

A.T. Jones The Present Truth (UK) Articles 1887-1903

June 24, 1897

"How the Catholic Creed Was Made. The Catholic Church Established under Constantine" The Present Truth 13, 25 , pp. 385-388.

[The "falling away," predicted by the apostle Paul (2 Thess. ii.), very soon after the apostles' days resolved the great body of the professed church into warring factions. Through the second and third centuries rival bishoprics strove for the supremacy. At the opening of the fourth century the last great effort of the old Paganism to overthrow the now was made under Diocletian. The common resistance of this persecution restored a semblance of outward unity to the churches. Following Diocletian there was for eighteen years continuous discord in the Roman State. Rival emperors intrigued and fought one another to get sole control. It was in this struggle that Constantine, who was a pagan, conceived the idea of securing the support of the bishops and the church party. In return for this help he was to favour the churches. The worldly churches, bereft of the power of the Gospel, and ambitious for political power, hailed him as a Divine deliverer. By their help, and by his own ability and unscrupulous use of power, he soon his cause and became sole emperor. And, although guilty of every crime and treachery, even to the murder of his own wife and son, the bishops flattered him in life and deified him at his death, and he is set down in church history as the first Christian emperor.] {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 385.1}

IF the mutual flattery of Constantine and the bishops had concerned only themselves, it would have been a matter of very slight importance indeed; but this was not so. Each side represented an important interest. Constantine represented the State, and the bishops the church; and their mutual flattery was only the covering of a deep-laid and far-reaching scheme which each party was determined to work to the utmost, for its own interests. "It was the aim of Constantine," says Draper, "to make theology a branch of politics; it was the hope of every bishop in the empire to make politics a branch of theology." Consequently, in their relations were involved the interests of both the Church and the State, and the welfare of human society for ages to come. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 385.2}

Therefore, "To the reign of Constantine the Great must be referred the commencement of those dark and dismal times which oppressed Europe for a thousand years. It is the true close of the Roman empire, the beginning of the Greek. The transition from one to the other is emphatically and abruptly marked by a new metropolis, a new religion, a new code, and, above all, a new policy. An ambitious man has attained to imperial power by personating the interests of a rapidly growing party. The unavoidable consequences were a union between the Church and the State, a diverting of the dangerous classes from civil to ecclesiastical paths, and the decay and materialisation of religion." ("Draper's Intellectual Development of Europe.") {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 385.3}

WHAT CONSTANTINE EXPECTED

WHEN the alliance was formed between Constantine and what was represents to him as Christianity, it was with the idea on his part that this religion formed a united body throughout the empire. This was true in a certain sense, because the persecution as carried on under the edicts of Diocletian, was against Christianity as a profession, without any distinction whatever as to its phases, and this caused all the different sects to stand together as one in defence of the principles that were common to all. Therefore

the essential unity of all the professions of Christianity he supposed to be a fact; and from all his actions and writings afterward it is certain that representations had been made to him by the bishops in a stronger measure than was true, and in an infinitely stronger measure than he found it in practice to be. The alliance with Christianity on his part was wholly political, and merely a part of the political machinery by which he designed to bring together again the divided elements of the empire into one harmonious whole. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 385.4}

It had been easy enough for all the sects in which Christianity claimed at that time to be represented, to stand together against an effort of the imperial power to crush out of existence the very name, as well as the right to profess it. It was not so easy for these same denominations to stand together as one, representing the charity and unifying influence of Christianity, when imperial support, imperial influence, and imperial power, were the prizes to be gained. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.1}

THE STATE DECIDING RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES

THEREFORE, although the alliance was formed with what was supposed to be Christianity as a whole, without any respect to internal divisions, it was very soon discovered that each particular faction of the Christian profession was ambitious to be recognised as the one in which, above all others, Christianity was most certainly represented. The bishops were ready and willing to represent to Constantine that Christianity was one. They did so represent it to him. And although he entered the alliance with that understanding, the alliance had no sooner been well formed than it devolved upon him to decide among the conflicting factions and divisions just where that one was to be found. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.2}

An edict issued at Milan had ordered that the church property confiscated by the edicts of Diocletian, should be, restored to "the whole body of Christians," without any distinction as to particular sects or names. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.3}

This was proper enough in itself. But Constantine and the bishops had formed an alliance for political purposes. The bishops had lent to Constantine their support, the fruit of which he was enjoying; and now they demanded that the expected return should be rendered. Accordingly, the restoration of the property of the Christians, under the Edict of Milan, had no sooner begun, than the contentions which had been raised before the late persecution, between the church of Rome and the churches of Africa, were not only made to assume new and political significance, but were made an issue upon which to secure the imperial recognition and the legal establishment of the Catholic Church. As the rule had already been established that all who did not agree with the bishops of the Catholic Church were necessarily heretics, and not Christians, it was now claimed by the Catholic Church that therefore none such could be partakers of the benefits of the edict restoring property to the Christians. The Catholic Church disputed the right of heretics to receive property or money under the Edict of Milan, by disputing their right to the title of Christians. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.4}

This forced an imperial decision upon the question as to who were Christians. The question was raised in Africa. To settle this question, Constantine issued an edict in which he declared:— {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.5}

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 decurious, or any others, these thou shalt cause immediately to be restored to their churches. Since we have

previously determined, that whatsoever these same churches before possessed, shall be restored to their right. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.6}

By this it was made evident that the imperial favours were only for the Catholic Church. Nor was it enough that Constantine should decide that his favours were for the Catholic Church; he must next decide which was the Catholic Church. This was brought about by a division which was created in the church at Carthage, having its origin in the late persecution. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.7}

HOW RIVAL BISHOPS INTRIGUED FOR PATRONAGE

THE edict issued by Diocletian had commanded the magistrates everywhere to compel the Christians to deliver up the Scriptures. Some did so; others refused and suffered. When Constantine formed his alliance with the bishops, Mensurius was Bishop of Carthage, and some of his enemies had falsely accused him of being one of those who had delivered up the Scriptures rather than to suffer. They were supported by a certain Donatus, bishop of a city in Numidia, and they separated themselves from communion with Mensurius. When Mensurius died, as the "primacy of the African church was the object of ambition to these two parties," and as this primacy carried with it imperial patronage, there were several candidates. A certain Cecilianus was elected, however, "in spite of the cabals and intrigue of Botrus and Celesius, two chief presbyters who aspired to that dignity." {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.8}

