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EUSEBIUS PAMPHILI



LONDON AGENTS
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EUSEBIUS PAMPHILI

Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine and first Christian Historian

A Study of the Man and His Writings

FIVE ESSAYS

BY

F. J. FOAKES-JACKSON

Formerly Lightfoot Scholar in the University of Cambridge

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To
THE LIGHTFOOT SCHOLARS
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

AVANT-PROPOS

Problème du rapport entre les premiers commencements du judaïsme postexilique et le triomphe, à l'époque où furent composés les écrits du Nouveau Testament, d'une Communauté juive très vigoureuse et sûre d'elle-même; problème du rapport entre les origines du christianisme et la victoire, au quatrième siècle, d'une Eglise chrétienne candidate à la dignité d'Eglise d'Etat — il y a là deux énigmes en quelque sorte symétriques. Dans l'un et l'autre cas, il s'agit, en effet, d'une histoire dont le point de départ et le point d'arrivée sont relativement bien connus, mais dont les parties médianes se trouvent enveloppées de ténèbres plus ou moins épaisses, qui rendent malaisée toute reconstitution méthodique des chaînons intermédiaires.

De même, il y a parallélisme entre la mission de Josèphe et celle d'Eusèbe. Celui-là et celui-ci s'appliquent, pourrait-on dire, à bâtir un pont par-dessus un abîme. Les deux se vouent à la tâche ingrate de présenter, de l'une et de l'autre périodes moyennes, une histoire continue et consistante. Liseurs infatigables, possesseurs d'un savoir relativement étendu pour leur temps, protégés des Romains qui leur ouvrent des documents inaccessibles à de moins favorisés qu'eux, en outre observateurs affranchis de tout fanatisme quoique attachés à la foi de leurs pères, Josèphe et Eusèbe s'efforcent, chacun, de démêler l'écheveau d'une histoire d'environ trois siècles et demi. Ils le font, de part et d'autre, avec une curieuse alternance entre informations solides et informations insuffisantes. Et l'un et l'autre demeurent fréquemment, quant aux matières qu'ils exposent, nos uniques témoins, nos seules autorités. Qu'on leur fasse crédit ou non, il faut bien reconnaître qu'en dehors d'eux l'on ne saurait presque rien des époques dont ils entendent retracer les événements décisifs.

L'auteur du présent livre a publié, il y a quarante ans, un *Manuel de l'Histoire de l'Eglise* et, il y a trente ans, une *Histoire des Hébreux*. L'un et l'autre ouvrages ont été plusieurs fois réédités et ajustés aux progrès particuliers que la connaissance historique n'a cessé de faire dans les deux domaines. Ces travaux ont amené leur auteur à soumettre à un examen critique la vie et les écrits de Josèphe. On trouvera le fruit de ses investigations dans le livre qu'il a fait paraître en 1930 sur ce sujet. Et voici, faisant pendant à ce dernier écrit, son ouvrage sur Eusèbe.

Ce qui vaut pour l'historien juif, vaut aussi pour l'historien chrétien. Parallèlement au caractère complexe des éléments assemblés et utilisés par le premier, l'on apercevra les grandes difficultés qu'il y a, pour le savant, à tirer des matériaux réunis par le second une intelligence adéquate de l'histoire des premiers siècles de l'Eglise. D'autant qu'Eusèbe n'est guère agréable à lire, malgré son érudition considérable, l'amplitude du rayon de sa curiosité et la très sérieuse dette de reconnaissance que lui doit, en conséquence, la postérité. De même, l'on verra que, si Eusèbe n'a pas brillé comme un héros de la foi, sa personne se révèle cependant suffisamment digne d'intérêt pour gagner, à mesure qu'on l'étudie, à être connue. Elle incarne bien, en tout cas, ce qu'avait de caractéristique l'époque sur laquelle s'est étendue sa longue vie, cette vie si riche en expérience des hommes et en efforts pour ressusciter un passé encore récent, mais déjà difficile à pénétrer.

*Écrit par M. Fernand Ménégoz, Professor de
l'Université de Strasbourg.*

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PREFACE

FOR many years I have endeavoured to make the history of Israel and of the early days of the Christian Church interesting to successive generations of pupils. Whether I have here and there succeeded it is for them to decide; but in the attempt I have at least realised the difficulty of the task I have undertaken. To trace the rise, progress and development of what to me is the truest revelation of God to man has had an extraordinary fascination, which is not lessened by the fact that the more I have learned the more perplexities have arisen in my mind in making the attempt. Of this, however, I am convinced that to arrive at anything approaching the truth a study of the best original authorities is indispensable. The problem involved in early Judaism and early Christianity is identical. The Old Testament and the New are the basic elements of both. In accounting for the rise of Judaism as we now know it we are under the guidance of the inspired writings of the Old Covenant, which take us down to the middle of the fifth century before our era, when the Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem with peculiar laws and traditions which in process of time made them into a people different from all other nations. The distinctive characteristics of the Jews are sufficiently marked when we reach the days of the New Testament, but how they developed since the days

of Nehemiah is by no means easy to account for, nor can the events of their history be easily co-ordinated in a continuous narrative. It is the same with the growth of Christianity. The New Testament gives four accounts of Jesus, a brief sketch of the first days of the Church, and a fuller one of the career of Paul, supplemented by a series of letters of this indefatigable missionary, but the historian, save for some scattered and disconnected documents, is left in the dark when the records of the Apostles of Jesus and their contemporaries cease.

Both in Judaism and Christianity an historian arose to bridge the gulfs. Josephus and Eusebius undertook to collect the material available for their purpose and to construct a continuous and consistent narrative. In some respects the two writers, though separated by centuries, were singularly alike. They were indisputably men of wide experience and omnivorous readers. Both enjoyed the patronage of the Roman rulers of their day, and had access to documents inaccessible to less favoured individuals. Neither of them was conspicuous for any fanatical devotion to the cause he espoused, though both were earnest apologists for the faith they respectively professed. Josephus' account of the fortunes of the Jews from about 330 B.C. to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is approximately equal in bulk to the *Church History* of Eusebius, from the birth of the Christ to the death of Constantine. The same lack of information on certain periods, whilst others are more fully treated, is apparent in both historians. Yet Josephus and Eusebius are

often our only authorities for the early days of post-exilic Judaism and Christianity. Whether or not we accept all they tell us as accurate fact, without them we are obliged to own that we should be in complete ignorance of much which they relate.

More than forty years ago I undertook to produce a Manual of Church History. I relied mainly on the lectures and instruction I had received in my student days, supplemented by reading modern works bearing on the subject. My book was fortunate enough to appear in eight editions in England and America; in preparation for each of which I was able to revise many of my opinions as my knowledge of the subject developed. Some ten years later I set myself to work on a similar attempt to sketch the history of the Hebrew nation, incited to do so by the interest taken in what were then comparatively new theories of the origin of the Old Testament scriptures. Five editions of my book enabled me to revise it on the same lines as my *Church History*, and to expand it till I brought the story down to New Testament times.

I learned a valuable lesson in trying to relate the history of Israel from the Bible, namely how much skill is needed to take ancient documents and make them into an orderly narrative. Even the historical books of the Old Testament do not always lend themselves to the construction of history in modern language; and the difficulties I experienced led me to realise how formidable a task I had engaged on, and perhaps to give my work the title of *The Biblical History of the Hebrews*.

On having to turn my attention to a protracted study of the Acts of the Apostles I had naturally to pay special attention to the history of Josephus dealing with the period, only to discover that despite what appears to be the confidence which most authors place on this historian, he does not give the assistance one might reasonably demand of him. This led me to endeavour to find out how much real information he provides in the later books of the *Antiquities* and to investigate his methods. I then realised the need of providing students with guidance as to how to read Josephus intelligently. As a result I wrote a book on his writings. Whether I have helped others by my work, I know not, but I am certain that I profited greatly by my own laborious efforts to give my readers an idea of how this author, in my opinion, ought to be studied.

I was thus led to do the same by the Christian historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, and was led to appreciate the difficulty of rightly employing his material in constructing a story of the first days of Christianity. This led me to offer to young students the fruits of my investigations in the hope of inducing them to go for themselves to the original authorities, when forming their views as to the origin of the Christian religion. Hence these essays.

It will appear that Eusebius is anything but an agreeable writer, though his erudition would be remarkable in any age; the versatility of his studies is amazing, and posterity owes him a heavy debt. Nor can he be included among the heroes of the

Faith. At the same time his personality must interest all who know anything concerning him, and the interest is bound to increase as their acquaintance with him increases. He is indeed typical of the times covered by his long life.

These essays are intended to be a prelude to a design which I have formed, although I can never hope to see its completion. In 1879, the year of my B.A. degree, I was a candidate for the Lightfoot Scholarship in Ecclesiastical History, who was declared by the examiners to have "acquitted himself with credit." In 1880 I was elected to the Scholarship. I can never be sufficiently grateful for the encouragement, due to the generosity of Bishop Lightfoot, to pursue my studies in Church History. Among the distinguished men who have been Lightfoot scholars are five who have been my pupils, and several others who are numbered among my most intimate friends; and it has always seemed to me that something should be produced in appreciation of his gift to his University. As one of his greatest contributions to the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* is his article on "Eusebius of Caesarea," it appears that there could be no more suitable memorial of his work in a field in which he laboured with so much success, than a volume which would assist the students of the future to understand Eusebius, the pioneer of Christian History.

The book should be prefaced by Dr. Lightfoot's article (of course with the permission of the publishers), and contain an estimate of Eusebius in all his different capacities, summaries of all his genuine

works, and due notice of all which have been attributed to him, an explanation of his system of chronology and exegesis of Scripture, and be so written as to attract the reader. This would be a worthy monument of England's most learned and generous bishop, and if it should see the light, these essays would indeed have borne good fruit.

They originated in a series of lectures delivered in 1931 to the Summer School of the Bishops' University, Lennoxville, Canada. They were given in the same year, at the suggestion of my colleague, Professor Hume of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, to the Faculty of Protestant Theology in the University of Strasbourg, of which I was made a doctor in 1933. I can hardly adequately express my gratitude for the friendly welcome I received from the professors, and especially for the kindness and hospitality shown me by M. Fernand Ménégoz, who wrote the *Avant-Propos* which I have ventured to print in this volume.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the reader of the proofs, Mr. J. H. Bullock, who read them with the intelligence of a true scholar. My old friend, Mr. E. W. Heffer, without my knowledge, submitted the work to no less a scholar than T. R. Glover, the Public Orator of the University of Cambridge, who criticised it with the severity of a scholar, and approved my efforts with the partiality of a tried friend of many years standing.

Cambridge, June, 1933.

Essay I

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

ESSAY I

THE BACKGROUND

EUSEBIUS was born soon after the middle of the third century of our era and died in or before A.D. 340. His long life was consequently passed in a most critical period of history. He witnessed the revival of the Empire under Diocletian, and the transference of its centre from West to East, and he lived through the violent attempt of the Roman government to destroy the religion of Christ. He saw the astonishing change of fortune which placed Constantine on the throne of the world, and which made Christianity the religion of Roman civilisation. He lived in close communication with the great Emperor, and knew much of the inner working of his policy of creating in the Church an imperial power. His influence was felt in the great council to which the bishops of the whole Empire were assembled to decide on the creed and discipline of the universal Church. An erudite scholar himself, he associated with the most learned men of his day, and, though immersed in books, was equally occupied in the business of an age of political as well as of ecclesiastical crisis. He comes before us as a theologian, a diplomat, possibly as one who had suffered for the Faith, but above all as an historian, the pioneer of those who relate the story of the Church. If he is

not entitled to a place among the great writers or men of genius in the ancient world, he yields in interest to few historical personages. To understand Eusebius aright it is desirable to endeavour to describe the background of the scene in which he played so conspicuous a part.

The third century of our era is one of the driest in secular history. It produced few exciting incidents, and few great names. Its record is mainly one of unhappiness and decay. The Roman Empire, now an inert mass, seemed to be in the throes of dissolution. Its rulers rise as suddenly as they fall and are but names to most of us. Only occasionally one of them performs a worthy act, or wins a great victory; but even such a one reigns too short a time to leave his mark on history. In less than fifty years from the death of Alexander Severus in 235, to the accession of Diocletian in 284, there were sixteen emperors and innumerable pretenders, and most of these died by the hands of their soldiers.¹ It is, moreover, difficult to realise how

¹ Alexander Severus perished with his mother in a military revolt (235) after a reign of 13 years. Maximin was murdered by his soldiers in 237. Two Gordians, father and son, perished in the revolt of Capellanus, prefect of Numidia, after a reign of two months. Gordian III was killed by his soldiers (244) at the instigation of his successor, Philip the Arabian. Philip was killed in battle or slain by his soldiers after a reign of five years in 249. Decius was killed in battle with the Goths (251), Gallus killed by his soldiers (253). Volusianus, son of Gallus, perished with his father. Aemilianus was slain by his soldiers after a reign of four months. Valerian was taken captive and killed by the Persians. Gallienus was killed by his soldiers after having been acknowledged as Augustus for 15 years. Claudius II

little information we possess, not only in regard to this century, but throughout the entire imperial period. Our chief authority, from Hadrian (117-138) and onward, is the so-called *Augustan History*, a compilation by six authors of biographies of emperors and their rivals. It is generally supposed that, as the writers assert, this history was composed early in the fourth century, some of the accounts of the different reigns being addressed to Diocletian (284-305), or Constantine (307-337). It has also been maintained that the whole series is a forgery of the time of Theodosius (379-395), or even later. Be this as it may, these lives mainly consist of gossip about the personal habits of the successive emperors, much being trivial, and not a little grossly indecent. Of history in the sense of the progress of events there is little or none, and it takes the genius of a Gibbon to weave a readable story out of the material at his disposal.¹

Yet in this apparently barren century the future destinies of the world were being shaped, not only

died of fever, after a victorious campaign against the Goths. Aurelian was murdered by his soldiers. Tacitus died in a campaign in Asia at the age of 75. Probus was killed by his troops after a reign of six years. Carus—cause of his death uncertain. Carinus was slain by his officers. Numerian, brother of Carinus was murdered by Assius Aper, prefect of the praetorians. All these emperors died away from Rome whilst commanding armies against the enemies of the Republic.

