

indeed—to act as became the nobility of their new birth; to love their enemies, and to overcome evil with good. He then allotted to each person his share in the work. The poor contributed their labour, and the rich their wealth, and thus an abundant relief was afforded, not only to the Christians, but to their heathen enemies.

One source of trouble and peril to the primitive Christians was an opinion, maliciously propagated, that to them were due all the disasters that afflicted the state, because they did not sacrifice to the gods. During one of these persecutions, a question arose of some importance in the Church, viz., how those should be treated who, in terror of death, had fallen away or had sacrificed to idols. Cyprian, though opposed by some, decided by means of a Council, that those who had so *lapsed* should, upon their true repentance, be restored. In another Council, in which there were no less than sixty-six Bishops, the subject of the baptism of children was discussed, and it was determined unanimously that the mercy of God was not to be denied even to the newly-born.

In the year 257, the Proconsul of Africa, wishing to work upon the Bishop's fears, summoned him to the Council-chamber. When Cyprian was brought into his presence—

“I have heard,” said he, “that you despise the worship of the gods, wherefore I advise you to consult for yourself, and honour them.”

*The Bishop of Carthage.*—“I am a Christian and a Bishop. I acknowledge no other gods, but one only true God. This God we Christians serve; to Him we pray night and day for all men, and even for the Emperor.”

*The Proconsul.*—“And is this, then, thy resolution?”

*The Bishop.*—“That resolution which is founded in God cannot be altered.”

*The Proconsul.*—“Then it is the will of the princes that you should be exiled.”

*The Bishop.*—“He who has God in his heart is no exile, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.”

Cyprian was sent to Curubis, a place about fifty miles off, where he remained eleven months, but was again conveyed to the neighbourhood of Carthage, and, after some delay, brought before the Governor, Galerius Maximus, who looked at him and said:

“Art thou Cyprian, who hast been Bishop and father to men of an impious mind? The sacred Emperor commands thee to do sacrifice. Be well advised, and do not throw away thy life.”

The holy martyr replied, “I am Cyprian; I am a Christian, and I cannot sacrifice to the gods. Do as thou hast been commanded. As for me, in so just a cause there needs no consultation.”

“You would judge better to consult your safety,” said the magistrate.

“My safety and my strength is Christ the Lord,” answered Cyprian; “I have no desire that things should be otherwise with me than that I may adore my God and hasten to Him, for ‘the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.’”