

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH: TRIALS, TRIUMPHS, AND THE GROWTH OF FAITH

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS A DEFINING REALITY THAT SHAPED THE IDENTITY, THEOLOGY, AND EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY IN ITS FORMATIVE YEARS. EMERGING IN A ROMAN WORLD THAT WAS OFTEN HOSTILE TO NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS, THE EARLY FOLLOWERS OF JESUS FACED SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION, RANGING FROM SOCIAL OSTRACISM TO BRUTAL EXECUTIONS. YET, THIS PERSECUTION DID NOT EXTINGUISH THE FLEDGLING CHURCH; INSTEAD, IT OFTEN FUELED ITS GROWTH AND DEEPENED THE COMMITMENT OF BELIEVERS. UNDERSTANDING THIS TURBULENT CHAPTER IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY OFFERS VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO HOW FAITH COMMUNITIES RESPOND TO ADVERSITY AND MAINTAIN RESILIENCE.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF PERSECUTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

BEFORE DIVING INTO THE SPECIFICS OF THE PERSECUTION FACED BY EARLY CHRISTIANS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO GRASP THE BROADER SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKDROP OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE DURING THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES AD. CHRISTIANITY BEGAN AS A SMALL JEWISH SECT IN JUDEA, PROCLAIMING JESUS OF NAZARETH AS THE MESSIAH. THIS CLAIM, ALONG WITH THE REFUSAL OF CHRISTIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN ROMAN RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS OR EMPEROR WORSHIP, SET THEM APART AND OFTEN MADE THEM TARGETS OF SUSPICION.

ROMAN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND CHRISTIAN EXCLUSIVITY

THE ROMAN EMPIRE WAS POLYTHEISTIC AND HIGHLY TOLERANT OF VARIOUS RELIGIOUS PRACTICES—PROVIDED THESE DID NOT DISRUPT PUBLIC ORDER OR CHALLENGE IMPERIAL AUTHORITY. CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER, REFUSED TO WORSHIP ROMAN GODS OR THE EMPEROR, WHICH WAS VIEWED AS SUBVERSIVE AND A THREAT TO SOCIETAL COHESION. THIS REFUSAL WAS OFTEN INTERPRETED AS ATHEISM OR EVEN TREASON, LEADING TO ACCUSATIONS THAT CHRISTIANS WERE ENEMIES OF THE STATE.

EARLY INSTANCES OF PERSECUTION

ONE OF THE EARLIEST RECORDED PERSECUTIONS TOOK PLACE UNDER EMPEROR NERO AROUND AD 64, FOLLOWING THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME. CHRISTIANS WERE SCAPEGOATED AND SUBJECTED TO HORRIFIC PUNISHMENTS SUCH AS BEING BURNED ALIVE OR TORN APART BY WILD ANIMALS. WHILE THESE PERSECUTIONS WERE LOCALIZED AND SPORADIC, THEY SET A PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE TREATMENT OF CHRISTIANS.

FORMS OF PERSECUTION FACED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS NOT UNIFORM; IT VARIED IN INTENSITY, MOTIVATION, AND METHOD DEPENDING ON THE REGION AND THE RULING AUTHORITIES.

SOCIAL OSTRACISM AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

BEYOND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, MANY EARLY CHRISTIANS FACED SOCIAL EXCLUSION. THEIR REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS RITUALS ALIENATED THEM FROM NEIGHBORS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATES. THIS OFTEN RESULTED IN LOSS OF INCOME, INABILITY TO ENGAGE IN CERTAIN PROFESSIONS, AND BEING SHUNNED IN PUBLIC LIFE. SUCH SOCIAL PERSECUTION PLACED ENORMOUS PRESSURE ON BELIEVERS TO RENOUNCE THEIR FAITH.

LEGAL PROSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

ROMAN LAW DID NOT INITIALLY TARGET CHRISTIANS SPECIFICALLY, BUT LAWS AGAINST “ATHEISTS” OR THOSE WHO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE EMPEROR WERE APPLIED TO THEM. CHRISTIANS WERE OFTEN ARRESTED AND GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN RECANTING THEIR FAITH OR FACING EXECUTION. MARTYRDOM BECAME A POWERFUL TESTIMONY WITHIN THE EARLY CHURCH, WITH ACCOUNTS OF SAINTS AND MARTYRS INSPIRING OTHERS TO REMAIN STEADFAST.