¹The *Augustan History* has been given in accessible form in the Loeb Classical Series in three volumes with a translation by David Magie, under the title of *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.

in its politics but in the spheres of thought and religion. In such an age Eusebius was born, a man in many ways typical of the period of transition in which his lot was cast.

In surveying the third century we may take into account its three main aspects (I) in politics, (II) in the sphere of thought, and (III) in that of religion.

I.—In his lifetime Eusebius witnessed the transition of the Roman government from the condition of being a republic in theory, and a dictatorship for all practical purposes with the city of Rome as its capital, to that of an avowed monarchy with its centre in an Eastern city. Tacitus, in the preface to his *History*, gives the clue to the cause of this momentous change. Commenting on the death of Nero and the period of civil war which followed it, he says, "A new political secret was then for the first time discovered. It was perceived that elsewhere than at Rome an emperor might be invested with the sovereign power."¹ This signifies that henceforward neither the Senate nor even the praetorian guard in the City could determine the destiny of the world by giving it a master; the choice rested with the military force throughout the Roman Empire. Thus the legions of the East bestowed the supreme authority on Flavius Vespasian, an experienced general of middle-class origin, whose character in contrast with those of his high-born predecessors was eminently bourgeois. His rule was continued by his two brilliant sons, the amiable Titus, and the

¹ Tacitus, *Hist.* I. 4.

morose Domitian;¹ after these, the principate passed into the hands of a series of excellent men, who succeeding one another by adoption gave the world a period of good government by rules of high character whose one object seemed to be devotion to the furtherance of the best interests of mankind. Under Nerva (96-98), Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), Pius (138-161), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), civilised humanity was indeed fortunate in its rulers.

But the closing days of the age of the virtuous and philosophic emperors were marked by disasters throughout the world. A plague of unusual violence diminished the population; the armies held the northern frontier with difficulty; at last Germanic tribes, the Marcomanni and the Quadi, burst into the territory of the Empire, and were only repulsed by Marcus Aurelius in his famous victory in A.D. 174.² With the death of this good emperor in A.D. 180, the world entered upon a long period of turbulence and confusion.

Marcus Aurelius did not adopt a worthy successor;

¹ Suetonius testifies to the excellent administration of the provinces under Domitian (*Domitian VIII*). When an emperor was disliked by the Senate he has gone down to posterity as a monster of vice.

² See Eusebius *H. E.* v. 5. Christians attributed the deliverance of the Roman army to the prayers of a Christian legion from Asia Minor, which received in consequence the name of Fulminatrix. The occurrence is one of the few in the reign of Marcus which is attested by contemporary evidence, pagan—the column of Antoninus in Rome, and Christian—Apollinarius, and a little later, Tertullian. Both sides claimed that the Emperor was saved by supernatural help.

but allowed the empire to pass to his son Commodus, whose twelve years of rule were marked, if we may believe the *Augustan History*, written more than a century later, by a series of crimes and debaucheries too horrible to attempt to relate. Hardly anything but crime and scandal is to be found in the disgusting record of Lampridius, the author of this part of the series; but it is evident that Commodus, if detested by the Senate, and exposed to treacherous plots which ended in his murder, was popular with the soldiery and common people. At the same time we are casually informed of the success of his generals in Africa and Dacia, and inscriptions record active measures being taken to protect the frontier of Mauritania, and of the Danube. The story of the recorded abominations of this emperor can only be read with the distrust which a chronicler, removed by several generations from the scene, and imbued with a delight in literary garbage, naturally inspires. Still, whatever the character of Commodus Antoninus may have really been, his murder was the signal for the inauguration of a period of violence during which emperors were set up and deposed by the military chiefs who were the real rulers of the Roman world. The reigns of those who have been aptly called "the barrack emperors" endured for a full century.¹

¹ Commodus is represented as the worst of men, some of his abominable acts being indescribable. Yet the story of the Roman Emperors as recorded in the histories must be accepted with great caution. Reading between the lines of Lampridius' account of him we gather that the affairs of the empire were in better shape on the whole, than under

It is difficult to imagine a worse state of affairs than a long-continued succession of military despotisms. The supreme power lies within the grasp of every successful or even popular general; and even in our own days it is no sooner attained than the other commanders begin to plot the downfall of the dictator. The system of adoption worked well for nearly a century, till a profligate and cruel emperor's death threw the tempting prize open to successful adventurers. There were three claimants for the Empire in A.D. 192, when Septimius Severus, an active soldier, managed to hold the reins of government till his death in 211, and to hand his authority to his sons, one of whom, Caracalla, reigned till 217. For the next sixty-four years there was only one emperor, the youthful and virtuous Alexander Severus (222-235), who remained in power for more than ten years; and he too met with a violent death.

Amid all the disasters of the time, the Empire appeared to be on the verge of dissolution into a number of principalities created by its military commanders; but it is extraordinary how much

Marcus Aurelius, and we are informed that Septimius Severus, a rigid martinet and reformer, did all in his power to honour the memory of Commodus. The decree of the Senate reviling the dead emperor is vindictive and of almost hysterical malignity. The constant plots against the life of Commodus explain, if they do not excuse, his ferocity. The historian Dion Cassius is certainly more lenient to one who may have been a bad man, but was scarcely the monster he is represented to have been according to later writers, though he put to death many important personages. (Bk. 73.)

vitality and power of cohesion it still possessed. Towards the middle of the century an attempt was made, not without a measure of success, to revive the virtues of the early Republic.¹ The pressure of invasion and the danger of disruption raised up a series of able if ephemeral princes, who stemmed the tide of barbarian invasion. Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian were not unworthy of the best days of Rome. Nor was the army, all too small as it was for the task, altogether degenerate, and for centuries it proved its superiority, when well led, against the advancing hordes of barbarians.² But something had to be done to restore the stability of the government, and Diocletian arose to make the first attempt.

Of Diocletian, a military adventurer with no advantage of birth or fortune, we know very little,

¹ Some of the last emperors of the third century, Claudius (268-270), Aurelian (270-275), Tacitus (275), Probus (276-282), as soldiers did much to save the civilisation of the Roman world, and were men of high character.

² The degeneracy of the Roman army has been insisted on by so many historians, notably Gibbon, till it has become a commonplace. It is assumed that since the early days of the Empire it had become hopelessly feeble. Those acquainted with such a writer as Procopius (A.D. 521-554) will see the absurdity of such a generalisation. See his prefatory remarks, in which the contrast between ancient and contemporary warfare is insisted upon in terms which might be used by a military historian of to-day. The story of the exploits of the Byzantine armies down to the days of the Crusades is often a glorious one; and if the soldiers were largely recruited from barbarous nations, the tradition of Roman discipline was maintained. An unwarlike empire could not have held the Moslems at bay and saved Asia Minor in days when Islam was carrying all before it from India to Spain.

and much of our information is due to a tractate called *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, written about A.D. 315 by Lactantius, the tutor of Constantine's son Crispus, or, as some maintain, by an unknown Caecilius. The treatise is written for the purpose of showing that all who persecuted the Christians came to a bad end, and like most propaganda is untrustworthy both in its praise and blame. As far as Diocletian is concerned, it is as full of malicious misrepresentation as most of the *Augustan Histories*, but, if we read between the lines, this emperor was a master of statecraft, worthy to take a place beside Augustus himself. Like his great predecessor he found civil war and confusion, and created, at any rate for his own time, an era of peace and comparative prosperity. He faced the almost insurmountable difficulties of the times with courage and wisdom. With most unpromising materials wherewith to work, he laid the foundations of a system which endured for many centuries. It may truly be said that if in Augustus the old Roman Empire took its rise, the new was called into being by Diocletian. The elaborate scheme of two Augusti and two Caesars, which he devised, only lasted whilst Diocletian was able to control it in person; but his general policy in regard to the future government of the Roman world had enduring results.

Diocletian is accused in the *De Mortibus* of excessive pomp and arrogance and also of a timidity ill becoming the head of the Roman army.¹ He

¹ In the *Heroes of the Nations Series* Life of Constantine by Firth, Lactantius is aptly described as "the most un-

assumed the divine title of Jovius, and gave that of Herculus to Maximian his western colleague. He donned the robes of royalty, and insisted on living in splendid isolation, only approachable by the servile prostrations and the elaborate etiquette of an oriental court. He also realised that the strength of the empire was not in Italy but in Asia Minor. In so doing he showed rare foresight.

The real successor of Diocletian was Constantine, who, instead of sanctioning a persecution of the Church, recognised it as a valuable influence in the state, but yet adopted a policy analogous to that of his predecessor. By incorporating the Christian Church into the Roman Empire Constantine became virtual ruler of both. No longer was the Church allowed to be an independent institution, but it became a recognised body under imperial patronage, and consequently had to pay a heavy price for its privileges. In the course of centuries the Church claimed the right of ruling the Western world; but this was impossible in the East, where the civil power exercised unquestioned authority. To the last the Eastern Caesar was the real head of the Church, and this was due to the reconstitution of the Empire by Diocletian, whose political aims, if changed, were continued by Constantine. This fully accounts for much which is perplexing in the life of Eusebius of Caesarea, whose whole attitude

trustworthy, and at the same time the most vigorous and attractive writer of the period." The paucity of really reliable historical material for these eventful years makes it hard to discover the truth.

towards the State was a recognition of its right to dictate to the Church. In a certain sense Eusebius was to Constantine what Archbishop Cranmer was to Henry VIII.

Thus this survey of the vicissitudes of the Roman Empire is of the greatest importance, if we would understand the course of subsequent events, in which the influence of Eusebius played a prominent part.

II.—But if the course of secular history during this period appears to be a dull chronicle of the rise and fall of comparatively uninteresting Caesars, and a melancholy catalogue of the misfortunes of the Roman world, only to end in a reorganisation of the Empire and the substitution of oriental despots for military dictators, the third century of our era is marked by a surprising intellectual activity.¹ The older religions and philosophies were undergoing a change producing momentous consequences.

The great philosophic movement of the age is known as Neoplatonism; and in the literature which has survived the influence of Christianity is clearly seen. Already this new religion was ceasing to be regarded as a sect of ignorant fanatics accused of practising obscene rites, and consequently exposed to persecution in reply to the demands of clamorous mobs. Christianity had come to be considered as a philosophy, pernicious in the eyes of some, but

¹ That Christianity held its own and made such rapid progress in its thought, organisation and discipline, in an age of so much intellectual ferment is no slight testimony to its mental vigour. It captured educated classes when the human mind was exceptionally active.

still deserving serious literary refutation. Neither the morality nor the theology of the Church was subjected to suspicion or ridicule. On the contrary, not only were the Christians deemed worthy of imitation, but their peculiar tenets were becoming subjects worthy of serious consideration, influential in the development of the philosophy of the age.

Some time during the principate of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180) there was presented to the world a carefully considered argument against the Christian religion. A generation or more later a copy of the book was given to the famous Origen, who was asked to refute it. The author was named Celsus, and, but for the answer to it, his work would certainly have been lost. As it is, Origen reproduces the arguments *verbatim*; but apparently even he had only a vague idea who Celsus was, or to what philosophic sect he belonged. But it is evident that at this time Christianity was taken very seriously by educated men. In some respects Celsus shows himself to be a bitter and unscrupulous opponent of the new religion. He points out what he considers to be its inconsistencies and absurdities, and does not hesitate to heap ridicule on such a belief as that in a resurrection. But elsewhere he shows a sort of respect for the Christians, and ends by begging them to emerge from their isolation and assist the Emperor in the arduous task of saving the civilised world. This philosophic attack is at least a proof of the growing power of Christianity.¹

¹ The significance of such a work as that of Celsus is that a man of such wide reading should, as early as 177,

Lucian, the satirist, one of the most brilliant wits produced by the ancient world, is said to have written against the Christians a treatise known as the *Philopatris*. This is certainly spurious, as even extant MSS. admit, and can be safely neglected. But by this time, and he was probably born at Samosata about A.D. 120, the scurrilous tales about the Christians were dying down. Nothing is said by Lucian of the old scandals; but in the story of the impostor Peregrinus Proteus some justice is done to their unbounded charity and love for one another. In the denunciation of Lucian's pet aversion, Alexander of Abonoteichus, the Christians are coupled with the Epicureans, whom Lucian admired, and in the *Peregrinus* their credulous piety towards a deceiver, who professed to join them, is made, not unamiably, a subject for ridicule.¹

In some respects there was a singularly modern tone adopted in regard to Jesus prevalent in the period under discussion. The Founder of the Christian religion began to be regarded as a good and wise man who had been misrepresented by the enthusiasm of His disciples. The most striking example of the influence of Jesus may be seen in the life of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus, in which, however, we note that there is no open allusion to our Lord. Philostratus was a Pythagorean philosopher who flourished in the middle of

have thought it necessary to devote so much space to the refutation of the aims of the Church.