Botrus and Celesius were now joined by Donatus and his party, and these all were further joined and supported by a certain Lucilla, a woman of great qualities, wealth, and interest, and an avowed enemy to Cecilianus. This faction gathered together about seventy of the bishops of Numidia for the purpose of deposing Cecilianus as one having been illegally chosen. When they came together at Carthage, they found that the great majority of the people were in favor of Cecilianus; nevertheless they summoned him to the council. He refused to go, and it was well that he did so, because one of them had already said of him, "If he comes among us, instead of laying our hands on him by way of ordination, we ought to knock out his brains by way of penance." A council composed of men of this character, it is easy to believe, were readily susceptible to whatever influence might be brought to bear upon them to bring them to a decision. Lucilla, by the free use of money, succeeded in persuading them to declare the election of Cecilianus void, and the bishopric of Carthage vacant. They pronounced him and all who held with him separated from their communion, and proceeded to elect and ordain a certain Majorinus, who had formerly been one of Lucilla's servants, but was now a reader in the church. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.9}

Thus matters stood in the church in Africa when in March, A.D. 313, Constantine sent to the proconsul Anulinus the following edict declaring that, as it appeared that the exercise of the "legally adopted" religion afforded prosperity to the state, it was his will {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.10}

that these men within the province entrusted to thee in the Catholic Church over which Cecilianus presides, who give their services to this holy religion, and whom they commonly call clergy, shall be held totally free and exempt from all public offices, to the end that they may not, by any error or sacrilegious deviation, be drawn away from the service due to the Divinity, but rather may devote themselves to their proper law, without any molestation. So that, whilst they exhibit the greatest possible reverence to the Deity, it appears the greatest good will be conferred on the State.—(Eusebius's "Ecclesiastical History.") {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 386.11}

As will be seen later, this exemption was a most material benefit. And when the party of Majorinus saw themselves excluded from it, they claimed that they were the Catholic Church, and therefore really the ones who were entitled to it. Accordingly, they drew up a petition to the emperor, entitled, "The petition of the Catholic Church, containing the crimes of Cecilianus, by the party of Majorinus." This petition requested the emperor to refer to the bishops of Gaul the controversy between them and Cecilianus. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.1}

CHURCH COUNCILS CALLED

WHEN Constantine received the petition and the accompanying papers, he appointed three of the principal bishops of Gaul to meet with the Bishop of Rome to examine the matter. When the council met, there were nineteen members of it. Melchiades, Bishop of Rome, presided in the council, and thus began to reap in imperial recognition and joint authority, the fruit of the offers which he made when in A.D. 311, he sent that letter and delegation of bishops to Constantine in Gaul, inviting him to the conquest of Rome and the deliverance of the church. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.2}

The council met in the apartments of the empress, in the Lateran Palace in Rome, Oct. 2, 313. Cecilianus appeared in person, and Donatus came as his accuser. The council decided that none of the charges were proved, pronounced Cecilianus innocent, and Donatus a slanderer. The Donatists appealed from the council to the emperor, demanding a larger council, on the plea that the bishops who composed this one were partial, prejudiced, and had acted hastily, and besides this, were too few in number properly to decide a matter of so great importance. Constantine ordered another council to be held at Arles, to be composed of "many bishops." {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.3}

This council met according to appointment, August, A.D. 314, and was composed of the bishops from almost all the provinces of the western division of the empire. Sylvester, who was now bishop of Rome, was summoned to the council but declined on account of age, sending two presbyters and two deacons as his representatives. This council also declared Cecilianus innocent of the crimes laid against him by the Donatists. The council also decided that whoever should falsely accuse his brethren should be cut off from the communion of the church without hope of ever being received again, except at the point of death. It further decided that such bishops as had been ordained by the Donatists should officiate alternately with the Catholic bishops till one or the other should die. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.4}

LEGISLATING IN DISCIPLINE AND EXALTING THE ROMAN BISHOPRIC

BUT the council did not stop with the consideration of the question which it was summoned to consider. The bishops in council now took it upon themselves to legislate in matters of discipline for the world, and to bestow special preference and dignity upon the Bishop of Rome. They "ordained that Easter should be kept on the same day, and on a Sunday, by all the churches in the world" (Bower's "History of the Popes"), and that the Bishop of Rome should announce to the churches the particular Sunday upon which it should be celebrated. Before adjourning, the council sent to the Bishop of Rome an account of their proceedings, with a copy of the decrees which they had adopted concerning the discipline of the churches, that he might publish them to all the churches. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.5}

The Donatists appealed again, not for a council, but to the emperor himself. Constantine held a consistory and heard their appeal, and in harmony with the council already held, pronounced in favor of Cecilianus and against the Donatists. Upon this the Donatists claimed that the emperor had been influenced by Hosius, one of his favourite bishops, and denied that he had any jurisdiction in the matter

at all, because it was not right for civil magistrates to have anything to do with religion! {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.6}

This claim was true enough, if they had made it at the beginning, and had refused from the first to allow their controversy to be touched upon in any way by the imperial authority. Then they would have stood upon proper ground; but when they themselves were the first to appeal to the civil authority, when they had asked the emperor to consider the matter again and again, with the hope of getting the imperial power on their side, and when they had carried to the last extreme their efforts in this direction,—when they had done all this in vain, and then turned about to protest, their protest was robbed of every shadow of force or merit. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.7}

The question as to which was the Catholic Church having now been decided, Constantine, in his next epistle, could add yet another distinguishing title. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.8}

SUCCESSIVE STEPS IN ESTABLISHING THE STATE RELIGION

AS we have seen, the Edict of Milan—March, A.D. 313—ordered that the churches should be restored to the Christians—"the whole body of Christians"—without distinction. When the Catholic Church asserted its sole right to the designation "Christian," and backed its assertion with political reasons which were then peculiarly cogent, the imperial epistle ran—March, A.D. 313—"to the Catholic Church of the Christians." When the emperor wrote to Melchiades appointing the first council under the imperial authority, his epistle ran—autumn, A.D. 313—"the holy Catholic Church." When he wrote to Chrestus—summer, A.D. 314—summoning him to the second council under imperial authority, he referred to the doctrine of the Catholic Church as embodying the "most holy religion." When it had been decided which was "the most holy Catholic religion," he addressed an epistle to Cecilianus—A.D. 316—announcing imperial favours to "the legitimate and most holy Catholic religion," and empowering Cecilianus to assist the imperial officers in preventing any diversion from the most holy Catholic Church. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.9}

RESULT OF IMPERIAL PATRONAGE, IN CHURCH AND STATE

When the Donatists rejected the decision of the emperor himself, and denied his right to say anything in the controversy in which they had invited him and over again to participate, as announced in the above letter to Cecilianus he carried against them—A.D. 316—the interference which they had solicited, to the full extent to which it would undoubtedly have been carried against the Catholics if the Donatists had secured the decision in their favor. The Donatist bishops were driven out, and Constantine ordered that all their churches be delivered to the Catholic party. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.10}