DESTRUCTION OF CHRISTIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP AND SCRIPTURES

IN SOME CASES, AUTHORITIES WENT BEYOND PUNISHING INDIVIDUALS TO DESTROYING THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES. CHURCHES WERE TORN DOWN, GATHERINGS WERE BANNED, AND SACRED TEXTS WERE CONFISCATED OR BURNED. THESE MEASURES AIMED TO DISRUPT THE PRACTICE AND SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY BUT OFTEN HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT, STRENGTHENING COMMUNAL BONDS.

NOTABLE PERSECUTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT

CERTAIN PERIODS AND EMPERORS STAND OUT IN THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION FOR THEIR SEVERITY AND SCALE.

EMPEROR NERO’S BRUTAL CRACKDOWN

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, NERO’S PERSECUTION AFTER THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST AND MOST INFAMOUS. HIS USE OF CHRISTIANS AS SCAPEGOATS DEMONSTRATED HOW POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY COULD TARGET MINORITY GROUPS. THE NARRATIVES OF MARTYRDOM FROM THIS ERA, SUCH AS THOSE OF PETER AND PAUL, BECAME FOUNDATIONAL STORIES FOR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY.

THE DECIAN PERSECUTION (AD 250–251)

EMPEROR DECIUS ISSUED AN EDICT REQUIRING ALL CITIZENS TO PERFORM A SACRIFICE TO THE ROMAN GODS AND THE EMPEROR, A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN MONOTHEISM. THIS WAS THE FIRST EMPIRE-WIDE PERSECUTION, LEADING TO WIDESPREAD ARRESTS AND EXECUTIONS. THE DECIAN PERSECUTION FORCED THE CHURCH TO CONFRONT THE DILEMMA OF APOSTASY VERSUS MARTYRDOM, RESULTING IN INTERNAL DEBATES ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION.

THE DIOCLETIANIC PERSECUTION (AD 303–311)

OFTEN CALLED THE GREAT PERSECUTION, THIS WAS THE MOST SYSTEMATIC AND WIDESPREAD ATTEMPT TO ERADICATE CHRISTIANITY BEFORE THE FAITH WAS LEGALIZED. UNDER EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN AND HIS CO-EMPERORS, CHURCHES WERE DESTROYED, SCRIPTURES WERE BURNED, AND CHRISTIANS WERE IMPRISONED OR EXECUTED.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT WAS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH?

THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS THE REFUSAL OF EARLY CHRISTIANS TO WORSHIP ROMAN GODS AND THE EMPEROR, WHICH WAS SEEN AS A THREAT TO THE ROMAN SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ORDER.

WHO WERE SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE ROMAN EMPERORS WHO PERSECUTED THE EARLY CHURCH?

NOTABLE ROMAN EMPERORS WHO PERSECUTED THE EARLY CHURCH INCLUDE NERO, DOMITIAN, DECIUS, AND DIOCLETIAN, EACH INITIATING VARYING DEGREES OF PERSECUTION AGAINST CHRISTIANS.

HOW DID THE EARLY CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO PERSECUTION?

EARLY CHRISTIANS RESPONDED TO PERSECUTION WITH RESILIENCE, OFTEN MEETING SECRETLY, SUPPORTING EACH OTHER, AND MANY CHOSE TO ENDURE MARTYRDOM RATHER THAN RENOUNCE THEIR FAITH.

WHAT ROLE DID MARTYRDOM PLAY IN THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH?

MARTYRDOM PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH BY INSPIRING FAITH AND COMMITMENT AMONG BELIEVERS AND ATTRACTING CONVERTS IMPRESSED BY THE COURAGE AND CONVICTION OF THE MARTYRS.

HOW DID THE ROMAN LEGAL SYSTEM TREAT CHRISTIANS DURING TIMES OF PERSECUTION?

