

When the Church held most uncompromisingly that her citizenship was in heaven, absolutely refusing to be affiliated with the kingdoms of this world, then it was that she was irresistible in her onward movement. This attitude of the early Christians gave great offence to heathen rulers, who often desired to be friendly to those who stubbornly refused to be befriended by them lest their friendship with the world might prove enmity to God.

Here is the picture which Uhlhorn gives of the victorious Church of the first three centuries: "The coming of the Lord was then believed to be quite near, and this hope dominated the whole life. No provision was made for the long continuance of the Church on earth, and all efforts were exclusively directed toward remaining in the world without spot till the day of Christ's coming." This is the time and this is the spiritual attitude in which Christianity made its most extraordinary advance among the heathen, so that Tertullian could say: "We are of yesterday, and yet have filled every place belonging to you—cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, senate, and forum;" and Eusebius observes that "the saving Word has brought the souls of men of every race to the devout veneration of the God of the universe." Indeed, so rapid and so firm was the progress of the Gospel during the period that Dr. Warneck estimates that "at the end of the first century there were in the whole extent of the Roman Empire at most *two hundred thousand* Christians, and at the end of the third century about *six millions*—that is, about a twentieth part of the whole population" (see "History of Protestant Missions," p. 4).

Yet the faithful historian, after drawing this glowing portrait of the primitive Church, confesses his aversion to the austere bearing toward the world which these "earliest Christians" thus maintained; and after the manner of modern preachers discoursing on the "Church of the future" or "the institutional Church," he thus moralizes: "Not thus could Christianity conquer the world! It must become larger hearted, must go to meet the world, condescend to it in order in this way to conquer. The Church must not remain as it was, it must strip off the guise of the conventicle and become the Church of the people."

This ideal, too, was realized; and a little later on the historian describes the bearing of the "Church of the people." "Christians in the higher classes who had numerous family connections among the heathen did not scruple to attend family festivals in heathen households, and, of course, also to be present at the customary heathen rites." "Some even ventured to accompany their heathen relatives to the games and theatres." It came to be considered wise not to antagonize the heathen usages as heretofore, and the word "discreet" in Titus 2:5 was much dwelt upon. No doubt the proposal for a "congress of religions" would have met with ready favor at this time. The distinction between consecrated and unconsecrated money gradually ceased. So rigid had been this discrimination, that "when the gnostic Marcion separated from the Church, the two hundred