As this was done in the interest, and by the direct counsel, of the Catholic party, through Hosius, the emperor's chief counselor, the imperial authority thus became wholly partisan, and to both parties was given a dignity which was far, far beyond any merit that was in the question at issue. To the Catholic party it gave the dignity of an imperial alliance and the assurance of imperial favor. The Donatist party it elevated to a dignity and clothed with an importance which placed it before the world as worthy of imperial antagonism. Into the Catholic party it infused more than ever the pride of place, power, and imperial favor. To the Donatist party it gave the dignity and fame of a persecuted people, and increased the evil which it attempted to destroy. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 387.11}

More than this, when the governmental authority, which should be for the protection of all alike from violence, became itself a party to the controversy, it forsook the place of impartial protector, and assumed that of a partisan. This deepened the sense of injury felt by the defeated party, and magnified the triumph of the victor; and the antagonism was only the more embittered. "The implacable faction darkened into a sanguinary feud. For the first time, human blood was shed in conflicts between followers of the Prince of Peace." (Milman's "History of Christianity.") {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 388.1}

And the government, by becoming a partisan, had lost the power to keep the peace. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 388.2}

By becoming a party to religious controversy it had lost the power to prevent civil violence between religious factions. "Each party recriminated on the other, but neither denies the barbarous scenes of massacre and license which devastated the African cities. The Donatists boasted of their martyrs, and the cruelties of the Catholic party rest on their own admission; they deny not, they proudly vindicate, their barbarities: 'Is the vengeance of God to be defrauded of its victims?' and they appealed to the Old Testament to justify, by the examples of Moses, of Phineas, and of Elijah, the Christian duty of slaying by thousands the renegades and unbelievers." (Milman.) This, though a shameful perversion of Scripture, was but the practical working out of the theocratical theory of government, which was the basis of the whole system of the union of church and State which had been created by Constantine and the bishops. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 388.3}

Constantine issued an edict commanding peace, but it was all in vain. The tumult went on, constantly increasing in violence, until the only alternative was for the imperial authority either to enter upon the horrors of a protracted war with its own subjects, or openly refuse to go any further. The latter step was taken. In A.D. 321, upon the advice of the civil officers of Africa, Constantine "repealed the laws against the Donatists, and gave the African people full liberty to follow either of the contending parties, as they liked best." (Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History.")

A. T. JONES. {June 24, 1897 ATJ, PTUK 388.4}

CHAPTER XXVI. ROME -- THE GREAT APOSTASY

That Man of Sin -- Men Speaking Perverse Things -- The Mysteries -- Worshiping Toward the East -- Ambition of the Bishop of Rome -- The New Platonists -- School of Clement and Origen -- The Two Pagan Streams -- Political Designs -- The New Paganism -- The Two Streams Unite; a New Religion

WHEN Paul was at Thessalonica, he preached to the people about the second coming of the Lord. After he had gone away, he wrote to them a letter in which he said more about this same event; and in his writing he made it so much of a reality, and his hope was so centered in the event, that apparently he put himself among those who would see the Saviour come, and wrote as though he and others would be alive at that time. He wrote: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the

trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

1 {1898 ATJ, GEP 374.1}

2. The Thessalonians, not bearing in mind what he had told them when he was there, misinterpreted these strong and apparently personal statements, and therefore put into the apostle's words a meaning that he did not intend should be there. Upon this they fell into the mistake of supposing that the second coming of Christ was immediately at hand, and was so near that they could even live without working until He should come. This idea had been worked up quite fully among them by persons pretending to have received revelations by the Spirit; by others pretending that they had received word from Paul to that effect; and yet others went so far as to write letters to that effect, and forge Paul's name to them. These facts coming to the apostle's knowledge, he wrote a second letter to correct the mistakes which, in view of the teaching he had given when he was present with them, they were wholly unwarranted in making. {1898 ATJ, GEP 374.2}

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3. In this second letter Paul did not modify in the least the doctrine that Christ is coming, nor that He will then certainly gather His people to himself. There was no mistake in the doctrine concerning the fact of His coming. The mistake was in the time when they expected Him to come. This is the point which the apostle corrects in his second letter, and writes thus: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." 2 {1898 ATJ, GEP 375.1}

4. All this he had taught them when he was there with them, and therefore reminded them, in the fifth verse, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" Then, having recalled to their minds the fact, he simply appeals to their knowledge, and says: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he [the son of perdition] might be revealed in his time." This plainly sets forth the prophecy of a great falling away or apostasy from the truth of the gospel. The purity of the gospel of Christ would be corrupted, and its intent perverted. {1898 ATJ, GEP 375.2}

5. The falling away of which Paul wrote to the Thessalonians is referred to in his counsel to the elders of the church at Ephesus, whom he called to meet him at Miletus. To them he said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall

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men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." 3 {1898 ATJ, GEP 375.3}

6. This warning was not alone to the people of Ephesus in the three years that he was there. It is seen through all his epistles. Because of this readiness of individuals to assert themselves, to get wrong views of the truth, and to speak perverse things, the churches had constantly to be checked, guided, trained, reproved, and rebuked. There were men even in the church who were ever ready to question the authority of the apostles. There were those who made it a business to follow up Paul, and by every possible means to counteract his teaching and destroy his influence. They declared that he was not an

apostle of the Lord at all, but of men; that he had never seen the Lord; that he was simply a tent-maker going about over the country working at his trade, and passing himself off as an apostle. Others charged him with teaching the doctrine that it is right to do evil that good may come. {1898 ATJ, GEP 376.1}

7. But it was not alone nor chiefly from these characters that the danger threatened. It was those who from among the disciples would arise speaking perverse things, of which an instance and a warning are given in the letter to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." 4 {1898 ATJ, GEP 376.2}

8. Nor yet was it with such as these that the greatest danger lay. It was from those who would arise not only speaking perverse things, but "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Through error of judgment, a man might speak perverse things with no bad intention; but the ones here mentioned would speak perverse things purposely and with the intention of making disciples for themselves -- to draw away disciples after them instead of to draw disciples to Christ. These would pervert the truth, and would have to

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pervert the truth, in order to accomplish their purpose. He who always speaks the truth as it is in Jesus, will draw disciples to Jesus and not to himself. To draw to Christ will be his only wish. But when one seeks to draw disciples to himself, and puts himself in the place of Christ, then he must pervert the truth, and accommodate it to the wishes of those whom he hopes to make his own disciples. This is wickedness; this is apostasy. {1898 ATJ, GEP 376.3}