DURING TIMES OF PERSECUTION, THE ROMAN LEGAL SYSTEM OFTEN CHARGED CHRISTIANS WITH CRIMES LIKE ATHEISM (FOR NOT WORSHIPING ROMAN GODS) OR SEDITION, LEADING TO PUNISHMENTS RANGING FROM CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY TO EXECUTION.

WERE ALL PERSECUTIONS OF THE EARLY CHURCH EMPIRE-WIDE AND SYSTEMATIC?

NO, NOT ALL PERSECUTIONS WERE EMPIRE-WIDE OR SYSTEMATIC; MANY WERE LOCAL AND SPORADIC, OFTEN DEPENDING ON REGIONAL GOVERNORS OR POPULAR SENTIMENT RATHER THAN CENTRALIZED IMPERIAL POLICY.

HOW DID THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH EVENTUALLY COME TO AN END?

THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH LARGELY ENDED WITH EMPEROR CONSTANTINE'S EDICT OF MILAN IN 313 AD, WHICH GRANTED RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE TO CHRISTIANS AND ALLOWED THE CHURCH TO PRACTICE OPENLY.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH: A HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL REVIEW

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH STANDS AS A PIVOTAL CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY, REFLECTING THE COMPLEX INTERPLAY BETWEEN EMERGING RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND ESTABLISHED POLITICAL POWERS IN ANTIQUITY. THIS PHENOMENON, SPANNING THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES AFTER CHRIST, INVOLVED SYSTEMATIC OPPOSITION, SOCIAL OSTRACISM, AND VIOLENT REPRESSION DIRECTED AT THE NASCENT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES. UNDERSTANDING THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH REQUIRES A NUANCED EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS, MOTIVATIONS OF ROMAN AUTHORITIES, AND THE RESILIENCE OF EARLY CHRISTIANS IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EARLY CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

THE EARLY CHURCH EMERGED WITHIN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, A VAST AND DIVERSE POLITICAL ENTITY CHARACTERIZED BY POLYTHEISTIC RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND A STRONG EMPHASIS ON IMPERIAL CULT WORSHIP. CHRISTIANS, AS A MINORITY SECT, OFTEN FOUND THEMSELVES AT ODDS WITH THE DOMINANT CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NORMS. THE REFUSAL OF CHRISTIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN EMPEROR WORSHIP AND TRADITIONAL PAGAN RITES WAS PERCEIVED AS A CHALLENGE TO THE SOCIAL ORDER AND IMPERIAL UNITY.

PERSECUTION WAS NEITHER UNIFORM NOR CONSTANT BUT VARIED ACROSS TIME AND GEOGRAPHY. INITIALLY, CHRISTIANS FACED LOCALIZED DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION. HOWEVER, DURING CERTAIN REIGNS, SUCH AS THOSE OF EMPEROR NERO AND LATER DIOCLETIAN, PERSECUTION INTENSIFIED INTO ORGANIZED CAMPAIGNS WITH WIDESPREAD CONSEQUENCES.

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE PERSECUTION

SEVERAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PERSECUTION OF EARLY CHRISTIANS:

- **RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE:** CHRISTIANITY'S MONOTHEISTIC STANCE CONFLICTED WITH ROMAN RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE IMPERIAL CULT, VIEWED AS SUBVERSIVE TO TRADITIONAL VALUES.
- **POLITICAL SUSPICION:** CHRISTIANS' REFUSAL TO SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE EMPEROR RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT LOYALTY AND POTENTIAL SEDITION.
- **SOCIAL DISRUPTION:** THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES THREATENED ESTABLISHED SOCIAL HIERARCHIES AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS TIED TO PAGAN TEMPLES.
- **SCAPEGOATING:** DURING CRISES SUCH AS PLAGUES OR MILITARY DEFEATS, CHRISTIANS WERE OFTEN BLAMED FOR INCITING DIVINE WRATH DUE TO THEIR REJECTION OF ROMAN GODS.

MAJOR EPISODES OF PERSECUTION

THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH CAN BE CATEGORIZED BY NOTABLE IMPERIAL RESPONSES AND LOCALIZED OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE.