¹ Lucian in his *Peregrinus Proteus* introduced the Christians not from any feeling of ill-will towards them, but as simple folk easily duped by an unscrupulous impostor.

the third century, and enjoyed the friendship of some of the most distinguished people of the time. His object in writing is to describe the career of a perfect sage. Miracles attend the birth of Apollonius. He studies in the temple of Aesculapius, travels to India, and learns the wisdom of the Brahmins. He rebukes the wickedness of his age, foretells the accession of Vespasian, and has a revelation of the death of Domitian. In the end he disappears rather than dies.¹

If Philostratus had not Christ in his mind in composing this philosophic novel, it is fairly certain that his contemporaries had, since Alexander Severus (A.D. 222-235) is said to have placed in his *lararium* or private chapel, the images of Orpheus, Abraham, Apollonius, and Christ. A generation later, Hierocles, an instigator of persecution in the days of Diocletian, compares the life of Apollonius, of course to its advantage, with that of Jesus. It is quite obvious that there was a tendency to show that Jesus was not the only wonder-working benefactor in his own day, but that the Greeks had also in the sage Apollonius one comparable to Him.

Christianity and philosophy were in fact drawing close together, at first as rivals inaugurating the bitter struggle, which began in the Decian and culminated in the Diocletian persecution, and later as endeavouring to come to an understanding. Both had much in common alike in aim and in system. The philosophers were striving to evolve

¹ The *Life of Apollonius*, translated by F. C. Conybeare, is to be found in the Loeb Classical Library, in two volumes.

an acceptable doctrine out of the old mythology, and the Christians to commend their new religion to the thoughtful men of their age. Both were labouring to replace the religion of the ancient world by something better and to restore the decaying morality of the Empire. The result was something like the strife witnessed by Dante in the *Inferno*, where the man and the serpent contended together and in the end exchanged forms.¹ This was in a measure partially true of the contest between the philosophic schools and the Church, one tending to become Christian, whilst the other adopted much of the thought of its opponent.

It is more than a coincidence that two at least of the leaders of Neoplatonism were said to have been originally Christians. It is by no means proven that Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the school, and Hierocles, who led the philosophic side of the persecutions, had apostatised. But, as the sequel will show, the transition from one mode at least of thought to the other was not necessarily as abrupt as we might imagine it to have been.

In his *Dialogue with Trypho* there is an account of how Justin, who as a Christian continued to wear the garb of a philosopher, sought wisdom from all the famous schools of his day. Until he discovered a Christian sage, he found most satisfaction in Platonism. This was the experience of others, including later the great St. Augustine, who passed from Platonism to the Church. The Neoplatonic

¹ *Inferno*, Canto XXV. The transformation is noted in Macaulay's Essay on the Earl of Chatham.

school endeavoured to combine the teaching of Plato with the growing piety of the age, which was constantly in the direction of an asceticism, practised for the purpose of obtaining divine manifestations, and an intense craving for miraculous intervention. The virtues which Neoplatonism encouraged were very similar to those fostered by the Church, and its theological terminology resembled and influenced that of Christianity. Its original home, however, was Alexandria, the seat of the Christian catechetical school, which followed the Jew Philo in his allegorical interpretation of scripture on Platonic lines. When it is realised that the Neoplatonists sometimes professed their admiration for the Fourth Gospel, it will be evident in what aspect they came to appreciate Christianity.¹

Ammonius Saccas is the alleged founder of the school. An Alexandrian of humble rank, as his name Saccas, "a carrier of bags," implies, he taught in his native city, living to see at least his eightieth birthday, and dying in A.D. 243. He survives in his pupils rather than in his writings; both Origen, the Christian and the pagan, studied under him, as well as Plotinus, and Longinus, the famous critic. Whether he was a Christian originally is disputed by his contemporaries. He certainly seems to have had a knowledge of the Scriptures. In common with his school he or his disciples recognised a sort of Trinity in the Being of God.

¹ Harnack notes this in his *Monasticism*. Eusebius, *Prep.* xi. 19, says that Amelius, the friend of Plotinus, quotes and expounds the first chapter of St. John without mentioning the source.

The leading philosopher of this age was Plotinus. His great work, the *Enneads*, is hard to read and difficult to understand; but in profundity of thought it has been compared not unfavourably with the best treatises of Plato. His life was quiet, but not inactive; for, like some other great mystics, he conducted his affairs with much practical wisdom. He seems to have been a man of singular amiability, trusted and loved by his friends. He was born in A.D. 204 or 205, probably in Egypt. His latter days were spent in Rome, where he enjoyed the patronage of the philosophical, if incapable, Emperor Gallienus and his wife, Salonina. He never mentions Christianity except under the form of certain Gnostic tenets, which he disliked because they travestied the teaching of his master Plato.¹ At the same time his teaching and moral aims resemble those of the best Christians. St. Augustine praises him highly as a philosopher, declaring that in Plotinus "Plato lived again." It must not, however, be forgotten that Plotinus' chief admirer and biographer was Porphyry, the most formidable literary enemy of the Church. The appearance of so great a thinker in what is generally described as an age barren in the realm of philosophy is significant, for Plotinus was not alone, but had both predecessors and followers. There must have been more mental activity in his days than many have been disposed to admit.²

¹ See the Ninth Book of the *Enneads*.

² Dr. Inge in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Plotinus* gives an interesting sketch of the contemporary philosophers.

Porphyry, the disciple of Plotinus, is another remarkable figure. His original name was Malchus, which his master Longinus changed to the more high-sounding one of Porphyrius, both names having the significance of "royal" or "imperial." He died apparently in A.D. 305 at the beginning of the Diocletian persecution. He was a most prolific writer and is credited with no less than fifty-six books. Twenty of these have been preserved at least in fragments, the rest being mentioned by early writers. His most famous work, that *Against the Christians* in fifteen books, was rightly regarded as the most formidable attack on their whole system. So greatly were his criticisms feared, that no less than thirty Christians, of whom Eusebius was one, are said to have endeavoured to refute them. Socrates, the Church historian in the fifth century, has preserved an edict of Constantine against the Arians in which he styles them Porphyrians, after the most bitter enemy of the Faith.¹ The remarkable thing about Porphyry is that his attempted refutation of Christianity is based on a first-hand acquaintance with its Scriptures, and the tone he adopted is far more temperate and considerate than that of Celsus. It is to be regretted that the Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 379-395) ordered Porphyry's book to be destroyed publicly; consequently only portions of his writings have survived. It would appear that this philosopher had a sincere admiration for Christ as a man and a teacher; and in many respects this great antagonist of Chris-

¹ Socrates, *H. E.* i. 9.

tianity closely resembled his best opponents. No one could say a word against his moral conduct. In belief he was a monotheist, and regarded the lesser gods of paganism as demons, good and evil, but here he shared under another form the belief of the Church in angels and devils. He practised a severe asceticism such as was already becoming a characteristic feature of Christianity, and hoped that by abasing the body he would be able to attain to a mystical union with the Divine. In a lesser degree than some of his colleagues he stood with the Christians in a desire for the supernatural. His attitude towards mankind and his naturally amiable and tolerant disposition would not have been unbefittingly displayed in the best churchmen of his age. Nevertheless he attacked the Faith with much learning and acuteness. Whether he had ever been a Christian or not, is an open question; but he certainly had an inside knowledge of the weak spots in the armour of the Faith. He was quick to recognise that the book of Daniel, on which the Christians based many of their strongest arguments, might be interpreted as referring to events contemporary with the writer, and not to what would happen centuries later. Thus, instead of Daniel having prophesied in the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius in the sixth century B.C., the author really wrote in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes about 170 B.C. and the allusions are historical rather than prophetic. Porphyry also pointed out discrepancies between the four gospels, and maintained that the Christ of the Church was not

really the Jesus of the Gospels. In a word, his arguments have a strangely modern ring about them, and resemble much of the criticism of to-day.¹

Plotinus was without question one of the greatest philosophers of the ancient world. His language is said to be involved and obscure, but his ideas are profound. Porphyry, his devoted disciple and admirer, is a better writer; but, though a truly learned man and a real scholar, he is deemed inferior to his master. The two Neoplatonic contemporaries of Eusebius, were Iamblichus and Hierocles. Iamblichus enjoyed far more admiration in his own day than either of his predecessors. It was said of him that he was only less than Plato in point of date. His comparatively few remains do not justify such an encomium; but in character and disposition he deserved the respect and love of his contemporaries. There is no mention of the Christians in his writings.²

Very different was his philosophic colleague,

¹ As Porphyry's book, *Against the Christians*, was destroyed, we learn about it only from Eusebius and Jerome. For this "enemy's" (Eusebius' word) appreciation of Christ, see the *Demonstration*, iii. 6 and 7. Inge's words, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, Vol. I, pp. 65, 66, are: "His polemic is thoroughly modern. He has not much to quarrel with Christian Ethics. . . . The real quarrel between Neoplatonism and Christianity lay in their different attitudes toward the old culture."

² It is said that Iamblichus was devoted to spiritualistic practices to induce religious exaltation. There is no evidence for this says Prof. A. E. Taylor, except the so-called *Abammon* Treatise, the authorship of which is disputed.

Hierocles, a philosopher who became an important Roman governor under Diocletian. Not only did he write two books against Christianity, but he incited the Emperor to persecution, and as an administrator of the Empire became a cruel enemy of the Church.

III.—We must now consider the condition of the Church into which Eusebius was born. By the beginning of the third century the Church had become a recognised factor in the life of the time, no longer a secret and maligned society, but a well organised institution which threatened to claim to dominate the thought of mankind. In this section we must consider Christianity (*a*) as it appeared in the public eye, (*b*) as a philosophy of life, and (*c*) in its relation to the ideals of the time. The Christian world in the third century had four great centres, Rome and Carthage in the West, and Alexandria and Antioch in the East. As Eusebius was fundamentally a Greek in the circumstances of his life, and as he knew little about the West, we shall confine our attention to the two last named.

(*a*) Already the Universal Church was a fact rather than an hypothesis.¹ We cannot say definitely how it was organised in its earliest days, what its creed exactly was, or whether it had a regular official ministry. After the appearance of the writings of St. Irenaeus, an Asiatic by birth

¹ The universality of the Church as "the Body of Christ" is of course recognised in the New Testament, and "the Catholic Church" as a regularly organised body, in my opinion, was not an admitted fact before Irenaeus.

and Bishop of Lyons in Gaul (*c.* A.D. 190), there is no question on these points. The churches were confederated throughout the civilised world, and were in constant communication with one another. All of them professed to adhere to the Faith as it had been received from the Apostles. The tradition of the Roman Church was considered most valuable as having been derived from Peter the chief of the Twelve and from Paul the great missionary to the Gentiles. Each church had a bishop as its authorised leader. Eusebius is, as will be seen, most anxious to impress upon the reader the importance of the episcopal succession in every great church; for, long before his time, the rank of the bishop was largely due to the prominence of the city over which he presided. In the course of the third century the Church began to build places of worship and to own large burial grounds, being, so far as its property was concerned, recognised by the Roman law.¹ Moreover, a scheme of government was being fabricated, by which the Christians could express their views by legislating for the community. The church councils, the most truly representative bodies in antiquity, began to be held in different parts of the Empire, thus preparing the way for the First General Council, in which Eusebius took so prominent a part.

(*b*) In the intellectual world the leading Christians

¹ Eusebius, *H. E.* vii. 30. The appeal of the bishop to Aurelian (270–275), in the matter of Paul of Samosata, turned on the question of the ownership of the episcopal residence. The catacombs were the property of Christian families.

were proving at least equal in ability to their philosophic opponents. The original Greek of Irenaeus has only survived in quotations; and the Latin translation of his works does not enable us to judge of him as a literary man. In opposing Gnosticism, as he knew it, he displayed no little ability. Tertullian and Cyprian, bred as Roman lawyers, unquestionably deserve an honoured place among contemporary authors. But we must turn to Egypt and Syria in order to appreciate the intellectual conditions under which Eusebius lived. The great catechetical school of Alexandria, immortalised by the names of Clement and Origen, was attended not only by the regular catechumens, but by most seekers after the highest knowledge. Here Christians and Neoplatonists studied together, before they parted, each to go on his several way. No modern classical scholar can disregard Clement of Alexandria as a perfect mine of quotations from authors who would otherwise have perished. It is noteworthy that the system of this teacher, as revealed in his three books, *The Exhortation*, *The Tutor*, and *The Miscellanies*, is in conformity with the Neoplatonic system of a threefold progress in instruction.¹

Eusebius devotes much attention to Origen, who is in many respects the greatest Christian scholar, as well as one of the most original thinkers in the early Church. His career must be treated later, here it is sufficient to say that he is the real founder of two schools of Christian thought, those of

¹ Bigg's *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*.

Alexandria and Antioch, that he produced a succession of the greatest Christian theologians who were numbered among his pupils. Yet, whilst keeping in touch with Neoplatonism, Origen was uncompromising in his Christianity, and finally died as a sufferer for Christ. It was to him that Eusebius owed his inspiration as a scholarly exponent of the Scriptures. For Origen may be regarded as the father of critical scholarship, or, at any rate, of the textual criticism of the Old Testament. His immense learning and his indefatigable zeal laid the foundation of the scholarship of all future generations, and Eusebius in this respect endeavoured to follow in his steps. Finally, Origen's theological opinions divided the Christian world between his enthusiastic admirers and his equally bitter opponents for at least three centuries after his death. Eusebius was undoubtedly brought up in an atmosphere of learning, pagan, heretical, and orthodox Christian. There are few greater names in philosophy than Plotinus; Paul of Samosata was convicted of heresy, but his ability was unquestioned; Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Lucian the martyr, would have been ornaments of any university in any age.