9. There was another consideration which made the danger the more imminent. These words were spoken to the bishops. It was a company of bishops to whom the apostle was speaking when he said: "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." From that order of men who were chosen to guide and to care for the church of Christ, from those who were set to protect the church -- from this order of men there would be those who would pervert their calling, their office, and the purpose of it, to build up themselves, and gather disciples to themselves in the place of Christ. To watch this spirit, to check its influence, and to guard against its workings, was the constant effort of the apostle, and for the reason, as stated to the Thessalonians, that the mystery of iniquity was already working. There were at that time elements abroad which the apostle could plainly see would develop into all that the Scriptures had announced. And scarcely were the last of the apostles dead when the evil appeared in its practical workings. {1898 ATJ, GEP 377.1}

10. No sooner were the apostles removed from the stage of action, no sooner was their watchful attention gone and their apostolic authority removed, than this very thing appeared of which the apostle had spoken. Certain bishops, in order to make easier the conversion of the heathen, to multiply disciples, and by this increase their own influence and authority, began to adopt heathen customs and forms. {1898 ATJ, GEP 377.2}

11. When the canon of Scripture was closed, and the last of the apostles was dead, the first century was gone; and within twenty years of that time the perversion of the truth of Christ had become widespread. In the history of this century and of this subject the record is, -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 377.3}

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"It is certain that to religious worship, both public and private, many rites were added, without necessity, and to the offense of sober and good men." -- Mosheim. 5 {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.1}

12. And the reason of this is stated to be that -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.2}

"The Christians were pronounced atheists, because they were destitute of temples, altars, victims, priests, and all that pomp in which the vulgar suppose the essence of religion to consist. For unenlightened persons are prone to estimate religion by what meets their eyes. To silence this

accusation, the Christian doctors thought it necessary to introduce some external rites, which would strike the senses of the people, so that they could maintain themselves really to possess all those things of which Christians were charged with being destitute, though under different forms." Mosheim. 6 {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.3}

13. This was at once to accommodate the Christian worship and its forms to that of the heathen, and was almost at one step to heathenize Christianity. No heathen element or form can be connected with Christianity or its worship, and Christianity remain pure. {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.4}

14. Of all the ceremonies of the heathen, the mysteries were the most sacred and most universally practised. Some mysteries were in honor of Bacchus, some of Cybele, but the greatest of all, those considered the most sacred of all and the most widely practised, were the Eleusinian, so called because celebrated at Eleusis in Greece. But whatever was the mystery that was celebrated, there was always in it, as an essential part of it, the elements of abomination that characterized sun-worship everywhere, because the mysteries were simply forms of the wide-spread and multiform worship of the sun. {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.5}

15. Among the first of the perversions of the Christian worship was to give to its forms the title and air of the mysteries. For says the record: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.6}

"Among the Greeks and the people of the East, nothing was held more sacred than what were called the mysteries. This circumstance led the Christians, in order to impart dignity to their religion, to say that they also had similar mysteries, or certain holy rites concealed from the vulgar; and they not only applied the terms used in the pagan mysteries to Christian institutions, particularly baptism and the Lord's Supper, but they gradually introduced also the rites which were designated by these terms." -- Mosheim. 7 {1898 ATJ, GEP 378.7}

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16. That this point may be more fully understood, we shall give a sketch of the Eleusinian mysteries. As we have stated, although there were others, these were of such pre-eminence that they acquired the specific name, by way of pre-eminence, of "the mysteries." The festival was sacred to Ceres and Proserpine. Everything about it contained a mystery, and was to be kept secret by the initiated. "This mysterious secrecy was solemnly observed and enjoined on all the votaries of the goddess; and if any one ever appeared at the celebration, either intentionally or through ignorance, without proper introduction, he was immediately punished with death. Persons of both sexes and all ages were initiated at this solemnity; and it was looked upon as so heinous a crime to neglect this sacred part of religion that it was one of the heaviest accusations which contributed to the condemnation of Socrates. The initiated were under the more particular care of the deities, and therefore their lives were supposed to be attended with more happiness and real security than those of other men. This benefit was not only granted during life, but it extended beyond the grave; and they were honored with the first places in the Elysian fields, while others were left to wallow in perpetual filth and ignominy." -- Anthon. 8 {1898 ATJ, GEP 379.1}

17. There were the greater and the lesser mysteries. The greater were the Eleusinian in fact, and the lesser were invented, according to the mythological story, because Hercules passed near Eleusis, where the greater mysteries were celebrated, and desired to be initiated; but as he was a stranger, and therefore could not lawfully be admitted, a form of mysteries was adopted into which he could be initiated. These were ever afterward celebrated as the lesser, and were observed at Agrae. In the course of time the lesser were made preparatory to the greater, and the candidate must be initiated into these before he could be initiated into the greater. {1898 ATJ, GEP 379.2}

18. "No person could be initiated at Eleusis without a previous purification at Agrae. This purification they performed by keeping themselves pure, chaste, and unpolluted during nine days, after which they came and offered sacrifices and prayers, wearing garlands of flowers, and having under their feet Jupiter's skin, which was the

skin of a victim offered to that god. The person who assisted was called Hudranos from hudor, water, which was used at the purification; and they themselves were called the initiated. A year after the initiation at the lesser mysteries they sacrificed a sow to Ceres, and were admitted into the greater, and the secrets of the festivals were solemnly revealed to them, from which they were called inspectors. {1898 ATJ, GEP 379.3}

19. "The initiation was performed in the following manner: The candidates, crowned with myrtle, were admitted by night into a place called the mystical temple, a vast and stupendous building. As they entered the temple, they purified themselves by washing their hands in holy water, and received for admonition that they were to come with a mind pure and undefiled, without which the cleanliness of the body would be unacceptable. After this the holy mysteries were read to them from a large book called petroma, because made of two stones, petrai, fitly cemented together; and then the priest proposed to them certain questions, to which they readily answered. After this, strange and fearful objects presented themselves to their sight; the place often seemed to quake, and to appear suddenly resplendent with fire, and immediately covered with gloomy darkness and horror." -- Anthon. 9 After initiation, the celebration lasted nine days. {1898 ATJ, GEP 380.1}

20. These mysteries, as well as those of Bacchus and others, were directly related to the sun, for "the most holy and perfect rite in the Eleusinian Mysteries was to show an ear of corn mowed down in silence, and this was a symbol of the Phrygian Atys." 10 {1898 ATJ, GEP 380.2}

21. The Phrygian Atys was simply the incarnation of the sun, and the mysteries being a form of sun-worship, the "sacred" symbols can not be described with decency. Therefore, it is not necessary to describe the actions that were performed in the celebration of the mysteries after the initiation, any further than is spoken by the apostle with direct reference to this subject. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." 11 {1898 ATJ, GEP 380.3}

