemnized the marriage of  
his second son, 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.

4025 CHAPTER L: Embassy and Presents from the Indians.

4030 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.

4035 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

4040 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. 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  
4045 approved piety to be their instructors. At the same time he assigned them the most  
accomplished teachers of secular learning, 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  
4050 respectively by captains, tribunes, and generals 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 Caesars were of tender years, they were aided by suitable advisers in  
4055 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  
4060 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  
4065 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. 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  
4070 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 tranquility throughout the empire, God, the dispenser of all  
blessings, judged it to be the fitting time to translate him to a better inheritance,  
4075 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.  
HE completed the time of his reign in two and thirty years, wanting a few months and  
4080 days, 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 fide, endure the fatigues of travel, engage in battle,  
and erect trophies over his conquered enemies, besides gaining those bloodless  
4085 victories by which he was wont to triumph over those who opposed him.

CHAPTER LIV: Of those who abused his Extreme Benevolence for Avarice and Hypocrisy.  
IN like manner his mental qualities reached the highest point of human perfection.  
Indeed he was distinguished by every excellence of character, but especially by  
4090 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  
4095 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  
4100 unworthy of himself, of which envy took advantage to cloud in this respect the luster  
of his character.

CHAPTER LV: Constantine employed himself in Composition of Various Kinds to the Close  
of his Life.  
4105 THESE offenders, however, were soon overtaken 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 his hearers in the sacred doctrines of religion. He was also habitually engaged in legislating both on political and military  
4110 questions; 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  
4115 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,  
4120 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.

4125 CHAPTER LVII: How he took Bishops with him on an Expedition against the Persians, and look 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  
4130 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  
4135 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; 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  
4140 all victory proceeds.

CHAPTER LVIII: 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  
4145 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  
4150 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  
4155 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  
4160 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.  
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CHAPTER LX: He also erected his own Sepulchral Monument in this Church.

4175 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  
4180 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  
4185 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  
4190 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.

4195 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  
4200 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. 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. After this he  
4205 proceeded as far as the suburbs of Nicomedia, and there, having summoned the bishops  
to meet him, addressed them in the following words.

CHAPTER LXII: Constantine's Appeal to the Bishops, requesting them to confer upon him  
the Rite of Baptism.

4210 "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  
4215 knows what is expedient for us, is pleased that I should receive this blessing here.  
Be it so, then, without delay: 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  
4220 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  
4225 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, and reclined on a couch of the purest white,  
refusing to clothe himself with the purple any more.

4230 CHAPTER LXIII: How after his Baptism he rendered Thanks 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."  
4235 He further expressed his compassion for 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

4240 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.

4245 CHAPTER LXIV: Constantinople's Death at Noon on the Feast of Pentecost.

4250 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  
4255 capable of understanding and loving him. 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.

4260 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  
4265 meanwhile ran wildly throughout the city, some expressing the inward sorrow of their  
hearts by 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.

4270 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  
4275 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  
4280 night and day.

CHAPTER LXVII: He received the same Honors from the Counts and other Officers as  
before his Death.

4285 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 confined 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  
4290 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  
4295 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  
4300 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.

4305 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 Caesars 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  
4310 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 Caesar, 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  
4315 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.

4320 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 ere while lived in luxurious  
4325 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  
4330 entreaty that they might be permitted to receive the body of their emperor, and perform his obsequies in the imperial city.

4335 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  
4340 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.

4345 CHAPTER LXXI: Sacred Service in the Church of the Apostles an 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  
4350 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. 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  
4360 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.

4365 CHAPTER LXXII: Of the Phoenix.

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.

4370 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 along with theirs in every province; and the name of Constantine was owned  
and honored even after the close of his mortal life.

4375 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  
4380 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  
4385 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  
4390 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  
4395 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  
4400 presented to us as worthy of comparison with him.

source: <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/vita-constantine.asp>

**Imperial Decrees of Constantine**

from *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 10, Ch. 5

by Eusebius, translated by C.F. Cruse

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*Eusebius (ca. 260-340 C.E.) was the bishop of Caesaria (in Palestine) from 315 until his death, during which time he wrote his Ecclesiastical History. Although not of the highest literary quality, it is an invaluable source of information about the first few centuries of the Christian Church. Book 10, which seems to have been issued in 325, includes the text of the Edict of Milan, itself issued in 313 after the Emperor Constantine's victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The Edict of Milan not only granted Christians religious toleration but also specifically recognized them as a group already owning significant property.*