(c) Lastly we have to consider the question of how it was that when Christianity was so full of the culture of the ancient world, the period under consideration was marked by bitter hostility between its teachers and the philosophers with whom they had so much in common. To account for this we must consider the condition of society. The ancient world in the

third century may be said to have been dying of old age. It was sinking under the unforeseen calamities of plague, pestilence, and famine. Political life was dead, there seemed no prospect of civilisation expanding by trade or military enterprise beyond the borders of an Empire which walls and fortresses seemed powerless to protect. Within the territory of Rome was a peace without progress, which is sometimes not unlike the peace of death.

But if life on earth is devoid of interest, there was no lack of activity in speculation as to the invisible world. Religion had taken the place of other objects of human endeavour, and a craving after the supernatural was everywhere becoming predominant. The old cults were still maintained, but men were earnestly seeking to penetrate the mysteries of the unseen. Philosophy was becoming more and more religious; the teachers of wisdom turned from the pursuit of scientific truth or political idealism to the search for mystical communion with the Supreme Being. A wave of ascetic contemplation was sweeping over mankind. The century was an age of self-mortification in the hope of union with the divine. Christian monasticism was indeed only one manifestation of the spirit of the time. The mysticism of the philosophers was monotheistic in the sense of a realisation of the essential unity of God in the spiritual sphere; and in this respect Christianity and philosophy were converging. Both agreed that there were many invisible beings: but the heathen thinkers ranked these among the old gods of polytheism as daemons, whereas the

Christians declared the gods of the Gentiles to be the powers of evil (daemons), while their own deceased saints and the angels were the unseen benefactors of humanity.

The question arose and became more and more pressing, as the Christian Church progressed in numbers and popularity. Even as early as the time of Celsus, that enemy of the Faith, who had been covering its adherents with abuse and ridicule, suddenly turned and addressed them with supplication. He, as we have seen, besought them to help the Emperor (Marcus Aurelius) in his difficult task of saving the world.¹ Let them come forth from their selfish isolation, let them assist his counsels, and even join his armies (*συστρατηγεῖν*) as officers. This implies that the Christian community had become so widespread and had attracted men of such high character, that its indifference to the desperate condition of the world was a positive danger to society.²

Lampridius in the *Augustan History* draws a sharp contrast between the two Syrian Emperors, Elagabalus and his cousin and successor, Alexander Severus, attributing the most incredible vices to the

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, vi.

² It is unnecessary to remind the reader that in every religion devotees have shown a tendency to isolate themselves from mankind and practise austerities either in solitude or in isolated communities. The harsh condition of life in the Roman Empire in and after the third century, and the absence of interest in war, commerce, literature, and science, fostered a disgust with society, which drove men to seek refuge outside its pale.

one, and extolling to the skies the virtue of the other. But at the same time the historian indicates that both pursued a somewhat similar policy. When Elagabalus introduced the black stone of the god of Emesa into Rome, he placed with his deity "the emblem (*typus*) of the great mother, the fire of Avesta, the Palladium, the shields of the Salii, and all that the Romans held sacred, purposing that no god should be worshipped at Rome save only Elagabalus (*Lat.* Heliogabalus). He declared furthermore, that the religions of the Jews and the Samaritans and the rites (*devotio*) of the Christians must also be transferred to this place in order that the priesthood of Elagabalus might include the mysteries of every form of worship."¹ The last clause has been pronounced spurious; but we have seen that in the *Life of Alexander Severus* that emperor is said to have placed in his *lararium* images of Orpheus, Abraham, and Christ.

In his attempt to introduce his Syrian god into the Roman pantheon, Elagabalus may have been more politic than Lampridius supposed. He may have tried to fuse together the various worships of what he believed to be the Supreme Being under different names, and thus to make one common religion for the Roman Empire. The Jews refused to submit to such an arrangement; but, as they lived under the protection of the Roman law, they were safe from persecution. The Christians had no such immunity; and, because they refused to come into

¹ *Hist. August.*, Elagabalus, 3, 5; Magie's translation in the Loeb Classical Library.

a scheme deemed vital to the interests of civilisation, they might be compelled to submit or to take the consequences. This explains the persecutions under Decius, Valerian, and finally under Diocletian and his successors, and also the intense hostility of the pagan philosophers who were aiming at a universal syncretism.

The foregoing considerations are necessary to appreciate the career of Eusebius of Caesarea, who witnessed one of the most momentous changes in history. Born, probably about A.D. 260, when Rome was still the real capital of the world, in what may be called an imperial republic, he lived through the period during which the government became virtually an oriental monarchy, with its centre on the Bosphorus. He witnessed the great struggle between the Neoplatonist philosophers and the Christian priesthood, and the final persecution of the Church, the issue of which was really to decide whether the old religion, guided by philosophers, or the new, should be the faith of mankind. Before his death he found the Church triumphant and mistress of the destinies of civilised humanity.

Essay II

ESSAY II

THE LIFE OF EUSEBIUS

THE career of Eusebius, which extended over about eighty eventful years, falls into several periods, which may be considered separately. (I) The first of these is from *c.* 260 to 305, and is occupied by his early training and his preparation for the literary work of his life under his teacher and friend, Pamphilus. (II) The second, from 305 to 323, begins with the Diocletian persecution and ends with the triumph of Constantine over his last rival, Licinius, which made him master of the entire Roman world. (III) The Arian controversy and the Council of Nicaea in 325 occupy a very short, but most important period, in which Eusebius was a conspicuous figure. (IV) The concluding years of the historian's career, from 326 to 339, embrace the course of events from Constantine's final settlement in the East to his death in 337, and also the attempts in the Church to nullify the doctrinal settlement of the First General Council. To the time of his death, Eusebius seems to have been active both as a bishop and a writer.

I.—The early days of Eusebius were passed in an atmosphere of scholarship. Such Alexandrians as Clement, Origen and Dionysius were almost modern critics; Clement, in his immense erudition, Origen, as the pioneer of Textual Criticism, and one of the

most original thinkers, and Dionysius, the earliest critic of the style and diction of the Revelation of St. John the Divine. To Origen, of whom Eusebius was a devoted admirer, were due the two great schools of Alexandria and Antioch, and the great Christian library of Caesarea, as well as several generations of Christian teachers who were either his immediate scholars, or were later inspired by his writings.

It was a scholarly rather than a creative age in which Eusebius lived, but the tradition of learning had been well established by the closing years of the third century. Origen may almost be said to have inaugurated in the Church of Egypt the movement towards allegorising and also the critical habit of the Syrian scholars. These opposing tendencies distracted the Church in the days of creeds and councils, the Alexandrians endeavouring to discover the meaning of the Scriptures by mystical interpretation, and the Antiochenes insisting on clearly understanding its grammatical sense. Thus the tendency of the Egyptians was to stress the relation of Christ to God rather than His humanity and sympathy with mankind. The mind of Eusebius seems to have been scholarly rather than devout: he was, as will appear in his subsequent career, an historian and investigator rather than a theologian.

But whether in Egypt or Syria, scholarly criticism was active. Africanus, a native of Emmaus, the chronologer to whom Eusebius owed so much, was the first to recognise that the story of Susanna in the Greek book of Daniel, was not consistent with

what is related of the prophet.¹ Origen perceived that the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews was not that of the genuine Pauline letters. Dionysius, the great bishop of Alexandria, declared on the ground of style that the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel were written by two men with the same name, John the Apostle, and John the Elder.² Views like these would have given no little offence even to learned Christians in comparatively recent times, and this suggests that the churchmen of the age possessed open and alert minds in commenting on the sacred books. But the *Hexapla* of Origen, completed in 246 in Palestine, proved that he realised the need of a correct text of Scripture as clearly as any scholar of our age.

The impetus this great man gave in the direction of exactness made the vast erudition of Eusebius possible. Banished from Alexandria by the jealousy of its bishop, Demetrius, about 236, Origen became the master and oracle of Syrian Christianity. Even before he had finally left Alexandria, he had been admitted in Palestine to the priesthood, despite his ecclesiastical disabilities, and for the last twenty years of his life, he made Caesarea his home and here

¹ Euseb., *H. E.* vi. 31. The letter is to be found in Routh's *Reliquiae Sacrae*, II, 225. Lawlor and Oulton call it "one of the most remarkable pieces of (early) Christian criticism." Dr. Salmon gives an excellent summary in the *Dict. of Christian Biography*, Art. "Africanus." Judged by this account, it is worthy of one of the best biblical scholars of modern times.

² The fragments of Dionysius have been collected by Dr. Feltoe. See Euseb., *H. E.* vii. 25.

he gathered of a library destined to be the storehouse from which the material for the history of early Christianity was extracted. Origen, however, was far more than a teacher of Scripture, a profound scholar and textual critic. He was a most original thinker; and although his views were not destined to raise the storm of controversy they provoked at a later date, during the youth of Eusebius he already had his detractors as well as admirers.¹

One of the warmest adherents of Origen after his death was Pamphilus, a presbyter of Caesarea, the guide, philosopher, and friend of Eusebius, a man of wealth and learning who crowned the honourable career of a scholar by a martyr's death. In token of his love for his master and colleague, Eusebius took his name and after his death styled himself "Eusebius of Pamphilus" (Εὐσέβιος ὁ Παμφίλου) i.e. the son of Pamphilus.² Pamphilus also had collected an extensive library; and previously Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, a warm personal friend and

¹ The subject of Origen's orthodoxy is one of the most complex in Christian history. He seems to have been condemned by Demetrius of Alexandria for his irregular ordination to the priesthood in Syria; but there are few allusions to his heretical opinions. Methodius, bishop of Patara, a martyr in the Diocletian persecution, attacked his views of creation; and that Eusebius assisted Pamphilus in Origen's defence is a proof that Origen's orthodoxy had been impugned. But we must wait for the later days of the Arian controversy for the furious outbreak of hostility against his opinions. Consult the *D.C.B.* Articles "Eusebius of Caesarea" (Lightfoot), "Origen" (Westcott), and "Origenistic Controversies" (A. W. W. Dale).

² For the meaning of the Greek words, see Lawlor, *Eusebiana*.

contemporary of Origen, had established another in the Holy City. Thus Eusebius had every opportunity for study, living in the society of a great scholar, and in touch with famous Christian libraries. In after life, when offered what was later the patriarchal see of Antioch, he refused to desert his beloved books in Caesarea and Jerusalem.

Caesarea was the capital of Judaea and the seat of the Roman procurator. Founded by Herod the Great, it was, with the exception of the Temple of Jerusalem, his most magnificent achievement.¹ The coast of Palestine is singularly destitute of harbours, Joppa, or Jaffa, the only port of Judaea, being a poor refuge for large ships. Herod selected a little place called Strato's Tower, and by erecting a mole on the northern side to protect the shipping from the wind, made a suitable harbour for the whole of southern Palestine. Utterly regardless of expense, the king made a fine commercial town with every convenience for mariners, and adorned it with temples, theatres and all that could contribute to a city worthy of Augustus Caesar, after whom it was named. Caesarea long maintained its pre-eminence in Palestine. It was the residence of the Roman procurator; here Vespasian was first acclaimed ruler of the Roman world. It was the home of the first Gentile congregation in the household of Cornelius (Acts x); and, when St. Paul visited the port on his last journey to Jerusalem, he was entertained by "Philip the Evangelist, one of the Seven." After the destruction of the Jewish Jerusalem, and the

¹ Josephus, *Antiq.* xv. 9.

rise on its site of a Gentile city called Aelia, Caesarea was practically the ecclesiastical capital of the province. Origen, as already stated, had made the place his headquarters in later life, and here he prepared his great work of Textual Criticism, the *Hexapla*. As an intellectual centre of Christian life, Caesarea in the days of Eusebius ranked with Alexandria and Antioch. In all the various activities of his long life as a scholar, Eusebius could draw on his native home of Caesarea and the surrounding country for his facts.

Eusebius is so wide in his learning that in dealing with his early life we have to consider the different sources from whence he derived his information. He was (1) a chronologer—indeed, in a sense, he may be called the father of the science of Church chronology; (2) a theologian; (3) a biblical student; (4) a topographer of Palestine; (5) an historian; (6) an apologist—and many other things besides; but these six are sufficient for our purpose.

(1) *Chronologer.*

Emmaus, probably a town some 22 miles north-west of Jerusalem was the home of a friend of Origen, Julius Africanus, only two of whose letters, one to Origen and another to Aristides, have survived.¹ Africanus, however, composed a chronology in five books which has been lost, perhaps absorbed in the

¹ Eusebius worked on the labours of his predecessor Africanus in his attempt to synchronise the events of scriptural and secular history, but Africanus has survived only in Eusebius and in a later writer, George Syncellus. Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, II, 238 ff.

great works of Eusebius and Jerome. This continuation of the work of Africanus is one of the great debts the historian owes to Eusebius.

(2) *Theologian.*

Perhaps for the very fact that Eusebius was not a profound thinker, a man of books rather than of reflection, he is important as illustrating the modes of thought in the influential schools of the Near East. Antioch, the near neighbour of Caesarea, was distinguished for a school of theologians, both orthodox and heretical, who insisted on a literal and grammatical interpretation of Scripture. Its teachers devote special attention to the human life of the Saviour, whereas the Alexandrians regarded Jesus rather as the Word of God in Heaven, than as the son of man on earth. The Antiochene theologian, Lucian the Martyr, was an elder contemporary of Eusebius.