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22. It was to accommodate the Christian worship to the minds of a people who practised these things that the bishops gave to the Christian ordinances the name of mysteries. The Lord's Supper was made the greater mystery, baptism the lesser and the initiatory rite to the celebration of the former. After the heathen manner also a white garment was used as the initiatory robe, and the candidate, having been baptized, and thus initiated into the lesser mysteries, was admitted into what was called in the church the order of catechumens, in which order they remained a certain length of time, as in the heathen celebration, before they were admitted to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the greater mystery. {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.1}

23. "This practise originated in the Eastern provinces, and then after the time of Hadrian (who first introduced the pagan mysteries among the Latins) it spread among the Christians of the West." The reign of Hadrian was from 117-138. Therefore, before the second century was half gone, before the last of the apostles had been dead forty years, this apostasy, this working of the mystery of iniquity, had so largely spread over both the East and the West, that it is literally true that "a large part, therefore, of the Christian observances and institutions, even in this century, had the aspect of the pagan mysteries." -- Mosheim. 12 {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.2}

24. Nor is this all. These apostates, not being content with so much of the sun-worship as appeared in the celebration of the mysteries, adopted the heathen custom of worshiping toward the east. So says the history: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.3}

"Before the coming of Christ, all the Eastern nations performed divine worship with their faces turned to that part of the heavens where the sun displays his rising beams. This custom was founded upon a general opinion that God, whose essence they looked upon to be light, and whom they considered as being circumscribed within certain limits, dwell in that part of the firmament from which he sends forth

the sun, the bright image of his benignity and glory. The Christian converts, indeed, rejected this gross error [of supposing that God dwelt in that part of the firmament]; but they retained the ancient and universal custom of worshiping toward the east, which sprang from it. Nor is this custom abolished even in our times, but still prevails in a great number of Christian churches." -- Mosheim. 13 {1898 ATJ, GEP 381.4}

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25. The next step in addition to this was the adoption of the day of the sun as a festival day. To such an extent were the forms of sun-worship practised in this apostasy, that before the close of the second century the heathen themselves charged these so-called Christians with worshiping the sun. A presbyter of the church of Carthage, then and now one of the "church fathers," who wrote about A. D. 200, considered it necessary to make a defense of the practise, which he did to the following effect in an address to the rulers and magistrates of the Roman Empire: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.1}

"Others, again, certainly with more information and greater verisimilitude, believe that the sun is our god. We shall be counted Persians perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you, also under pretense sometimes of worshiping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. In the same way, if we devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than sun-worship, we have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day of Saturn to ease and luxury, though they too go far away from Jewish ways, of which indeed they are ignorant." -- Tertullian. 14 {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.2}

26. And again in an address to all the heathen he justifies this practise by the argument, in effect, You do the same thing, you originated it too, therefore you have no right to blame us. In his own words his defense is as follows: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.3}

"Others, with greater regard to good manners, it must be confessed, suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray toward the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity. What then? Do you do less than this? Do not many among you, with an affectation of sometimes worshiping the heavenly bodies, likewise move your lips in the direction of the sunrise? It is you, at all events, who have admitted the sun into the calendar of the week; and you have selected its day, in preference to the preceding day, as the most suitable in the week for either an entire abstinence from the bath, or for its postponement until the evening, or for taking rest and banqueting." -- Tertullian. 15 {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.4}

27. This accommodation was easily made, and all this practise was easily justified, by the perverse-minded teachers, in the perversion

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of such scriptures as, "The Lord God is a sun and shield," and, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." 16 {1898 ATJ, GEP 382.5}

28. As this custom spread, and through it such disciples were multiplied, the ambition of the bishop of Rome grew apace. It was in honor of the day of the sun that there was manifested the first attempt of the bishop of Rome to compel the obedience of all other bishops, and the fact that this attempt was made in such a cause, at the very time when these pretended Christians were openly accused by the heathen of worshiping the sun, is strongly suggestive. {1898 ATJ, GEP 383.1}

29. From Rome there came now another addition to the sun-worshiping apostasy. The first Christians being mostly Jews, continued to celebrate the Passover in remembrance of the death of Christ, the true Passover; and this was continued among those who from among the Gentiles had turned to Christ. Accordingly, the celebration was always on the Passover day, -- the fourteenth of the first month. Rome, however, and from her all the West, adopted the day of the sun as the day of this celebration. According to the Eastern custom, the celebration, being on the fourteenth day of the month, would of course fall on different days of the week as the years revolved. The rule of Rome was that the celebration must

always be on a Sunday -- the Sunday nearest to the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. And if the fourteenth day of that month should itself be a Sunday, then the celebration was not to be held on that day, but upon the next Sunday. One reason of this was not only to be as like the heathen as possible, but to be as un like the Jews as possible; this, in order not only to facilitate the "conversion" of the heathen by conforming to their customs, but also by pandering to their spirit of contempt and hatred of the Jews. It was upon this point that the bishop of Rome made his first open attempt at absolutism. {1898 ATJ, GEP 383.2}

30. We know not precisely when this began, but it was practised in Rome as early as the time of Sixtus I, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 119-128. The practise was promoted by his successors, and Anicetus, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 157-168, "would neither
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conform to that [Eastern] custom himself nor suffer any under his jurisdiction to conform to it, obliging 'them to celebrate that solemnity on the Sunday next following the fourteenth of the moon." -- Bower. 17 In A. D. 160, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, made a journey to Rome to consult with Anicetus about this question, though nothing special came of the consultation. Victor, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 192-202, likewise proposed to oblige only those under his jurisdiction to conform to the practise of Rome; but he asserted jurisdiction over all, and therefore presumed to command all. {1898 ATJ, GEP 383.3}

31. "Accordingly, after having taken the advice of some foreign bishops, he wrote an imperious letter to the Asiatic prelates commanding them to imitate the example of the Western Christians with respect to the time of celebrating the festival of Easter. The Asiatics answered this lordly requisition by the pen of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, who declared in their name, with great spirit and resolution, that they would by no means depart in this manner from the custom handed down to them by their ancestors. Upon this the thunder of excommunication began to roar. Victor, exasperated by this resolute answer of the Asiatic bishops, broke communion with them, pronounced them unworthy of the name of his brethren, and excluded them from all fellowship with the church of Rome." -- Mosheim. 18 {1898 ATJ, GEP 384.1}

32. In view of these things it will readily be seen that between paganism and this kind of Christianity it soon became difficult to distinguish, and the third century only went to make any distinction still more difficult to be discerned. {1898 ATJ, GEP 384.2}