THE NERO PERSECUTIONS (64 AD)

ONE OF THE EARLIEST RECORDED PERSECUTIONS OCCURRED UNDER EMPEROR NERO FOLLOWING THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME IN 64 AD. HISTORICAL SOURCES SUCH AS TACITUS DESCRIBE HOW NERO BLAMED CHRISTIANS FOR THE DISASTER, LEADING TO BRUTAL EXECUTIONS INCLUDING CRUCIFIXIONS AND BEING BURNED ALIVE. THIS EVENT MARKED THE FIRST STATE-SPONSORED ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS CHRISTIANITY AND SET A PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE IMPERIAL ATTITUDES.

THE DECIAN AND VALERIAN PERSECUTIONS (3RD CENTURY)

EMPEROR DECIUS (249-251 AD) INITIATED AN EMPIRE-WIDE EDICT REQUIRING PUBLIC SACRIFICES TO ROMAN GODS, COMPELLING CHRISTIANS TO EITHER COMPLY OR FACE PUNISHMENT. THIS POLICY REPRESENTED THE FIRST SYSTEMATIC ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE RELIGIOUS CONFORMITY THROUGH LEGAL MEANS. LATER, EMPEROR VALERIAN INTENSIFIED PERSECUTION EFFORTS, TARGETING CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND CONFISCATING CHURCH PROPERTY.

THE GREAT PERSECUTION UNDER DIOCLETIAN (303-311 AD)

THE MOST SEVERE AND PROLONGED PERSECUTION OCCURRED DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN AND HIS CO-EMPERORS. KNOWN AS THE "GREAT PERSECUTION," IT INVOLVED A SERIES OF EDICTS AIMED AT ERADICATING CHRISTIANITY BY BANNING WORSHIP, BURNING SCRIPTURES, AND IMPRISONING CLERGY. THIS PERIOD WITNESSED WIDESPREAD MARTYRDOM AND SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES, BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE FAITH'S INTERNAL CONSOLIDATION.

IMPACT OF PERSECUTION ON EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

DESPITE THE VIOLENT REPRESSION, THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH HAD PARADOXICAL EFFECTS THAT INFLUENCED CHRISTIANITY'S DEVELOPMENT.

STRENGTHENING OF INTERNAL COHESION

ADVERSITY FOSTERED A SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AMONG BELIEVERS, REINFORCING COMMUNAL IDENTITIES AND ENCOURAGING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ORGANIZED STRUCTURES, SUCH AS EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP AND CODIFIED DOCTRINES. THE NARRATIVES OF MARTYRS BECAME POWERFUL SYMBOLS OF FAITH AND PERSEVERANCE, INSPIRING CONVERTS AND STRENGTHENING MORALE.

EXPANSION OF THE FAITH

IRONICALLY, PERSECUTION OFTEN INCREASED PUBLIC INTEREST IN CHRISTIANITY. THE COURAGE DISPLAYED BY MARTYRS AND THE MORAL APPEAL OF CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS ATTRACTED NEW ADHERENTS FROM VARIOUS SOCIAL STRATA, INCLUDING SLAVES, WOMEN, AND INTELLECTUALS.

DEVELOPMENT OF APOLOGETICS

EARLY CHRISTIAN THINKERS RESPONDED TO PERSECUTION THROUGH APOLOGETICS—DEFENSES OF THE FAITH AIMED AT DISPUTING MISCONCEPTIONS AND ADVOCATING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE. FIGURES LIKE JUSTIN MARTYR AND TERTULLIAN ARTICULATED THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS THAT LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH SHARES SIMILARITIES WITH OTHER HISTORICAL EPISODES OF RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION, YET CERTAIN DISTINCTIONS STAND OUT:

- **SCALE AND DURATION:** UNLIKE SOME BRIEF OR LOCALIZED PERSECUTIONS, EARLY CHRISTIAN SUFFERING SPANNED CENTURIES AND MULTIPLE POLITICAL REGIMES.
- **LEGAL STATUS:** CHRISTIANITY TRANSITIONED FROM AN ILLICIT SECT TO AN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED RELIGION BY THE EARLY 4TH CENTURY, ILLUSTRATING A DYNAMIC LEGAL TRAJECTORY.
- **SOCIAL INTEGRATION:** OVER TIME, CHRISTIANS SHIFTED FROM MARGINALIZED OUTSIDERS TO INFLUENTIAL ACTORS WITHIN THE EMPIRE.