(3) *Biblical Student.*

This same Lucian is credited with having been the editor of what may be described as the Vulgate or popular edition of the Greek Bible. The library and the traditions of Origen at Caesarea, and the whole spirit of the school at Antioch, naturally disposed Eusebius to those biblical studies of which it will be hereafter necessary to speak at length.

(4) *Topographer.*

From Caesarea, Eusebius had access to Galilee, and those districts so intimately associated with the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel story. He used his

opportunities to become the pioneer of Palestinian and biblical topography. Here he was, as elsewhere, followed by Jerome, who could impugn his orthodoxy more easily than he could dispense with his guidance, and in this connection he calls Eusebius *admirabilis vir*.

(5) *Historian*.

It is impossible to overrate the important part Pamphilus played in the education of Eusebius. In this wealthy presbyter of Caesarea, and ardent collector of books, Eusebius found a patron and a master with whom he could co-operate. Pamphilus, in fact, is one of those figures in the history of Christianity, of whom we regret that we know so little. All must, however, acknowledge that without him the compilation of the History of the Church would have been impossible.

(6) *Apologist*.

Finally, the coast of Palestine was one of the storm centres of the Diocletian persecution. Here, if anywhere, Christianity fought the battle for its existence, and it is no wonder that Eusebius, who lived through those terrible years in a country remarkable for intellectual activity, should have become the literary defender of his religion. And not only did Eusebius, as a presbyter, live under the shadow of persecution; but even for some years after he became bishop of Caesarea his country was not free from the hostility of the Roman authorities, in spite of the nominal toleration granted to the eastern churches by the edict of Milan in 313.

II.—The learning of Eusebius had been acquired in the peaceful years which preceded the last greatest persecution of the Church. In a very unjust attack, in which Eusebius is blamed for omitting to describe the corruption of the Church after a long interval of peace, Gibbon accuses our historian of misrepresenting the facts and only recording what was to the credit of Christianity. A perusal, however, of the somewhat obscure rhetoric at the beginning of the eighth book of the *History* will effectually silence such an imputation, as Eusebius freely admits that the faults of the Church provoked God to visit it with persecution.¹ This is not, however, the place to describe the prolonged peril through which the Church passed, virtually extending in the East over twenty years; for the peace of the Church was not finally assured as long as Licinius was the colleague of Constantine. Not till his defeat in 323, after which Constantine became sole Emperor, was the triumph of Christianity final and indubitable.

Of Eusebius himself we learn but little during this period. All we know is that he was an eye-witness of the great persecution in Palestine and Egypt. He was later accused by the Egyptian bishop, Potammon, of having offered sacrifice to save his life, but this is hardly likely considering that for

¹ *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XVI (towards end), "The gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius himself, indirectly confesses, that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of religion."

years he had held the see of Caesarea without reproach. He may have shared in the imprisonment of Pamphilus, as he certainly assisted the martyr in his defence of Origen.¹

In 313 Eusebius was elected bishop of Caesarea, and in 315 he preached at the dedication of the great church of Tyre, which publicly marked the acknowledgment of the Christian religion as a legal institution in the Empire.² Whether Licinius meant to persecute the Church, or merely grew colder towards it as his enmity towards Constantine increased, is a matter of doubt. Certainly there was a large assembly of bishops at Tyre, where a magnificent church was dedicated while Licinius was still ruling in the East. (*H. E.* x. 4.)

This period was, however, full of literary activity; for, as has been already indicated, the philosophers abetted the government in its attempts to destroy Christianity. The ablest pagan thinkers were putting forth an anti-Christian literature, full of argument, some of which is formidable to this day. The destruction of the Scriptures is one of the special features of the Diocletian persecution; and the anti-Christian propaganda was actively carried out in the elementary schools, where it was ordered that the *Acts of Pilate*, full of outrageous statements about Jesus, should be read by the children and committed

¹ Photius (ninth century) is a doubtful authority for Eusebius having shared Pamphilus' captivity. Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, II, p. 6.

² The catacombs in Rome were private property, and till the third century were left undisturbed. Even before the Diocletian persecution churches were fairly numerous.

to memory.¹ The cruelty of Hierocles, prefect of Bithynia, later promoted to Alexandria, was only matched by his skilful use of the pen as well as the sword against the Christians. All this stimulated Eusebius to put forth a series of books in defence of the Church. He wrote a reply to Hierocles, which is still extant: his *Preparation, Demonstration, and History* are intended to show how the Christian religion was prepared for in antiquity, proved by the utterances of the Hebrew prophets, and spread throughout the world after the coming of the Christ. Even if he showed weakness in days of persecution, he did yeoman service to his cause by keeping himself alive in those critical times, where there was grave need, especially in the East, not only for those who were ready to defend their convictions by enduring torture and death, but also for men of learning prepared to devote themselves to the task of convincing the philosophers that the cause of Christ was well worthy of defence.

As the sequel will show, Eusebius was by temperament a moderate man; and above all things a student whose vast learning probably restrained his enthusiasm. His accumulation of facts and wide reading did not produce in him great originality, nor was his balanced mind calculated to produce the

¹ Euseb., *H. E.* ix. 4. Lactantius, *De Mort.* 36. See the note in McGiffert's *Eusebius*. Maximin was the most "scientific" of all the Diocletian persecutors, anticipating the policy of Julian the Apostate. The campaign against the Church has been reproduced in later times, when poisoning the wells of history for political purposes has been resorted to.

qualities of a hero. Though the world, in fact, owes him a great debt, it cannot be paid in the form of extravagant admiration.

III.—The Arian controversy, which began before Constantine became master of the East, brought Eusebius, probably then the most learned man in the world, into contact with the great Emperor. Arius, the famous presbyter of Alexandria, was one of that large company of clever men who seek to give a simple commonsense solution of insoluble difficulties.¹ The problem here was "How can the Son be declared to be God and yet not be identified with the Father?" Alexander, the bishop, declared that the Son is God in the same sense as is the Father, thereby confusing the Persons of the Trinity, to which Arius, the presbyter, opposed the view that the Son is not God in the sense the Father is, thereby dividing the Substance. The question seems trivial to the plain man of to-day, who is inclined to decide religious questions from a practical point of view. It did not, even in the fourth century, seriously perplex the Western theologians. But the subtle-minded Orientals, trained in Greek methods of thinking, saw and appreciated the difficulty; and the Eastern world was distracted by

¹ Writers of divergent views on Arianism are agreed that the system, as far as we know it, of its founder was superficial and leading to a false conclusion. Newman, Gwatkin, and Harnack pass virtually the same judgment on the heresy. Arianism as a heresy is practically dead, though the question of the equality of the Son with the Father is a living issue. See the writer's Article on "Arianism" in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

it. Nor can we blame them for recognising the seriousness of the problem; for if Alexander was right, the Son was no more than a manifestation of the Father, and had no personal existence; and if, on the contrary, Arius' theory was established, then the Son was a different kind of God, and the principle of pagan polytheism was conceded. On the whole, Eusebius was inclined more to the opinion of Arius than to that of Alexander.¹ His Antiochene training had led him to insist on the personal life of Jesus and to distrust the mysticism of Alexandria. Above all things he dreaded the sort of Christology which merged the Person of the Redeemer in that of the Father, thereby losing touch with the historic Jesus Christ who had lived among men. Nevertheless, as will be seen, the whole question was to his mind too difficult to be solved definitely in either way: and Eusebius remained open to conviction without becoming a strong partisan of either side. This explains his attitude during the Council of Nicaea and in the controversies which succeeded it.

On September 10, 323, Constantine finally defeated Licinius at Chrysopolis, and secured the mastery of the world and the virtual triumph of the Church. From this time forward the imperial policy was to secure the unity of both Church and Empire in regenerating the Roman world.

¹ Not that Eusebius was in any sense an Arian. Even Newman acquits him of this charge. But to the end Eusebius was what Gwatkin terms a Conservative, that is, his opinions were pre-Nicene and opposed to the New Orthodoxy. Lightfoot's remarks in *D.C.B.*, Art. "Eusebius of Caesarea" are admirable.

How Eusebius came to be acquainted with Constantine is not known; but he declares that he first saw the Emperor as a young man in the suite of Diocletian in 296, and was impressed by the fine presence of the future ruler of the world.¹ At any rate, when the Council of Nicaea assembled in 325, Eusebius says that he sat at the right hand of the Emperor, and delivered the inaugural address to the assembled bishops. His learning was indispensable to the august assembly, even though he was not always able to carry his point on theological questions.

It is hardly correct to assume, as is too often done, that the First General Council was assembled solely for the purpose of settling the Arian dispute by the drawing up of a creed. On the contrary, several other questions were distracting the Church fully as much as the dogmatic dispute. If we may judge the bishops and clergy of antiquity by any modern standard, they were probably as excited about the proper time for observing the Christian Passover (Easter) as they were over the precise relationship between the Father and the Son.² When a practical question requiring a learned solution was to the fore, the advice of Eusebius would be invaluable. What was accepted as the definition of Catholic doctrine was based on what Eusebius presented as the baptismal creed of his church of Caesarea, with

¹ *Vita Constant.*, i. 19.

² This is brought out in Stanley's *Eastern Church*, in the description of the Council. The Venerable Bede, *Hist.* v. 21, estimates Eusebius highly on this point.

certain significant alterations and omissions which had his approval, as his object was rather to conciliate the rival parties than to destroy the possibility of the recrudescence of Arian opinion. His conduct in accepting the decision of the council reveals his attitude towards both the Church and the imperial authority.

The estimates of the character of the Emperor Constantine have been so diverse that it is not possible to decide for or against his claim to the title of "great." Few rulers have left a more permanent mark on history. The incorporation of the Church into the Roman Empire, the recognition of the Bishop of Rome as a world power, the establishment of Jerusalem as the centre of Christian piety, the calling of the First General Council, are the enduring results of his policy, to which must be added the transfer of the seat of empire to the shores of the Bosphorus. The Church of St. John Lateran in Rome, and of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and, above all, the city which bears his name, are indeed monuments which have stood the test of time. Yet his official recognition of Christianity has made pagan writers endeavour to hold him up to contempt, and his vacillation in the Arian controversy has made Christians less ardent in his praise. Without, however, discussing his character as an emperor, we will confine ourselves to the attempt to describe his ecclesiastical policy.¹

¹ Few human rulers have left a more permanent impression on the world than Constantine, and if this entitles a man to be called "Great," he deserves the title. Yet opinions

Constantine, as has been already said, was the real successor of Diocletian, and though one sanctioned a cruel persecution, and the other loaded the Church with benefits, the ultimate object of both was the same, namely, to make religion the handmaid of the Empire. The Neoplatonic philosophers attempted to unify the creed of the civilised world in a comprehensive philosophy, which recognised, if it virtually explained away, the religions already in existence. Because Christianity refused to be absorbed, it was persecuted, and because it could not be destroyed, it emerged the great religious power in the world. Constantine foresaw that the Church must ultimately prevail, and resolved that it should do so, not as a congeries of warring sects, but as a united and organised body.

Such a man as Eusebius was indispenable to Constantine, who appreciated his many-sided learning, his conciliatory disposition, blameless character, and excellent reputation. The Emperor had already discovered in the West that it was no easy task to maintain peace in the Church, and speedily found the clergy of the East no more amenable. But he still hoped that unity might be secured, if the bishops could be assembled in a General Council and agree

as to his greatness during his own century and the next differ greatly. Eusebius makes him a hero, but the next church historian, Socrates, says that the *Life of Constantine* is too much of a panegyric. Julian in his *Caesares* shows Constantine no mercy. Zosimus, the fifth-century historian, is bitterly opposed to him: Aurelius Victor in the fourth century says that Constantine was truly great in his youth, but degenerate in old age.

to settle the questions of the hour. Up to a point he seems to have succeeded at Nicaea, where the bishops, almost unanimously, accepted a creed for Christendom. Only a few recalcitrants who refused to subscribe were banished from their sees. That Eusebius did not like the creed with the addition of a word affirming the Son to be of one substance or essence with the Father (*homoousios*) is certain, but evidently he did not think it sufficiently important to wreck the work of the Council or to risk being driven into exile. By the advice of the Emperor, with whom he took counsel, Eusebius signed, and wrote an explanation of his conduct to his people at Caesarea, explaining that the Emperor (really Eusebius himself), did not mean by this agreement to imply that the Son was identified with the Father in the Sabellian sense of the intruded word.¹ This is interesting for many reasons. Bishops, as representing their flocks, were evidently anxious to have the people understand their action at every council, and it would appear that at Caesarea the motives of Eusebius in joining the majority were liable to be questioned. Even to-day we may ask whether Eusebius was over-submissive to the secular power in agreeing to the Creed of the majority, and whether he was one of those courtly bishops who prepared the way for what has been called the Caesaro-papalism of the East. His conduct is certainly capable of a more charitable interpretation. To one who had

¹ Eusebius' letter to the Church of Caesarea is repeated both by Athanasius and Socrates (Athanasius, *De Decretis*; Socrates, *Hist.* i. 8). It is not in the works of Eusebius.

been through the terrible ordeal of the Diocletian persecution, the conversion of Constantine must have seemed indeed a miracle, and Eusebius had heard the story of the divine vision from the Emperor himself.¹ At Nicaea he had been fascinated by the dignity mixed with humble courtesy, with which the Master of the Roman World had received the assembled bishops. Eusebius and others may well have welcomed Constantine, when he acknowledged himself as the supporter of the Faith, as another Cyrus, the anointed of the Lord, to assist whom in every respect was the duty of all Christians.

