

from Heaven, and many of those who scoffed at it soon learned its beneficent and holy influence. It suited all classes. Philosophers and scholars had ceased to ignore it; the wealthy and great thought it a worthy topic of conversation; the idle and listless at least began to consider it some sort of passing curiosity, and the masses, whether ignorant or informed, found in it a source of encouragement and comfort. Jews, ever the same in their restless discontent, despised it; but its power could not be resisted. Its voice was heard in every direction.

Still, even at this early day, some of the evils that have ever oppressed Christianity, are seen in their initiatory state. The Bishop of Antioch, for instance, at the time we write about, was the well known Paul of Samosata. He had assumed the role of the wealthy, pompous, prince like ecclesiastic, so different from the humility preached by the ordinary Christian. Glorious was he in his raiment, grand was his chariot which shone with gold and precious stones. Marked was his retinue as he moved through the streets and his forerunners cried "Make way for Paul of Antioch." Thus did he pay his episcopal visits to cities like Palmyra, and men who had heard "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world" denounced by the Christian preacher were puzzled to reconcile what they saw with what they heard. Had Paul and men like him of early days foreseen where such pomp and love of power would land the church of Christ as we are able to look back and discern it they would have paused in their thoughtless career.

Away on the rocky mountain shelves near the magnificence and glory of Palmyra lived an aged and worn out Christian hermit. He was a hermit only because his work was done, but bitterly did he deplore the growing conformity of Christians to the pageantry and hollow glitter of the world. He saw the mischief it would bring to the Church and he was right.

Still those who deplored the beginnings of difficulties, such as this, in Christianity, always pointed to the plain and simple teaching of the religion itself and insisted that from that alone it should be judged, and notwithstanding all drawbacks, the voice of Jesus steadily made itself heard all over the Roman Empire, both west and east, and gave a weary people rest for their souls.

The fall of Palmyra, under the ambition of Zenobia, is graphically described by Mr. Ware. Her noble army, glittering in splendor, a pageant in itself wonderful to behold, led by Zenobia in person, was met by the stern Aurelian and twice defeated. Falling back upon her beloved city she defied for a long time the siege of the Romans, but was forced, through treachery to yield. She was taken captive to Rome to grace the triumph of Aurelian. In her absence a revolt was raised against the Romans in Palmyra and the fierce Aurelian returned with his legions, dismantled the city and butchered the inhabitants. The magnificent buildings, with but few exceptions were des-

troyed and Palmyra, the wonder of the east, went out in its glory for ever.

But the voice of Christianity died not with it or any others of the buried cities of old. They perished, but it endured. It endured because it came from God. Be it ours to promote still the power and force of our religion which has come down to us from early days of struggle and strife.

## THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

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THE story of the conversion of England is not at all to be confounded with that of the introduction of Christianity into Britain, nor with the history of the ancient British Church.

We use the name "England" in its strictest sense—"Angle-land," the land that was subdued and occupied by the Anglo-Saxons.

I take for granted, as facts fully established and generally known, that the Gospel was preached in Britain at a very early date, and the Church planted there before the close of the second century; that in the fourth century the British Church, completely organized, was received as an orthodox apostolic and independent Church by the great Christian commonwealth, that it was in constant communication with the Western Churches and was noted for its uncorrupt soundness in the Faith; that for more than 300 years from its complete subjugation by Agricola in A. D. 84, Britain was a Roman Province, differing little in culture and civilization from any other portion of the empire: that during this long period of peace and good government, the country made rapid advances in wealth—good roads were made through its length and breadth, fortified camps and walled cities were dotted over its surface—the princely villas of opulent Roman merchants and the temples of the ancient mythology of the conquerors adorned the chief seats of government or commerce. London, as early as A. D. 61, the year when Boadicea, irretrievably defeated by Nero's general, Paulinus, preferred death to dishonor, was a large emporium of commerce, its streets frequented by foreign merchants and its port by trading vessels, and York, before the close of the occupation, had become the capital of the Emperor of the Gallican Provinces, Constantinus, whose wife Helen was a Christian British lady, and the birth place of his greater son, Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of Rome. The Church, too, had prospered. With the exception of the two years of the Diocletian persecution, A. D. 303-305, the rigor of which was much mitigated by the tolerance of Constantinus, but which gave the British Church her first martyr, St. Alban, she enjoyed uninterrupted tranquility. Many of the churches of England and Wales best known to-day date their origin from that period; of a few, the actual buildings still surviving at least in part—