THESE FACTORS HIGHLIGHT THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES AND EVENTUAL TRIUMPHS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY COMPARED TO OTHER MINORITY RELIGIONS FACING PERSECUTION.

LESSONS FOR CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

ANALYZING THE PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH OFFERS VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO THE DYNAMICS BETWEEN STATE POWER AND RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION. IT UNDERSCORES THE DANGERS OF CONFLATING POLITICAL LOYALTY WITH RELIGIOUS CONFORMITY AND THE POTENTIAL RESILIENCE OF FAITH COMMUNITIES UNDER PRESSURE. MODERN DISCUSSIONS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CAN

DRAW ON THESE HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS TO ADVOCATE FOR PLURALISM AND TOLERANCE.

THE NARRATIVE OF THE EARLY CHURCH'S PERSECUTION IS NOT MERELY A RECORD OF SUFFERING BUT A TESTAMENT TO THE COMPLEX INTERACTIONS BETWEEN IDEOLOGY, AUTHORITY, AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN ANTIQUITY. IT CONTINUES TO INFORM THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE, HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP, AND THE BROADER CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS PERSEVERANCE.

Persecution Of The Early Church

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* Herbert Brook Workman, 1906

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* Herbert Brook Workman, 1911

persecution of the early church: *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* W. H. C. Frend, 1965

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* Herbert B. Workman, 2009-04-01 The subject of persecution in the early Church, treated as a whole, has been somewhat neglected by English writers. The legal aspects of the matter, the relations of the Church to the Empire, and the nature of the courts and procedure by which the Christians were condemned have been fully dealt with in the researches of Ramsay, Hardy, and others . . . Persecution also, treated merely from the standpoint of the Church, the experiences of the martyrs, has, of course, never lacked presentation in this country from the days of Foxe onward . . . [A] treatment of the subject as a whole, in its legal, historical, ecclesiastical, and experiential aspects, is what I have attempted in the following pages . . . While I trust that no aspect of the subject has been neglected, special attention has been drawn to those aspects of the inner life of the Church which led to persecution. Contents 1. The Master and His Disciples 2. Casesar or Christ 3. The Causes of Hatred 4. The Great Persecution 5. The Experiences of the Persecuted

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* Herbert Brook Workman, 1960

persecution of the early church: *PERSECUTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH* HERBERT B. WORKMAN, 2018

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* Herbert Brook Workman, 1923

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* , 1990

persecution of the early church: *The Myth of Persecution* Candida Moss, 2013-03-05 An expert on early Christianity reveals how the early church invented stories of Christian martyrs—and how this persecution myth persists today. According to church tradition and popular belief, early Christians were systematically persecuted by a brutal Roman Empire intent on their destruction. As the story goes, vast numbers of believers were thrown to the lions, tortured, or burned alive because they refused to renounce Christ. But as Candida Moss reveals in *The Myth of Persecution*, the “Age of Martyrs” is a fiction. There was no sustained 300-year-long effort by the Romans to persecute Christians. Instead, these stories were pious exaggerations; highly stylized rewritings of Jewish, Greek, and Roman noble death traditions; and even forgeries designed to marginalize heretics, inspire the faithful, and fund churches. The traditional story of persecution is still invoked by church leaders, politicians, and media pundits who insist that Christians were—and always will be—persecuted by a hostile, secular world. While violence against Christians does occur in select parts of the world today, the rhetoric of persecution is both misleading and rooted in an inaccurate history of the early church. By shedding light on the historical record, Moss urges modern Christians to abandon the conspiratorial assumption that the world is out to get them.