IV.—This brings us to the concluding years of the life of Eusebius. The Council of Nicaea, like most other conferences, had rather raised the question in dispute, than settled it. The bishops had with practical unanimity condemned Arius and agreed upon a creed; but no sooner had they separated than they began to reconsider their decision, and especially to enquire what the formula they had given to the world actually meant.² Constantine, having brought about a settlement, and induced the representatives of the churches to draw up a definition of their faith and to agree upon it, was resolved to enforce it. Arius and his friends were banished, and thereby, it was hoped, rendered powerless to disturb the peace of the Empire, and in this way harmony for the future would be preserved. But

¹ *Vita*, i. 28.

² Socrates describes the state of affairs after Nicaea as a "battle in the dark." It took more than a generation to prove that the Arian position was untenable.

there were many like Eusebius who, though he agreed to the creed in the interests of peace, was by no means disposed to endanger the tranquility of the Church by unduly pressing an *ex animo* acceptance on all which had been decided at Nicaea, or to make the word *homoousios* a pretext for a new ecclesiastical dispute.

The closing years of the life of Constantine form an obscure period of secular history, and the ecclesiastical happenings are equally confusing. The part taken by Eusebius of Caesarea is very hard to determine, and his silences may be taken as a proof of his discretion. What he actually says must be discussed when we deal with the account he gives of the Emperor. All that can be done here is to summarise the events which formed the background of the closing years of the bishop.

The Council of Nicaea was followed by the denunciation of those who disturbed the peace of the Church by criticising the dogmatic decrees. Among these, of course, were Arius, and also Eusebius of Nicomedia, a man destined to exercise in his own day a greater influence than his namesake of Caesarea. He was evidently, as will hereafter appear, a most dexterous politician: but for two years he was in exile for refusing to assent to the Creed to which he afterwards subscribed. In 326 Constantine paid his brief visit to Rome, where he stayed at the most for two months, into which few days more legends have been crammed than into any other period of human history. These include the "Donation of Constantine," the baptism of the

Emperor, the resolve to found Constantinople, and the tragic killing of his wife Fausta and his son Crispus. As, however, Eusebius says nothing of these happenings, and our informants all belong to a later period, they may here be passed over. Constantine returned to the East to convert the old city of Byzantium into the new Rome of Constantinople, which was dedicated about 329. After this the Emperor is once more involved in ecclesiastical politics. The visit of the Empress Helena to Palestine and the discovery of the Holy Places of Jerusalem took place a little before this. Here Eusebius is certainly a valuable guide, as the Sacred City was well known to him from his earliest days.

In 328 Athanasius became bishop of Alexandria, and the struggle with Arianism began to enter upon a new phase. Eusebius bishop of Nicomedia was a friend and confidant of Constantine's sister, Constantina. He was recalled at her request; and although Constantine had once been violently prejudiced against him, distrusting him as a partisan of Constantina's husband Licinius, he took him into favour as the man most likely to reconcile the conflicting religious parties. Evidently the object of the Emperor was to maintain the Creed of Nicaea and at the same time to soften the animosity of those who were ready to accept it though only with reservations. Eusebius of Nicomedia later became the head of a faction, bearing his name, the object of which was to neutralise and ultimately to supplant the work of the Council. In this Eusebius of

Caesarea certainly took a part, owing to his dislike of the Sabellian doctrine towards which the extreme adherents of Nicaea seemed to be tending. The chief supporters of the Nicene doctrine—for Athanasius had scarcely yet come to the front—were Marcellus bishop of Ancyra in Galatia, and Eustathius the Patriarch of Antioch, both of whom had been present at the Council. In 331 the Patriarch was accused of Sabellianism and deposed, much to the indignation of the people of Antioch. The Emperor, however, acquiesced in the decision of the bishops, and Eustathius was sent into banishment. He was succeeded by Flacillus, to whom Eusebius addressed his book against the opinions of Marcellus of Ancyra, showing that they were destructive of the Christian faith. It would seem that already Marcellus had gone too far in his defence of the word *homousios*; and throughout his life his excessive zeal was embarrassing to his friends, and especially to Athanasius.

These attacks on Eustathius and Marcellus were followed by a furious onslaught on the one man of outstanding ability who upheld the Nicene settlement. The Patriarch of Alexandria, it may safely be affirmed, was the greatest prelate at this time in the Christian world; for if the see of Rome was given precedence, the power of its bishop was trifling compared to that of the head of the Alexandrian Church. The city was important as the granary of the Eastern world; and it was famous for its educational opportunities and its independent position in the Empire. But Alexandria could also boast of a

succession of bishops unequalled in eminence in the Christian world; and if Athanasius was the greatest of them, he certainly had predecessors whose names are worthy of being coupled with his own. To strike down this great primate, the staunchest supporter of the Nicene Creed, would be indeed a triumph; and to this end Eusebius of Nicomedia, and possibly our Eusebius, devoted their utmost energies.¹

What part the historian took in this most discreditable intrigue, it is not easy for us to say. In the end Constantine was persuaded in the interest of peace to order Athanasius to leave Alexandria in 336 and betake himself to Treviri (Trèves) in Gaul. In the following year Constantine died after receiving baptism at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia. He had celebrated his *tricennalia*, the thirtieth year of his succession, a little before, at which the Bishop of Caesarea had been present.² But the long and eventful life of Eusebius was soon to end. The date of his death is not known: but he was not alive in 340, the year of the Great Council of Antioch. As will be shown hereafter, it is not easy to estimate his conduct in his closing years. It is enough to say that in his *Life of Constantine* what he does not tell us is as instructive as what he actually relates.

¹ Eustathius of Antioch was deposed when Constantine visited Palestine about 331. His name is never mentioned by Eusebius. Our information is from the later historians. See below, Essay V.

² The celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's accession was the occasion of one of Eusebius' longest orations—a mixture of panegyric, theology and prolixity.

It is no easy task to depict the character of Eusebius from a mere outline of the facts of his life; but in order to understand his literary work we must at least make the attempt. At the most, however, a biographer can only give a personal estimate of his character. It is evident from his later life, when he was in contact with Constantine, that he was neither a hero nor a prophet. He seems to have been essentially one of those amiable people who are ready to purchase peace by compromise, and he was evidently convinced that the Emperor was God's appointed agent for the salvation of the persecuted Church. For this reason, rather than mere sycophancy, he supported Constantine's policy and deferred to his wishes. To him we may suppose the Nicene doctrine with the word *homoousios*, to which Marcellus, Athanasius, and others, attached so much importance, was no more than a convenient expedient for closing a tiresome controversy, which would probably be forgotten when the memory of the Arian heresy had passed away. Nor was Eusebius in any sense a prophet. He was not one of those far-seeing men who could recognise in Constantine's claim to control the bishops of the Church the danger that the Church would in days to come be too much overshadowed by the Roman Empire, and be forced to submit its highest aspirations to the exigencies of state policy. To him it seemed that the first Christian Emperor, as the deliverer of the persecuted saints, ought to be accepted, and revered in that capacity. This estimate of Eusebius will assist in forming our

judgment of his account, when we have to consider him as an historian of his own day.

Strange to say, Eusebius drew down the wrath of the dominant party in the Eastern Church several centuries after his death by a letter written by him on the subject of an alleged portrait of Jesus, which Constantina Augusta asked to be sent to her. Eusebius in answer wrote a letter in which he expressed doubt as to whether the portraits, said to be Christ and St. Paul, were genuine, and explained that he had kept them by him to prevent their becoming a stumblingblock to others. He reminded Constantina that St. Paul had refused to know Christ "after the flesh" and that such pictures only tended to idolatry. This letter in the eighth century fell into the hands of the Image-breakers, who quoted the authority of Eusebius against their opponents. The retort was that this document came from an heretical source. This answer was partly due to the hostility with which two most influential saints, Epiphanius and Jerome, had regarded Eusebius, not only as a lukewarm supporter of Nicaea, but also as an Origenist.¹

This survey of the stirring events of the long life of Eusebius of Caesarea is sufficient to show that, if he was not a great man, he was an historian with every qualification for his task, with the possible

¹ Jerome in his letter to Pammachius and Oceanus (Ep. 83) praises Eusebius as an historian, but calls him an avowed champion of the Arian impiety. See also Ep. 133, Migne, *Pat. Latina*. In Ep. 84, Migne XXII, 71, Jerome says that Eusebius in all his works proves Origen to be an Arian.

exception of literary power. He fully understood the importance of world chronology for a history of the Church; he was an indefatigable collector of material which he arrayed with no little skill; he has placed posterity under a debt which it is not possible to assess. Trained in the days when the Church was unmolested, and learning was pursued with ardour, his middle life witnessed the worst and most protracted of persecutions, and in his last years he saw the ship of the Church sail through the storm into what he fervently hoped would prove an untroubled sea. He died before the hopes aroused by the policy of Constantine could prove to be fallacious, at a time when magnificent churches were rising up to welcome the new era.

Despite the fact that doubts were thrown upon the complete orthodoxy of Eusebius, his name appeared long in the Calendar of Saints, although it is not always certain which of the many Eusebii is sometimes meant. If service to the cause of the Church were a qualification, he would certainly deserve a place in the Calendar, and no suspicion as to his personal character has been raised even by his bitterest opponents. The charge that he had escaped martyrdom by some sort of apostasy, to which allusion has been made above, cannot be definitely proved. But whether Eusebius is entitled to rank among the saints of the Church or not, his place among its doctors is beyond question.¹

¹ See Lightfoot's Article in the *D.C.B.*, "Eusebius of Caesarea," concluding remarks.

Essay III

ESSAY III
THE CHURCH HISTORY OF EUSEBIUS,
BOOKS I—V

EUSEBIUS begins his *Church History* with a preface setting forth the scope of his undertaking. He had taken no little pains to prepare himself for the task, which he evidently regards as the consummation of his great apology for the Christian religion. Having shown in his *Praeparatio* how world history had been leading up to the coming of the Christ, and in his *Demonstratio* how the prophets had prepared the way for the revelation of the Gospel, he proceeds to relate the story of the trials of the Church, by persecution at the hands of the Gentiles, and by the more insidious attacks of false doctrine advanced by professed adherents. The work concludes with the triumphant emergence of the Faith out of its most severe trial into the peace which God at last gave to his people.

As a pioneer in the field of ecclesiastical history, Eusebius compares himself to one journeying through a pathless wilderness, guided only by the light of widely separated beacons, and by the voices of those who shout directions from watchtowers. Here and there he has been able to gather scraps from ancient church writers, like one who collects flowers in a meadow. To prepare the foundation for his great

work, he says he has made a special study of the difficult science of chronology, to which he refers his readers.¹ With this explanation we can realise that the problem before the modern student is how to use the materials which Eusebius has placed at his disposal.

The first book of the *History* is of importance as explaining the purpose and illustrating the method of the whole work. The most damaging charge made against the Christian religion at this time was that of novelty. To answer this, Eusebius insists on the pre-existence of Christ and His relation with the Father from the beginning of the world. God spake, and Christ, as His Word, created. Throughout the book of Genesis, Christ is the active, and sometimes the visible manifestation of the Father. The fact that Christ was known to the prophets and seers of old is next emphasised. The conclusion, in Eusebius' own words, "So let no one suppose that because of the date of His Incarnation, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ, was something new (in the world)."² In the next chapter (4) it is declared that so far from the Christians being a new people, they had in a sense always existed on earth, their religion being that of Abraham and of the men of old, free from the complications and conceptions introduced by the Mosaic Law. A man, in fact, would not be far in the wrong if he were to call the righteous in ancient days "Christians in fact, if not in name."³

The object of this proem to the *History* clearly

¹ Bk. i. 1. sect. 4. ² Bk. i. 3. sect. 21. ³ Bk. i. 3. sect. 7.

reveals the apologetic character of the whole, and therefore deserves serious attention. One cannot fail to observe that Eusebius uses only scriptural proofs, and says nothing of the philosophers or the virtuous heathen. To him the Faith is the religion of humanity as revealed in what he supposes to be the earliest records, namely, the opening chapters of Genesis. His object is to rebut the charge of innovation and his argument is directed to that end. By theologians much importance is attached to the doctrinal statements about Christ. These are advanced with no particular attention to the Church controversies of the time, and reflect the opinions of Christian teachers before the Arian dispute forced them to become more explicit than formerly.

The headings of the chapters of the rest of the First Book (5—13) will indicate its scope and throw some light on the subsequent method of the historian. (5) The time of Christ's appearance. (6) Native Jewish rulers cease with the accession of Herod. (7) The two genealogies of the Christ. (8) Herod's cruelty and his death. (9) The times of Pilate. (10) High Priests in the days of Christ. (11) Testimonies to the Baptist and Christ. (12) The disciples of the Saviour. (13) The story of Abgar of Edessa.

Eusebius has taken his information mainly from the New Testament and Josephus; but to the student of history only a few points in these detached and loosely connected chapters are of interest. There is in the sixth chapter a note from Africanus, that Herod the Great was not the son of an Edomite

prince, but of one of the temple-servants of Apollo at Ascalon, who had been taken prisoner and sold as a slave in Idumaea, but rose to power by gaining the favour of Hyrcanus, thus repeating the rabbinic tradition that the founder of the first alien family to reign over Judah was of servile origin.¹ The length of our Lord's earthly ministry is said to have been four years by a strange calculation, it being stated that according to Josephus there were four priests between Annas and Caiaphas, and each held the office for a single year.² In the eleventh chapter the famous testimony of Josephus to Christ occurs, and here it seems evident from the context that Eusebius had this disputed section before him in the copy which he used. The story of the mission of Abgar the Black, prince of Edessa, to Christ, and of Thaddeus being sent by Thomas to heal him, concludes the book. Eusebius says that the authority which he quotes was preserved in Syriac in the archives of Edessa and that it was translated into Greek.³

From this survey of the First Book we can judge how little material Eusebius had to work upon in his account of the times of Christ. Outside the New

¹ Bk. i. ch. 6.