33. In the latter part of the second century, there sprang up in Egypt a school of pagan philosophy called the "Eclectic." The patrons of this school called themselves "Eclectics," because they professed to be in search of truth alone, and to be ready to adopt any tenet of any system in existence which seemed to them to be agreeable to their ideas of truth. They regarded Plato as the one person above all others who had attained the nearest to truth in
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the greatest number of points. Hence they were also called "Platonists." {1898 ATJ, GEP 384.3}

34. "This philosophy was adopted by such of the learned at Alexandria as wished to be accounted Christians, and yet to retain the name, the garb, and the rank of philosophers. In particular, all those who in this century presided in the schools of the Christians at Alexandria, -- Athenagoras, Pantaenus, and Clemens Alexandrinus, -- are said to have approved of it. These men were persuaded that true philosophy, the great and most salutary gift of God, lay in scattered fragments among all the sects of philosophers, and therefore that it was the duty of every wise man, and especially of a Christian teacher, to collect those fragments from all quarters, and to use them for the defense of religion and the confutation of impiety. Yet this selection of opinions did not prevent them from regarding Plato as wiser than all the rest, and as especially remarkable for treating the Deity, the soul, and things remote from sense, so as to suit the Christian scheme." -- Mosheim. 19 {1898 ATJ, GEP 385.1}

35. In the end of the second century, and especially in the first forty-one years of the third, there flourished in Alexandria one of these would-be philosophers -- Ammonius Saccas by name -- who gave a

turn to the philosophy of the Eclectics, which caused his sect to be called the New Platonists. The difference between the Eclectic and the system founded by Ammonius was this: The Eclectics held, as above stated, that in every system of thought in the world there was some truth, but mixed with error, their task being to select from all systems that portion of truth which was in each, and from all these to form one harmonious system. Ammonius held that when the truth was known, all sects had the same identical system of truth; that the differences among them were caused simply by the different ways of stating that truth; and that the proper task of the philosopher was to find such a means of stating the truth that all should be able to understand it, and so each one understand all the others. This was to be accomplished by a system of allegorizing and mystification, by which anybody could get whatever he wanted out of any writing that might come to his notice. {1898 ATJ, GEP 385.2}

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36. "The grand object of Ammonius, to bring all sects and religions into harmony, required him to do much violence to the sentiments and opinions of all parties, -- philosophers, priests, and Christians, -- and particularly by allegorical interpretations to remove all impediments out of his way. . . . To make the arduous task more easy, he assumed that philosophy was first produced and nurtured among the people of the East; that it was inculcated among the Egyptians by Hermes, and thence passed to the Greeks; that it was a little obscured and deformed by the disputatious Greeks; but still that by Plato, the best interpreter of the principles of Hermes and of the ancient Oriental sages, it was preserved for the most part entire and unsullied. . . . {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.1}

37. "To these assumptions he added the common doctrines of the Egyptians (among whom he was born and educated) concerning the universe and the Deity, as constituting one great whole [Pantheism]; concerning the eternity of the world, the nature of the soul, providence, and the government of this world by demons, and other received doctrines; all of which he considered as true and not to be called in question. For it is most evident that the ancient philosophy of the Egyptians, which they pretended to have learned from Hermes, was the basis of the New Platonic, or Ammonian; and the book of Jamblichus, *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, in particular, shows this to be the case. . . . {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.2}

38. "To this Aegyptiaco-Platonic philosophy, this ingenious man and fanatic joined a system of moral discipline apparently of high sanctity and austerity. . . . And these precepts Ammonius, like one born and educated among Christians, was accustomed to embellish and express by forms of expression borrowed from the sacred Scriptures, which has caused such language to occur abundantly in the writings of his followers." 20 {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.3}

39. One of the earliest to espouse this philosophy from among those who professed to be Christians, was Clement of Alexandria, who became the head of that kind of school at Alexandria. These philosophers "believed the language of Scripture to contain two meanings; the one obvious, and corresponding with the direct import

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of the words; the other recondite, and concealed under the words, like a nut by the shell. The former they neglected, as of little value, their study chiefly being to extract the latter; in other words, they were more intent on throwing obscurity over the sacred writings by the fictions of their own imaginations, than on searching out their true meanings. Some also, and this is stated especially of Clement, accommodated the divine oracles to the precepts of philosophy." -- Mosheim. 21 {1898 ATJ, GEP 386.4}

40. The close resemblance between the pagan philosophy and that of the New Platonists is illustrated by the fact that but one of the classes concerned could tell to which of them Ammonius Saccas belonged. The pagans generally regarded him as a pagan. His own kind of Christians counted him a good Christian all his life. The genuine Christians all knew that he was a pagan, and that the truth of the whole matter was that he was a pretended Christian "who adopted with such dexterity the doctrines of the pagan

philosophy, as to appear a Christian to the Christians, and a pagan to the pagans." 22 He died A. D. 241. {1898 ATJ, GEP 387.1}

41. Clement is supposed to have died about A. D. 220, and the fame and influence which he had acquired -- and it was considerable -- was far outshone by Origen, who had been taught by both Clement and Ammonius. Origen imbibed all the allegorical and mystifying processes of both Ammonius and Clement, and multiplied upon them from his own wild imagination. He was not content with finding two meanings in the Scriptures as those before him, but took the secondary sense, the hidden meaning, and added to it four additional meanings of his own. His system then stood thus: (1) All Scripture contains two meanings, the literal and the hidden. (2) This hidden sense has within itself two meanings, the moral and the mystical. (3) The mystical has within it yet two other meanings, the allegorical and the anagogical. According to this method of mysticism, therefore, in every passage of Scripture there are at least three meanings, and there may be any number from three to six. {1898 ATJ, GEP 387.2}

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42. His explanation of it is this: (1) Man is composed of three parts, -- a rational mind, a sensitive soul, and a visible body. The Scriptures resemble man, and therefore have a threefold sense: (a) a literal sense which corresponds to the body; (b) a moral sense corresponding to the soul; and (c) a mystical sense which corresponds to the mind. (2) As the body is the baser part of man, so the literal is the baser sense of Scripture; and as the body often betrays good men into sin, so the literal sense of Scripture often leads into error. Therefore, those who would see more in the Scripture than common people could see, must search out this hidden meaning, and yet further must search in that hidden meaning for the moral sense. And those who would be perfect must carry their search yet further, and beyond this moral sense which they found in the hidden meaning, they must find the mystical sense, with its additional train of allegorical and anagogical senses. {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.1}