persecution of the early church: Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church W. H. C. Frend, 2014-04-15 Although the story of the triumphant rise of Christianity has often been told, it was a triumph achieved through blood and tribulation. The literal meaning of the term martyr meant witness, but among early Christians it quickly acquired a harsher meaning--one who died for the faith--and that witness through death was responsible for many conversions, including those of Justin Martyr, who himself offered just such witness, and perhaps even Tertullian. Persecution was seen by early Christians, as by later historians, as one of the crucial influences on the development of the early church and Christian belief. Why did the Roman Empire persecute Christians? Why did thousands of Christians not merely accept, but welcome martyrdom? In his classic work, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, the late W. H. C. Frend explores the mindset of Christians who suffered persecution as well as the motivations of those who persecuted them. He shows the critical importance of Jewish ideas to early Christians, heavily influenced as they were by the story of Daniel and the revolt of the Maccabean. He argues that the Christian concept of martyrdom held in such high regard among early Christians can only be understood as springing from Jewish roots. Frend explores a number of major persecutions to show both common themes and variations, and examines also the relationship between the heavenly kingdom of Christ and the rule of the earthly emperor. In doing so, he shows how persecution formed an essential part in a providential philosophy of history that has profoundly influenced European political thought.

persecution of the early church: *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* W. H. C. Frend, 1981

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church* Herbert B. Workman, 2015-07-10 Excerpt from *Persecution in the Early Church: A Chapter in the History of Renunciation* Of the following pages the lecture actually delivered consisted of Chapter I., 1, and of the whole of Chapter V. These sections I have printed unaltered. This will explain a few slight repetitions, as also certain hortatory paragraphs not strictly in keeping with an historical work. The subject of persecution in the early Church, treated as a whole, has been somewhat neglected by English writers. The legal aspects of the matter, the relations of the Church to the Empire, and the nature of the courts and procedure by which the Christians were condemned have been fully dealt with in the researches of Ramsay, Hardy, and others, who approve on the whole of the judgement of Mommsen. The opposite view, though still maintained by certain writers of repute (see *infra*, Appendix E), has not found any English historian, so far as I know, to defend it at length. Persecution also, treated merely from the standpoint of the Church, the experiences of the martyrs, has, of course, never lacked presentation in this country from the days of Foxe onward. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

persecution of the early church: *Persecution in the Early Church: A Chapter in the History of Renunciation* Herbert B. B. Workman, 2017-08-23

persecution of the early church: *Persecution and Profession* Geo Morrish, 2015-03-25 Contents. Part 1. Persecution. Chapter 1. Persecution: Why Christians were persecuted. Why called Atheists. — Rome full of temples and altars. — Christianity aggressive. — The burning of Rome, charged on the Christians. — Persecution by Nero. — Testimony of Tacitus. — The Twelve Apostles Chapter 2. Insurrection of the Jews: Often revolted under the Romans. — The Jews at Caesarea. — Florus attacks Jerusalem. — Treachery of the Jews. — Massacre of the Jews at Caesarea. — Cestius attacks Jerusalem. — Great victory of the Jews over the Romans. — Prophecies relating to the destruction of Jerusalem. — Fearful sights and great signs. — The cry of Jesus, son of Ananus. — Josephus. — Ruler — Prophet — With the Romans. — Destruction of Jerusalem. — The Jews divided