*Copy of the imperial ordinances, translated from the Latin language.*

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As we long since perceived that religious liberty should not be denied, but that it should be granted to the opinion and wishes of each one to perform divine duties according to his own determination, we had given orders, that each one, and the Christians among the rest, have the liberty to observe the religion of his choice, and his peculiar mode of worship. And as there plainly appeared to be many and different sects added in that edict, in which this privilege was granted them, some of them perhaps, after a little while, on this account shrunk from this kind of attention and observance. Wherefore as I, Constantine and Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, came under favorable auspices to Milan, and took under consideration all affairs that pertained to the public benefit and welfare, these things among the rest appeared to us to be most advantageous and profitable to all. We have resolved among the first thing to ordain those matters by which reverence and worship to the Deity might be exhibited; that is, how we may grant likewise to the Christians, and to all, the free choice to follow that mode of worship which they may wish, that whatsoever divinity and celestial power may exist, may be propitious to us and to all that live under our government. Therefore, we have decreed the following ordinance, as our will, with a salutary and most correct intention, that no freedom at all shall be refused to Christians, to follow or to keep their observances or worship; but that to each one power be granted to devote his mind to that worship which he may think adapted to himself, that the Deity may in all things exhibit to us his accustomed favour and kindness. It was just and consistent that we should write that this was our pleasure, that all exceptions respecting the Christians being completely removed, which were contained in the former epistle, that we sent to your fidelity, and whatever measures were wholly sinister and foreign to our mildness, that these should be altogether annulled; and now that each one of the Christians may freely and without molestation, pursue and follow that course of worship which he has proposed to himself: which, indeed, we have resolved to communicate most fully to your care and diligence, that you may know we have granted liberty and full freedom to the Christians, to observe their own mode of worship; which as your fidelity understands absolutely granted to them by us, the privilege is also granted to others to pursue that worship and religion they wish, which it is obvious is consistent with the peace and tranquillity of our times; that each may have the privilege to select and to worship whatsoever divinity he pleases. But this has been done by us, that we might not appear in any manner to detract any thing from any manner of religion, or any mode of worship. And this we further decree, with respect to the Christians, that the places in which they were formerly accustomed to assemble, concerning which we also formerly wrote to your fidelity, in a different form, that if any persons have purchased these, either from our treasury or from any other one, these shall restore them to the Christians, without money and without demanding any price, without any superadded value, or augmentation, without delay, or hesitancy. And if any have happened to receive these places as presents, that they shall restore them as soon as possible to the Christians, so that if either those that purchased or those that received them as presents, have any thing to request of our munificence, they may go to the provincial governor, as the judge, that provision may also be made for them by our clemency; all which, it will be necessary to be delivered up to the body of Christians, by your care, without any delay. And since the Christians themselves are known to have had not only those places where they were accustomed to meet, but other places also, belonging not to individuals among them, but to the right of the whole body of Christians, you will also command all these, by virtue of the law before mentioned, without any hesitancy, to be restored to these same Christians, that is to their body, and to each conventicle respectively; the aforesaid consideration, to

4470 wit, being observed; namely, that they who as we have said restore them without  
valuation and price, may expect their indemnity from our munificence and liberality.  
In all which it will be incumbent on you, to manifest your exertions as much as  
possible, to the aforesaid body of Christians, that our orders may be most speedily  
accomplished, that likewise in this, provision may be made by our clemency, for the  
4475 preservation of the common and public tranquility. For by these means, as before  
said, the divine favour with regard to us, which we have already experienced in many  
affairs, will continue firm and permanent at all times. But that the purpose of this  
our ordinance and liberality may be extended to the knowledge of all, it is expected  
that these things written by us, should be proposed and published to the knowledge of  
all, that this act of our liberality and kindness may remain unknown to none.

4480 *Copy of another Ordinance which was issued by the Emperors, indicating that the  
benefit was conferred solely on the catholic (universal) church.*

Hail, our most esteemed Anulinus. This is the course of our benevolence; that we wish  
those things that belong justly to others, should not only remain unmolested, but  
4485 should also when necessary be restored, most esteemed Anulinus. Whence it is our  
will, that when thou shalt receive this epistle, if any of those things belonging to  
the catholic church of the Christians in the several cities or other places, are now  
possessed either by the decurions, or any others, these thou shalt cause immediately  
to be restored to their churches. Since we have previously determined, that  
4490 whatsoever these same churches before possessed, shall be restored to their right.  
When, therefore, your fidelity has understood this decree of our orders to be most  
evident and plain, make all haste to restore, as soon as possible, all that belongs  
to the churches, whether gardens or houses, or any thing else, that we may learn thou  
hast attended to, and most carefully observe this our decree. Farewell, most esteemed  
4495 and beloved Anulinus.