43. As in this system of philosophy the body of man was a clog to the soul and hindered it in its heavenly aspirations, and was therefore to be despised, and by punishment and starvation was to be separated as far as possible from the soul, it followed that the literal sense of Scripture, which corresponded to man's body likewise, was a hindrance to the proper understanding of all the hidden meanings of the Scripture, and was to be despised and separated as far as possible from the hidden sense, and counted of the least possible worth. Accordingly, one of the first principles of this teaching was the following: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.2}

"The source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture. Those who do so will not attain to the kingdom of God. Let us therefore seek after the spirit and substantial fruit of the word, which are hidden and mysterious." -- Origen. 23 {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.3}

44. And the next step was but the logical result of this; namely: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.4}

"The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." -- Origen. 24 {1898 ATJ, GEP 388.5}

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45. By such a system as this it is evident that any one could find whatever he pleased in any passage of Scripture, and that the Scripture could be made to support any doctrine that was ever invented by the wildest fancy of the veriest fanatic. Even though the doctrine might be flatly contradictory to the Scripture, the Scripture could be made fully to agree with and teach the doctrine. {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.1}

46. Two of the chief disciples of Ammonius were Origen and Plotinus. Origen professed to be a Christian, and perpetuated the philosophy of Ammonius under the name of Christianity. Plotinus made no profession of anything but paganism, and perpetuated the philosophy of Ammonius under the name of Neoplatonism. Plotinus succeeded Ammonius in the Neoplatonic school; and Origen succeeded Clement in the so-called, but apostate, Christian school. There was great rivalry between these schools; and each became supreme in its respective sphere. {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.2}

47. Among the pagans, the school of Ammonius and of his successor Plotinus "gradually cast all others into the background. From Egypt it spread in a short time over the whole Roman Empire, and drew after it almost all persons who took any interest in things remote from sense." {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.3}

48. On the other hand, "the estimation in which human learning should be held was a question on which the Christians were about equally divided. Many recommended the study of philosophy, and an acquaintance with the Greek and Roman literature; while others maintained that these were pernicious to the interests of genuine Christianity and the progress of true piety. The cause of letters and philosophy triumphed, however, by degrees; and those who wished well to them continued to gain ground till at length the superiority was manifestly decided in their favor. This victory was principally due to the influence of Origen, who, having been early instructed in the new kind of Platonism already mentioned, blended it, though unhappily, with the purer and more sublime tenets of a celestial doctrine, and recommended it in the warmest manner to the youth who attended his public lessons. The fame of this philosopher increased daily among the Christians; and in proportion to his rising credit, his method of proposing and explaining the doctrines of Christianity gained authority till it became almost universal." {1898 ATJ, GEP 389.4}

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49. The principles of these two schools were so evenly balanced that "some of the disciples of Plotinus embraced Christianity on condition that they should be allowed to retain such of the opinions of their master as they thought of superior excellence and merit. This must also have contributed, in some measure, to turn the balance in favor of the sciences. These Christian philosophers, preserving still a fervent zeal for the doctrines of their heathen chief, would naturally embrace every opportunity of spreading them abroad, and instilling them into the minds of the ignorant and the unwary. {1898 ATJ, GEP 390.1}

50. "This new species of philosophy, imprudently adopted by Origen and other Christians, did immense harm to Christianity. For it led the teachers of it to involve in philosophic obscurity many parts of our religion, which were in themselves plain and easy to be understood; and to add to the precepts of the Saviour no few things, of which not a word can be found in the Holy Scriptures. . . . It recommended to Christians various foolish and useless rites, suited only to nourish superstition, no small part of which we see religiously observed by many even to the present day. And finally it alienated the minds of many, in the following centuries, from Christianity itself, and produced a heterogeneous species of religion, consisting of Christian and Platonic principles combined. And who is able to enumerate all the evils and injurious changes which arose from this new philosophy -- or, if you please, from this attempt to reconcile true and false religions with each other? {1898 ATJ, GEP 390.2}

51. "The same Origen, unquestionably, stands at the head of the interpreters of the Bible in this century. But with pain it must be added that he was the first among those who have found in the Scriptures a secure retreat for errors and idle fancies of all sorts. As this most ingenious man could see no feasible method of vindicating all that Scripture says, against the cavils of heretics and enemies of Christianity, if its language were interpreted literally, he concluded that he must expound the sacred volume upon the principles which the Platonists used in explaining the history of the gods. He therefore taught that the words in many parts of the Bible convey no meaning at all; and in places where he admitted certain ideas

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lie under the terms used, he contended for a hidden and recondite sense of them, altogether different from their natural import, but far preferable to it. . . . Innumerable expositors in this and the following centuries pursued the method of Origen, though with some diversity; nor could the few who pursued a better method make much head against them." -- Mosheim. 25 {1898 ATJ, GEP 390.3}

52. "The doctrine of the incarnation, the resurrection of the flesh, and the creation of the world in time, marked the boundary line between the church's dogmatic and Neoplatonism. In every other respect

theologians and Neoplatonists drew so close together that many of them are completely at one. . . . If a book does not happen to touch on any of the above-mentioned doctrines, it may often be doubted whether the writer is a Christian or a Neoplatonist. In ethical principles, in directions for right living, the two systems approximate more and more closely. . . . It indoctrinated the church with all its mysticism." 26 {1898 ATJ, GEP 391.1}

53. While this effort was being made on the side of philosophy to unite all religions, there was at the same time a like effort on the side of politics. It was the ambition of Elagabalus (A. D. 218-222) to make the worship of the sun supersede all other worship in Rome. It is further related of him that a more ambitious scheme even than this was in the emperor's mind; which was nothing less than the blending of all religions into one, of which "the sun was to be the central object of adoration." -- Milman. 27 But the elements were not yet fully prepared for such a fusion. Also the shortness of the reign of Elagabalus prevented any decided advancement toward success. {1898 ATJ, GEP 391.2}

54. Alexander Severus (A. D. 222-225) held to the same idea, and carried it into effect so far as his individual practise was concerned. "The mother of Alexander Severus, the able, perhaps crafty and rapacious, Mamaea, had at least held intercourse with the Christians of Syria. She had conversed with the celebrated Origen, and listened to his exhortations, if without conversion, still not without 392

respect. Alexander, though he had neither the religious education, the pontifical character, nor the dissolute manners of his predecessor, was a Syrian, with no hereditary attachment to the Roman form of paganism. He seems to have affected a kind of universalism: he paid decent respect to the gods of the Capitol; he held in honor the Egyptian worship, and enlarged the temples of Isis and Serapis. In his own palace, with respectful indifference, he enshrined, as it were, as his household deities, the representatives of the different religions or theo-philosophic systems which were prevalent in the Roman Empire, -- Orpheus, Abraham, Christ, and Apollonius of Tyana. . . . The homage of Alexander Severus may be a fair test of the general sentiment of the more intelligent heathen of his time." -- Milman. 28 His reign also was too short to accomplish anything beyond his own individual example. But the same tendency went rapidly forward. {1898 ATJ, GEP 391.3}