into factions. — The siege led by Titus. — Determined resistance of the Jews. — Mode of attack by the Romans. — Severe famine in the city. — A woman eats her child. — The city taken. — Titus desires to save the temple. — It is burnt. — The city destroyed. — Great slaughter and numerous prisoners. — Prophecy fulfilled. Chapter 3. Further Persecutions. — The Romans attribute all calamities to the Christians. — Letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan. — Trajan's reply. — Ignatius. — Justin Martyr. — Polycarp. — Blandina. — Perpetua. Chapter 4. The Apostolic Fathers: Clement. — Polycarp. — Barnabas. — Ignatius. — Hermas. — None to be trusted as scripture. Chapter 5. Attacks on Christianity. — Celsus. — Porphyry. — The Oracle of Delphi. — Hierocles. — The Apologies. — Justin Martyr. — Minucius Felix. — Athenagoras. — Tertullian Chapter 6. The Catacombs. — How formed. — The testimony of the tablets. — A visitor's description. Chapter 7. Miracles and Signs. — Their existence in the early church. — Exorcists. Chapter 8. Offices in the Early Church. — Elders, Presbyters, and Bishops. — Undue exaltation of the bishops. Chapter 9. Customs in the Church. — Reception into the Church. — Catechumens. — Fidelis. — Audientes — Baptism. — Forms of Worship. — Meetings on Sunday. — The Lord's Supper. — Taken weekly. — Singing. — Collection for the poor. — Bread and wine sent to the sick. — Water mixed with the wine. — Abuses creeping in. — Love Feasts. — Superstitions in the Church. — The sign of the cross. — Clergy and laity. — The Lord's Supper and Absolution. — Letter of Dionysius. — Celibacy of the Clergy. — Hippolytus and Callistus. Chapter 10. Early Heresies. — What is heresy? — Gnosticism. — Arianism. — The Novatians. — The Lapsi. Chapter 11. Cyprian and the Assumptions of Rome. — How were the lapsi to be treated? — Rome struggles for supremacy. Chapter 12. The Later Persecutions. — Persecution of Decius. — The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. — Origen. — Valerian and Diocletian. — Galerius. — The oracles consulted. — The ten persecutions. — The address to the church at Smyrna. Part 2.

Profession. Chapter 1. Conversion of Constantine. — His vision. — Was he really a Christian? Chapter 2. The Council of Nice. — The Nicene creed. — The Arians condemned. Easter — How calculated — How kept Chapter 3. Athanasius and His Times. — The Arians in power. — Athanasius persecuted. — Death of Constantine. — Athanasius banished. Chapter 4. Ambrose: made a bishop suddenly. — Valens emperor in the East. — Eighty ministers burnt in a ship. — The Second General Council. — Ambrose rashly opposes Valentinian II. — Revolt at Thessalonica. — Massacre of the inhabitants. — Penance demanded of the emperor. Chapter 5. Chrysostom and His Times. — He finds being an advocate and a Christian inconsistent. — Chrysostom an ascetic. — His trick on his friend Basil. — His narrow escape. — He cannot crucify the flesh. — Made a presbyter and preaches. — The revolt at Antioch. — Made bishop of Constantinople by Eutropius. — Not liked by the clergy. — Popular with the bishops. — He aids Eudoxia in carrying relics to her new chapel. — Protects Eutropius when condemned to death. — He ventures to the Gothic camp. — The Tall Brethren. — Plots against Chrysostom. — He is deposed and banished. — The fright by an earthquake restores him. — Eudoxia's image condemned by Chrysostom. — Again he is deposed and banished. — His great usefulness in his long banishment, — Removed to a more severe climate. — His death. Chapter 6. The Donatist Schism. — Their doctrine of separation from evil, good. — Their practice bad. — The Circumcelliones. — Augustine. — His works. Chapter 7. Pelagianism. — Pelagius condemned. — His doctrine. — Semi-Pelagianism Chapter 8. Monasticism. — St. Anthony. — Simon Stylites. — The Essenes. — Egyptians. — What led to Monasticism. — The Scriptures preserved and copied by Monks. Chapter 9. Christianity in Britain. — The Druids. — Their human sacrifices. — Christianity in England early. — Was Claudia a British Christian? — St. Patrick and Ireland. — Scotland. Chapter 10. Councils in the Church. — The General Councils: The first at Nice. — The second at Constantinople. — The third at Ephesus. — Eutyches condemned. — The Robbers' Meeting. — The fourth at Chalcedon. — The Nicene creed confirmed. — What Scripture for Councils. — What authority over Christians. Chapter 11. The Western Church. — Leo the Great, bishop of Rome. — Saves the city of Rome. — Defends the faith. — Manichaeism. — The Priscillianists. — Leo anxious for universal supremacy. — His conflict with Hilary of Arles. — His death. Chapter 12. Close of the Fifth Century. — Conflicts with the Arians. — The Monophysites. — The Henoticon. — The bishops of Rome and Constantinople excommunicate each other. — The professing church rent into parties. —

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