*Copy of the Emperor's Epistle, in which he ordains a council of bishops to be held  
at Rome, for the unity and peace of the church.*

4500 Constantine Augustus to Miltiades bishop of Rome, and to Marcus. As many  
communications of this kind have been sent to me from Anulinus, the most illustrious  
proconsul of Africa, in which it is contained that Cæcilianus, the bishop of  
Carthage, was accused, in many respects, by his colleagues in Africa; and as this  
appears to be grievous, that in those provinces which Divine Providence has freely  
entrusted to my fidelity, and in which there is a vast population, the multitude are  
4505 found inclining to deteriorate, and in a manner divided into two parties, and among  
others, that the bishops were at variance; I have resolved that the same Cæcilianus,  
together with ten bishops, who appear to accuse him, and ten others, whom he himself  
may consider necessary for his cause, shall sail to Rome; that you, being present  
there, as also Reticus, Maternus, and Marinus, your colleagues, whom I have  
4510 commanded to hasten to Rome for this purpose, may be heard, as you may understand  
most consistent with the most sacred law. And, that you may have the most perfect  
knowledge of these matters, I have subjoined to my own epistle copies of the writings  
sent to me by Anulinus, and sent them to your aforesaid colleagues; in which your  
gravity will read and consider in what way the aforesaid cause may be most accurately  
4515 investigated and justly decided; since it neither escapes your diligence, that I show  
such regard for the holy catholic church, that I wish you, upon the whole, to leave  
no room for schism or division. May the power of the great God preserve you many  
years, most esteemed.

4520 *Copy of the Epistle in which the Emperor commanded another council to be held, for  
the purpose of removing all the dissensions of the bishops.*

Constantine Augustus to Chrestus bishop of Syracuse. As there were some before who  
perversely and wickedly began to waver in the holy religion and celestial virtue, and  
to abandon the doctrine of the catholic (universal) church, desirous, therefore, of  
4525 preventing such disputes among them, I had thus written, that this subject, which  
appeared to be agitated among them, might be rectified, by delegating certain bishops  
from Gaul, and summoning others of the opposite parties from Africa, who are  
pertinaciously and incessantly contending with one another, that by a careful  
examination of the matter in their presence, it might thus be decided. But since, as  
4530 it happens, some, forgetful of their own salvation, and the reverence due to our most  
holy religion, even now do not cease to protract their own enmity, being unwilling to  
conform to the decision already promulgated, and asserting that they were very few  
that advanced their sentiments and opinions, or else that all points which ought to  
have been first fully discussed not being first examined, they proceeded with too

4535 much haste and precipitancy to give publicity to the decision. Hence it has happened,  
that those very persons who ought to exhibit a brotherly and peaceful unanimity, are  
disgracefully and detestably at variance with one another, and thus give this  
occasion of derision to those that are without, and whose minds are averse to our  
most holy religion. Hence it has appeared necessary to me to provide that this  
4540 matter, which ought to have ceased after the decision was issued by their own  
voluntary agreement, now, at length, should be fully terminated by the intervention  
of many.

Since, therefore, we have commanded many bishops to meet together from different and  
remote places, in the city of Arles, towards the calends of August, I have also  
4545 thought proper to write to thee, that taking a public vehicle from the most  
illustrious Iatronianus, corrector of Sicily, and taking with thee two others of the  
second rank, which thou mayest select, also three servants to afford you services on  
the way; I would have you meet them within the same day at the aforesaid place. That  
by the weight of your authority, and the prudence and unanimity of the rest that  
4550 assemble, this dispute, which has disgracefully continued until the present time, in  
consequence of certain disgraceful contentions, may be discussed, by hearing all that  
shall be alleged by those who are now at variance, whom we have also commanded to be  
present, and thus the controversy be reduced, though slowly, to that faith, and  
observance of religion, and fraternal concord, which ought to prevail. May Almighty  
4555 God preserve thee in safety many years.

[http://wadsworth.com/history\\_d/special\\_features/ilrn\\_legacy/wawclc01c/content/wciv1/readings/eusebius.html](http://wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ilrn_legacy/wawclc01c/content/wciv1/readings/eusebius.html)