

The religion of the Pagan world was made up in a great measure of ostentatious display. Offerings and sacrifices of various kinds were made in temples of great magnificence, some of which were kept constantly open for this purpose. A great number of persons devoted their lives to the service of these gods. They worshipped the images of almost every creature that could be imagined, and the planets, which were generally represented by colossal statues of exquisite workmanship. The influence of these deities over the people was universal. Nations dare not go to war without consulting these oracles. Some of their temples were dedicated especially to war. There was one in Rome which was kept constantly open in time of war and shut in time of peace. And there was one period in which war was so prolonged, that this temple, dedicated to the god of war, was kept continually open for a hundred years. And everything that a zealous love of the marvelous and the wonderful could do to sustain the tottering empire of Paganism was done, and to enforce the observance of pagan rights. And to ensure respect to their ancient mythology, thousands of the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus were put to death.

This is but a glance at the difference of the two systems. But at the time of Constantine the religion of Jesus had varied very materially from what it was two hundred years before.

Some writers dispute in relation to Constantine's conversion. Some say that he was baptized by immersion in the old church of St. John Lateran, at Rome, which was originally a heathen temple, dedicated to the goddess Faustina, one of the Roman Empresses, who, by some historians is asserted to have been one of the most

lewd women that ever lived in Rome; but who was regarded as a paragon of purity by her Imperial husband, who caused her to be proclaimed a goddess; and the virgins of Rome, especially those of patrician blood, were required to go into the presence of her statue to offer their vows previous to marriage. Saint John Lateran also contained, it is said, the font in which Constantine was baptized. But some assert, and I think Eusebius is among the number, that Constantine was a little careless in regard to the matter of baptism, and deferred it, as many persons do the making of their wills—until after their death.

This, however, matters not so much as the effect produced by this grand political change, which not only had a tendency to suppress Paganism, but it also degenerated Christianity. Thousands and thousands of Pagans—men dedicated to the Pagan service, now found it to their interest to seek employment under the new religion; and in order to make it permanent and to give it the appearance of consequence it was deemed necessary to incorporate into it some of the Pagan rites and ostentatious display. Degeneracy, almost universal degeneracy was the result. In a few centuries the religious power had grown almost equal to the former civil power of Rome.

A division occurred between the patriarchs of Constantinople and those of Rome, as to the right of supremacy. The patriarchs of Constantinople would not acknowledge those of Rome as superior in authority. The result was the establishment of the Greek Church—an organization which exists at the present day, at the head of which is the Emperor of Russia. The rest of Europe, with the exception of the Eastern Empire of the Romans, what was