² Bk. i. 10. A very strange statement. Can it be that Eusebius considered the High Priestly office as annual under the Roman rule? Or is John xi. 21 his authority?

³ Bk. i. 13. The charge brought against Eusebius of inventing the correspondence is completely disproved by the publication in Syriac of the *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle* (1876), by Dr. G. Phillips, President of Queens' College, Cambridge.

Testament he had only Josephus' *War* and *Antiquities*, and the lost *Chronology* of Africanus. These chapters certainly do not give us reason to suppose that Eusebius' historical work is likely to be interesting reading: their value lies in the way they illustrate his use of the books he consults. Josephus, it is true, is a less satisfactory guide to New Testament history than is frequently assumed. As to Julius Africanus, the loss of his work makes us less competent to judge, though Eusebius deserves our gratitude for preserving the notice that the *Desposyni* or kindred of the Saviour "from the Jewish villages of Nazara and Cochaba" paid particular attention to the genealogy of their family.¹ The statements in St. Luke's gospel, for instance, about Lysanias are perhaps not unnaturally accepted without discussion.² Eusebius evidently believes in the story of Abgar, and it appears advisable to trust more to his honesty than to his critical acumen; nor is it to be imagined that he invented this romance any more than that he deliberately inserted into his copy of Josephus the testimony about Jesus. Like some other learned people, whatever he found in a book Eusebius was inclined to accept without excessive enquiry.

With the Second Book we reach Ecclesiastical

¹ Bk. i. 7.

² Bk. i. 9. . . . Lysanias is not mentioned by Josephus in this connection, and Eusebius has incorporated Luke iii. 1. The statement from Josephus is very inaccurate, as Archelaus is said to have received his father's kingdom, though he was only made ethnarch of Herod's Judæan dominions.

history proper; and here the student is enabled to form an opinion of the use to which Eusebius puts his material, especially as his sources are familiar, or for the most part accessible to all. They fall under three heads: (1) The Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament; (2) Philo and Josephus; (3) The works of other writers.

1. The way in which Eusebius begins this book is illustrative of his whole method. He mentions, as is natural, the appointment of Matthias to the place of Judas and then goes on to relate the ordination of the Seven. Next he speaks of James, the Lord's brother, who was appointed bishop of Jerusalem by Peter and James and John, the sons of Zebedee, none of whom laid claim to this honour. Thus the beginning of the Church is its ministry—the Twelve Apostles, the deacons, and the bishop of Jerusalem; and throughout the *History* the regular succession to the episcopate is stressed. Eusebius now passes to the scattering of the disciples after the martyrdom of Stephen to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Whilst Paul was persecuting the Church, Philip was preaching in Samaria, and Simon, the first heretic, made his appearance. The next facts to be mentioned are the conversion of the eunuch of Candace by Philip, and the divine selection of Paul as "a chosen vessel." Thus, in a somewhat dry manner, we have the scheme of Eusebius unfolded. (*a*) The Church is organised, (*b*) the believers are scattered and preach the Gospel, (*c*) heresy is introduced. After this the story in Acts is little used and but sparingly quoted. It is assumed that

the book is well known to the reader, and Eusebius makes use of sources which he knows will be less accessible. Here and there in the introductory history he quotes the words of St. Paul from his epistles, but he refers but little to the missionary labours of the apostle.

2. After mentioning a few facts related in Acts, Eusebius turns to non-scriptural writers, notably Philo Judaeus, and Josephus. He refers to the so-called *Embassy* of Philo, and to both the *War* and the *Antiquities* of Josephus. Eusebius has, as was natural, a very high opinion of Philo and speaks of his noble ancestry, his knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, and his wide acquaintance with Greek philosophy, notably with Plato and Pythagoras.¹ But although he knows Philo's *Embassy*, Eusebius does not quote from that most interesting book, but prefers to give Josephus' description of the visit of the Jewish representatives to Caligula. Here undoubtedly is a proof that our historian has no eye for literary effect, Josephus being at this point dull and ill-informed, whereas Philo's account is that of an eye-witness, and is as racy as anything in the literature of the period.² It is not till he mentions the Egyptian *Therapeutae* that Eusebius makes use

¹ Bk. ii. 17 and 18.

² See Dean Milman's *History of the Jews*, II, for Philo's description of the interview. The story is even better told by Dean Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, who remarks: "No other fragment of ancient history, except the fourth of Juvenal's Satires, gives us so near an insight into the domestic life of the rulers of the world."

of Philo, and gives copious extracts from the *Contemplative Life*. In the following chapter, the eighteenth, we have a catalogue of all Philo's works, with the astonishing remark that this author came to Rome in the reign of Claudius and read his *Embassy* to the Roman Senate! Josephus is evidently the favourite authority and is largely used, especially in confirmation of the narrative of Acts. The most interesting quotation from Josephus is the story of the death of "Herod the King," as he is called in Acts, but who is known to Josephus as Agrippa. Strangely enough, Eusebius comments on this discrepancy, although it must have been obvious to all that the same king is meant. The fact that Josephus says that Herod saw an owl on a rope as a portent of death, and that Eusebius has transformed the bird into an angel, has been a fertile subject of discussion.¹

Eusebius has evidently read both the second book of the *War* and the twentieth of the *Antiquities* and both in the same form as they are now preserved to us. In the later books of the *Antiquities* the narrative of Josephus is far from satisfactory, and so Eusebius quite clearly felt. In the nineteenth chapter Eusebius falls into the inexcusable mistake of saying that Claudius appointed Agrippa II King of the Jews and Felix procurator of the whole country of Samaria and Galilee and Peraea. In this chapter, to quote a note appended to Dr. McGiffert's

¹ Bk. ii. 10. Eusebius has been accused of deliberately falsifying Josephus and of inventing "the angel." The text is very uncertain. See McGiffert's valuable note.

translation, "Eusebius simply sums up in one sentence what fills half a page in Josephus."¹

What may be not uncharitably called this careless, uncritical and unskilful treatment of Josephus, has a bearing on the much vexed testimony to Christ given in Bk. i. 11. In his comment on the death of James Eusebius says "These things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just who was the brother of Jesus, that is called the Christ. . . ." This he declares is a quotation from Josephus. Possibly it may be an interpolation, but if so, why was it omitted in all copies of Josephus which were made, not by Jews, but by Christians?² Now the famous "Christ" passage was not, so far as we know, in Origen but is quoted by Eusebius, who is naturally accused of interpolating the paragraph in the interest of the Christian faith. It would appear from what has been said that Eusebius quoted as from Josephus what he found elsewhere, without careful examination of his authority. If so it is very improbable that he himself "forged" Josephus' notice of Christ; but either had read it and quoted it without looking up the reference in Josephus, or vaguely remembered something of the sort as having been said by the Jewish historian. One is disposed, therefore, rather to question his accuracy than his integrity.³

¹ Bk. ii. 19, 2.

² Bk. ii. 23. This at any rate is not an invention of Eusebius, as Origen, *Contra Cels.* i. 47, quotes it.

³ Bk. i. 11. Eusebius places the "Christ" passage as occurring after the allusion to the Baptist, whereas in the

3. We may now consider the other authorities employed in this book. They fall under three categories: (a) those who are known to us by their extant works, (b) those whose works are quoted, but are no longer extant, and (c) those whom Eusebius does not name.

(a) In Chapter 1 there is a brief quotation from the *Outlines* of Clement of Alexandria to the effect that Peter, James, and John each refused to accept the bishopric of Jerusalem. In the second chapter Eusebius gives a longer extract from the *Apology* of Tertullian, which he says has been translated from the Latin into Greek, to the effect that Tiberius, on receiving the report of Jesus from Pilate, wished to have Him enrolled among the gods, but could not obtain the consent of the Senate. In the ninth chapter Clement of Alexandria is again referred to as relating how the man who led James the son of Zebedee to his death was converted. Justin Martyr's story of Simon Magus being worshipped in Rome and of his altar *Simoni deo sancto* is found in the thirteenth chapter, in which also we find the testimony of Irenaeus, that Simon was the author of all heresy. In Chapter 15 the agreement of Clement's *Outlines* with the testimony of Papias of Hierapolis is noted. In Chapter 25 Tertullian's *Apology* is again quoted. From all this we can see that Eusebius used largely what has been possessed from the first by the Church. The

Antiquities of Josephus it comes earlier. It is quoted three times by our author, here, *Demonstr.* iii. 5, and in his *Theophania*, but never in precisely the same form.

passage about Nero from Tertullian has been copied from our historian from an exceedingly bad translation.

(b) The outstanding lost author used in this book by Eusebius is Hegesippus, to whom he is largely indebted and who is considered by some to be the earliest Church historian. The martyrdom of James the brother of the Lord is told by him at length in Chapter 23. To the somewhat mysterious Caius of Rome, and Dionysius of Corinth, we are indebted for the death of Peter in Rome and the site of his trophy (tomb) by the Ostian Way.¹

(c) Unknown writers relate, in Chapter 7, the suicide of Pilate, and in Chapter 24 the fact that Mark was succeeded by Annianus as Bishop of Alexandria.²

It now remains to sum up the contents of the Second Book, which consists of twenty-six chapters. The diffusion of the Gospel began with the conversion of the "King of the Osrhoenians" (i.e. Abgar). Eusebius says he will follow the record of the Scripture, and he relates the spread of the Gospel, including the refutation of Simon Magus, down to the conversion of Paul, the chosen vessel. Then, abandoning the narrative of Acts, our historian relates the story of Tiberius being told about Christ. After reverting very briefly to Acts, Eusebius turns to Josephus and Philo about Herod Agrippa I, the tumults at Alexandria, the Embassy to Caligula, Pilate's crimes, the martyrdom of James the

¹ Bk. ii. 25.

² Bk. ii. 7 and 24.

Apostle, and the tragic death of the persecutor, Herod. Eusebius shows that Acts and Josephus are in accord as to the famine in Jerusalem, and the rebellions of Theudas under Fadus. In Chapters 13 and 14 the story of Simon Magus as told by Justin is given, and Peter's conflict with the impostor and his preaching in Rome. Next comes the writing of the Gospel of St. Mark, in Rome; and later the Evangelist's foundation of the Church of Alexandria, for which Eusebius gives no authority except report (*φασίβ*). Two long chapters, 17 and 18, are devoted to Philo. The story of the Jews in Palestine is now resumed, and, if Josephus here is dull, Eusebius certainly gives but little colour to his narrative. Little is said of Paul's missionary work, but a chapter is devoted to what happened after his release from his first captivity at Rome, the authority being 2 Tim. The longest chapter in the book is ch. 23 and the material is taken partly from Josephus, but mainly from Hegesippus. It relates the martyrdom of James the Just, and whether historical or not, is lively and interesting.¹ Eusebius tells the story in the words of Hegesippus with but little commentary

¹ Bk. ii. 23. Personally I incline to a belief in the historical value of this passage, despite many palpable absurdities. The complete absence of any hints in Acts that James was ever molested in Jerusalem and that the church over which he presided could hold a council (Acts xv), and receive a delegation of Jews from distant cities (Acts xxi) is significant. That the priests, according to Hegesippus, asked him to persuade the people indicates that as an ascetic, constantly in the Temple and zealous for the Law, he was both influential and popular.

of his own. The only notice of episcopal succession, which is so much stressed later, is that Annianus succeeded St. Mark at Alexandria.

A summary of such a book as this is necessarily dry, and leaves us dissatisfied. Eusebius has certainly not made the best of his material. Though here and there he indulges in rather turgid rhetoric he has no eye, either for historic effect, or for picturesque description. In short, he is rather a compiler of extracts than a writer of history. Considering his singularly varied life, full of stirring experiences, he seems to have been a dull laborious man constantly reading, and making extracts, which he lacks ability to present in an interesting form. Nevertheless, he is an invaluable guide, and his *History*, if it cannot be read with pleasure, can at least be studied with profit.

Book iii is longer and fuller and contains material of interest in some ways to the ordinary student. But to anyone who tried to read it with the object of extracting a connected story from its chapters, the only result would be almost hopeless confusion. Guidance is needed in the form of some rearrangement by which the very different subjects are brought under the several headings, the first of which here shall be that of the Episcopal Succession.

Eusebius attaches the highest importance to the continuity of the Christian Church, as shown in the regular succession of the great sees. It is noteworthy, therefore, that he has nothing to tell us of the labours of most of the Twelve Apostles in the direction of founding churches, except what he

derives from a commentary on Genesis, now lost.¹ The only two Apostles, apart from Peter and John, are Thomas and Andrew, whom tradition sends one to Parthia or India, and the other to Scythia. This is the more remarkable because several apocryphal *Acts* of Apostles were already in existence, which Eusebius ignores as heretical and unworthy of any credit.