55. On the side of philosophy and the apostasy, the progress was continuous and rapid. "Heathenism, as interpreted by philosophy, almost found favor with some of the more moderate Christian apologists. . . . The Christians endeavored to enlist the earlier philosophers in their cause; they were scarcely content with asserting that the nobler Grecian philosophy might be designed to prepare the human mind for the reception of Christianity; they were almost inclined to endow these sages with a kind of prophetic foreknowledge of its more mysterious doctrines. 'I have explained,' says the Christian in Minucius Felix, 'the opinions of almost all the philosophers, whose most illustrious glory it is that they have worshiped one God, though under various names; so that one might suppose either that the Christians of the present day are philosophers, or that the philosophers of old were already Christians.' {1898 ATJ, GEP 392.1}

56. "These advances on the part of Christianity were more than met by paganism. The heathen religion, which prevailed at least among the more enlightened pagans during this period, . . . was almost as different from that of the older Greeks and Romans, or even that which prevailed at the commencement of the empire, as it was from Christianity. . . . On the great elementary principle of 393

Christianity, the unity of the supreme God, this approximation had long been silently made. Celsus, in his celebrated controversy with Origen, asserts that this philosophical notion of the Deity is perfectly reconcilable with paganism." -- Milman. 29 {1898 ATJ, GEP 392.2}

57. The emperor Decius, having no sympathy with any religion, philosophy, or morality, but that of the old original Roman, did his best to restore it throughout the empire. Hence the persecution raised by him. Valerian followed closely the course marked out by Decius; but in the forty years of peace to

religion, from the edict of toleration by Gallienus to the edict of persecution by Diocletian, all these elements worked steadily forward in the same general direction. Of the progress of the apostasy during this time, we have a powerful illustration in the practise of Gregory Thaumaturgus, the "wonder-worker." {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.1}

58. Gregory was a pupil and a convert of Origen's. Origen strongly urged him "to devote his acquirements in heathen science and learning to the elucidation of the Scriptures." When he left Origen's school at Alexandria, he returned to Pontus, and became bishop of Neo Caesarea, A. D. 240-270, and how fully he followed the advice of Origen is shown by the following: -- {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.2}

"When Gregory perceived that the ignorant multitude persisted in their idolatry, on account of the pleasures and sensual gratifications which they enjoyed at the pagan festivals, he granted them a permission to indulge themselves in the like pleasures, in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs, hoping that, in process of time, they would return of their own accord to a more virtuous and regular course of life.' There is no sort of doubt that, by this permission, Gregory allowed the Christians to dance, sport, and feast at the tombs of the martyrs, upon their respective festivals, and to do everything which the pagans were accustomed to in their temples, during the feasts celebrated in honor of their gods." -- Mosheim. 30 {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.3}

59. Neo Caesarea was one of the most important cities in Pontus. Yet so diligently did Gregory thus employ the talents committed to him by Origen, that it is related of him that whereas "there were said to be only seventeen Christians in the whole city when he first

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entered it as bishop, there were said to be only seventeen pagans in it at the time of his death." 31 It is manifest, however, that those who were by him brought to the Christian name were as much pagan as before except in the mere matter of the name. {1898 ATJ, GEP 393.4}

60. In the time of Diocletian, that which was known as paganism was so far different from the original paganism of Rome, that Milman plainly designates it as the "new paganism." This new paganism was so little removed from the apostate form of Christianity which we have traced, as really to differ from it only in name. "In paganism itself, that silent but manifest change of which we have already noticed the commencement, had been creeping on. . . . This new paganism, as has been observed, arose out of the alliance of the philosophy and the religion of the old world. . . . From Christianity, the new paganism had adopted the unity of the Deity, and scrupled not to degrade all the gods of the older world into subordinate demons or ministers. The Christians had incautiously held the same language; both concurred in the name of demons; but the pagans used the term in the Platonic sense, as good but subordinate spirits, while the same term spoke to the Christian ear as expressive of malignant and diabolic agency. {1898 ATJ, GEP 394.1}

61. "But the Jupiter Optimus Maximus was not the great Supreme of the new system. The universal deity of the East, the sun, to the philosophic was the emblem or representative; to the vulgar, the Deity. Diocletian himself, though he paid so much deference to the older faith as to assume the title of Jovius, as belonging to the lord of the world, yet on his accession, when he would exculpate himself from all concern in the murder of his predecessor, Numerian, appealed in the face of the army to the all-seeing deity of the sun. It is the oracle of Apollo of Miletus, consulted by the hesitating emperor, which is to decide the fate of Christianity. The metaphorical language of Christianity had unconsciously lent strength to this new adversary; and in adoring the visible orb, some, no doubt, supposed that they were not departing far from the worship of the 'Sun of Righteousness,'" -- Milman. 32 {1898 ATJ, GEP 394.2}

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62. Diocletian himself really contemplated the same fusion of all religions into one, with the sun as the one great universal deity, which Elagabalus had contemplated in his day; but by Galerius and the leading philosopher of the new paganism, he was persuaded to use all the power of the State in the effort to make paganism alone supreme over and against every form and every profession of the Christian name.

The result, however, was that Galerius was compelled to issue a public edict confessing his failure. {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.1}

63. Then came Constantine, the best imperial representative of the new paganism, and the most devout worshiper of the sun as the supreme and universal deity, with the avowed purpose, as expressed in his own words, "First to bring the diverse judgments formed by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition, as it were, of settled uniformity." In Constantine the new paganism met its ideal, and the New Platonism -- the apostate, paganized, sun-worshipping form of Christianity -- met its long-wished-for instrument. In him the two streams met. In him the aspiration of Elagabalus, the hope of Ammonius Saccas and Clement, of Plotinus and Origen, and the ambition of the perverse-minded, self-exalted bishops, were all realized and accomplished -- a new, imperial, and universal religion was created. {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.2}

64. Therefore, "the reign of Constantine the Great forms one of the epochs in the history of the world. It is the era of the dissolution of the Roman Empire; the commencement, or rather consolidation, of a kind of Eastern despotism, with a new capital, a new patriciate, a new constitution, a new financial system, a new, though as yet imperfect, jurisprudence, and, finally, a new religion." -- Milman. 33 {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.3}

65. The epoch thus formed was the epoch of the papacy; and the new religion thus created was the PAPAL RELIGION. {1898 ATJ, GEP 395.4}