Out of the thirty-nine chapters of the Third Book no less than ten, mostly very short, give the episcopal succession:—Rome (Chs. 2, 13, 15, 34), Alexandria (Chs. 14, 21), Antioch (Chs. 22, 36), Jerusalem (Chs. 22, 32, 35). With the exception of Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, these bishops are but names, yet this fact is in itself a proof of the importance Eusebius attaches to the office. At the same time it is noteworthy that he does not mention that the Apostles ordained their successors. Thus “after the death of Peter and Paul, Linus was allotted (*κληροῦται*) the bishopric.” In Chapter 4, called “On the Succession of the Apostles,” those mentioned by St. Paul—Timothy, Titus, Linus, etc., are enumerated.

Far more interesting to us and of equal importance in the eyes of Eusebius is the Canon of Scripture. In this he had a very practical interest in the days of persecution. When the Diocletian emperors ordered the destruction of the Christian Scriptures, it was customary for some of the clergy to surrender books which were not sacred, and yet

¹ Bk. iii. 1. Eusebius evidently had no definite information on the subject.

were accepted by the pagan officials. Thus such books as the *Shepherd* might be given up without serious offence, and credit rather than otherwise could be gained by surrendering heretical *Gospels* and *Acts*, which to the uninitiated would appear to be Christian Scriptures. The principal chapters on the Canon of the New Testament in this book are:— 3, on the writings of Peter and Paul; 24, on the order of the Gospels; 25, with the famous three-fold division of the genuine, disputed, and rejected Christian writings. Finally, in Chapter 29 we have a long quotation from Papias, with the well-known account of the origin of the Gospel of Mark. No part of Eusebius' *History* is better worth studying than his testimony to the New Testament, and it will soon appear that some books which have found their way into our New Testament are rejected by him.¹

The Third Book has several traditions of the Apostles which are quoted by Eusebius from early writers. Of these the most interesting to us is from Hegesippus, who would have been forgotten but for

¹ 2 Pet. is declared to be uncanonical, although set among the Scriptures as profitable to many. Peter's Acts, Preaching, and Apocalypse are rejected; and Hebrews was disputed by the Roman Church as not by Paul (iii. 3). The chapter deserving of the closest study is iii. 25, with its famous division of (1) undoubted, (2) disputed, (3) spurious writings. In the last category are the Acts of Paul, the *Shepherd*, Apocalypse of Peter, Barnabas, the Teaching of the Apostles. In vi. 25, Origen's canon of both the Old and the New Testament is given. Great as was Eusebius' admiration for Origen, he does not, to quote Lawlor and Oulton (*Eusebius*, II, p. 103), "bow even to his authority" in regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

extracts from him in Irenaeus and Eusebius. His description of the death of James, which may or may not be historical, but is very vivid, has been already alluded to in the section on Book ii. 23. We shall meet with Hegesippus again in the *History*. In this Third Book he relates the story of the family of Jesus. In the days of Domitian, when the Jews were beginning to threaten the troubles which broke out in Palestine a generation later, the Emperor ordered the descendants of David to be slain, and sent for two of the grandchildren of Jude, the Lord's brother. When they came to Rome they were questioned about the Messianic kingdom, and proving to be humble and harmless they were sent home again. Here (Book iii. 20) Eusebius quotes the exact words of Hegesippus. Hegesippus is also said to have confirmed the fact of the sedition in the Church of Corinth mentioned in the Epistle of Clement of Rome. He also has some interesting paragraphs, which Eusebius quotes, relative to the martyrdom of Symeon, the son of Clopas, the uncle of Jesus. This happened in the reign of Trajan under the proconsul Atticus. Certain heretics accused Symeon of being a Christian and a descendant of David; and the aged martyr—he was 120 years old—was cruelly tortured and finally crucified. Personally, the present writer is inclined to attach a higher value to the testimony of Hegesippus than he usually obtains. More important even than Hegesippus is Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, whose *Exposition of the Oracles* (or Sayings) of the Lord is largely quoted in chapter 39 of the Third Book.

His testimony as to the origin of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, and his acquaintance, if not with the Apostle St. John, at least with apostolic men, is of inestimable value. Besides giving more extracts from Caius, Eusebius relates the death of John and Philip, on the authority of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, and gives in Book v. the same writer's letter to Pope Victor on the Paschal question.¹

Of the writers whose works are still extant, besides Josephus, whose *Life* and book *Against Apion* are used as well as the *War*, we have Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Pliny, and Ignatius. The quotations from Irenaeus are particularly valuable, as we have only a Latin version of him, except where he is quoted in Greek, as he naturally is by Eusebius. The beautiful story of St. John and his disciple who became a robber, is related from Clement of Alexandria's *What rich man can be saved?*

If we feel disappointed at the scanty information we are able to extract from Eusebius concerning this period of early Church history, we can console ourselves with the thought that if we know little, the advantages Eusebius enjoyed in collecting information were even less than ours. Many sources, especially antiquarian, in countries he could not have visited were sealed books to him. The written

¹ Notices of Hegesippus, Papias, Polycrates and Gaius are collected in Routh's *Reliquiae Sacrae*. Gaius (Caius) was supposed to have been the author of the *Philosophumena* now almost universally accepted as the work of Hippolytus. See Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, II, 208.

authorities on which he has to rely are with but few exceptions the same as are to be had to-day, and these are so meagre that it is doubtful whether they could have been put to better use in the construction of an historical narrative. Eusebius went far afield for his history, as we see from this book. He used not only Greek, but Latin and (for Abgar) Syriac authorities.

Thus far we have tried to indicate the method of our author and his use of authorities. Henceforward we must do our best to cover more ground, and perhaps arouse more interest, by indicating the chief points in each successive book till we come to the account of what Eusebius knew from those with whom he had had personal intercourse, and to the scenes in which he himself took part.

With the Fourth Book we reach a very much more interesting phase in Eusebius' story of the Church. With the reign of Trajan he seems on surer ground and is able to report rapid progress in days of comparative peace. When we come to the records of martyrdom they have all the appearance of genuineness and the two taken from contemporary documents, i.e. that of Polycarp in the Fifth Book, and of the sufferers of Lyons and Vienne, are of surpassing interest. Our gratitude to Eusebius for preserving these records must be ungrudgingly given. The book is arranged on the usual lines, the lists of the leading bishops are carefully preserved and the years they occupied their sees. A very full category of ecclesiastical writers is given, and the enumeration of the leading heresiarchs is continued from Book iii.

This is the age of the good Emperors, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius (Verus in the heading of Ch. 15). Unfortunately few periods of Roman history are less known to us from contemporary secular authority, though the progress of the Church was remarkable, and the desperate struggle against the Roman power on the part of the Jews led to the final severance of Judaism and Christianity. But we have no Josephus to relate the terrific series of rebellion, massacre, and reprisal in the days of Trajan and Hadrian, culminating with the defeat of Barcochba and the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a heathen city under the name of Aelia, in honour of the Emperor Aelius Hadrianus. The authority for this fact given by Eusebius is Aristo of Pella—Pella being the place whither the Christians had betaken themselves after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.¹ It is no more than a conjecture, but it may be that the first really severe persecution of the Church began in the East in the days of Trajan, when the Jewish unrest caused serious apprehensions and the hopes of the Christians for the return of a Messiah were considered as provocative of sedition.

It is not possible to touch on every aspect of this interesting book, but there are two rescripts referring to the Christians to which one may call attention. The first is the letter of Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus, in which the Emperor discourages informations against Christians and deprecates their being condemned to gratify popular clamour against

¹ Bk. iii. 5.

them. Eusebius says that he himself translated the letter from the Latin, and it certainly bears marks of being a genuine document, but for one clause in which there is an injunction that unless some crime is alleged against him a Christian is not to be punished. The other, quoted also in Justin's *Apology*, is addressed to the Commonalty of Asia by Antoninus (i.e. Pius or Marcus Aurelius—for Eusebius is very confused in his statements about the Antonine Emperors)¹ is almost certainly a forgery. The repeated quotation of these rescripts testifies to a belief that the Roman authorities were exceedingly unwilling to molest people who were otherwise law-abiding, because they belonged to an unpopular though illegal sect. The martyrdom of Polycarp, during the games at Smyrna, related in this book, is a remarkable example of a leading Christian being sacrificed, despite the efforts of the authorities, to the demands of a disorderly mob; and the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne were long victims of extreme unpopularity before they were brought to a barbarous death sanctioned by the magistrates. For various mostly unexplained reasons, the Roman state began to take Christianity as a serious matter towards the close of the second century.²

¹ This rescript, iv. 13, is placed in the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161), but is quoted as emanating from Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, i.e. Marcus Aurelius (161-180). Justin attributes the rescript to Pius. It is remarkable that we have so little knowledge of the two most virtuous men who ever presided over the Roman Empire; of Pius we know scarcely anything.

² See above, Essay I, pp. 16, 20.

This growing hostility on the part of the government is evidenced in the book before us by the notice paid to the Apologetic literature which is so marked a feature of the period. Quadratus, Aristides, Melito of Sardis and especially Justin Martyr, are mentioned by Eusebius as addressing Emperors on behalf of the Christians. The whole book is full of interest, but it is enough to say that here and in the preceding book Eusebius is most careful to note at least the names of those heretics whose views distracted the growing Church, although he tells us little of value about their opinions.

The Fifth Book really concludes the story of the primitive Church, and after it we enter upon the century in which Eusebius was born, and meet with people whom the historian may either have actually seen or known, men with whom he had personal acquaintance. He tells us in his preface that he had made a catalogue of the martyrs, and we are indebted to him for giving at length the finest and most ancient complete story of the sufferings of an heroic company of Christians, like the martyrdom of Polycarp. This is reported in a letter from one Church to another. The cities of Lyons (Lugdunum) and Vienne on the Rhone were in the heart of Gaul; but as trading cities they were in communication with the province of Asia, to which their greatest Christian, St. Irenaeus, belonged. Consequently, when the persecution was over, they wrote to the brethren of the Asiatic city of Philomelium, to describe the constancy of their martyrs. The entire extract should be carefully studied, as it

bears on the face of it the appearance of genuineness, and is superior to the record of any other martyrdom, except perhaps that of Polycarp and of Perpetua and her companions, for the beautifully Christian spirit which it displays.¹

Eusebius, who in the previous book has depended mainly upon Justin Martyr, now relies mainly upon Irenaeus, who succeeded the venerable martyr, Pothinus as bishop of Lyons. The importance of Irenaeus in the story of primitive Christianity can scarcely be over-estimated. He is the link between the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages of the early Church, as he knew Polycarp, the disciple of John. He is our witness for the acceptance by the Church of four Gospels, and only four, and for the unbroken Apostolic succession of the tradition of the true faith in the Roman Church. Indeed it may almost be confidently asserted that the history of the Catholic Church, in the sense of a type of Christianity recognised throughout the world, begins with Irenaeus, with whom we pass from a series of scattered testimonies to a more consistent story of the growth of the society of believers in Jesus.

A second authority of importance in this book

¹ Before Decius (250-252) Eusebius mentions very few martyrs with the exception of these two. Nero's persecution is alluded to in the vaguest terms (ii. 25). The martyrdom of James (ii. 23) is told with some detail from Josephus, Hegesippus, and Clement of Alexandria. But considering the intense interest the historian takes in the martyrs of a later age he has remarkably little knowledge of the earlier sufferers.

is Clement of Alexandria, whom Eusebius has quoted earlier. Clement is in a sense the counterpart of Irenaeus, to whose pioneer work another aspect of Christianity is due; for if in Irenaeus we get the first definite idea of the ecclesiastical and traditional aspect of the Church, in Clement we see the beginnings of Christianity as a philosophical system. In this widely read ecclesiastical writer, with his immense knowledge of the literature of antiquity, we see the rise of the Alexandrian school and the Christian scholarship of Origen, by which Eusebius and his friends were so greatly influenced.

In the fifth chapter we have the account of an actual occurrence which is as well attested as any event in ancient history. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius in his war with the Marcomanni and Quadi (Eusebius: Germans and Sarmatians) was in sore danger. A sudden violent thunderstorm blew in the faces of the enemy and relieved the Roman army which was perishing of thirst. In this heathen and Christian writers are agreed, and are of opinion that the deliverance was a miracle, the pagans attributing it to the prayers of the virtuous Emperor, the Christians to those of a legion which was later known as the "Thundering Legion." The origin of this name is more or less apocryphal; but the victory due to the storm is an undoubted fact. Eusebius is by no means credulous as to miraculous events and rarely refers to them. Two chapters later (Ch. 7) he quotes Irenaeus on the subject of Christian miracles, and seems to imply that they

had continued up to this time, but had ceased in his own day.¹

Chapters 16—19 are devoted to that strange movement in Christianity known as Montanism, which had a great influence on the subsequent development of the Church. Eusebius tells the story entirely from the reports of those who were engaged in the transactions, and makes no independent comment on the significance of what happened. He says nothing of the penetration of Montanism into the West and does not mention Tertullian, the one Christian writer of genius who embraced its views. It would not be an easy task to determine from Eusebius' *History*, what Montanism really was, and it is quite possible that he did not know himself. It was evidently not a heresy, nor does it appear that it was a schism or the setting-up of a rival Church. Rather it was an outburst of enthusiasm, which claimed to be prophecy, but exercised in a way not consonant with the decorous tradition of the Church. Two women, Maximilla and Priscilla, prophesied with Montanus. In vain the bishops tried to exorcise the spirit in which the prophets, male and female, spoke, and brought the customary charges of covetousness and immorality against them. The infection spread throughout Asia and attracted the notice of Serapion, the powerful bishop of Antioch.²

¹ To prove the continuance of miracles in the church, Eusebius quotes Irenaeus in the Fifth Book of the *History*, Ch. 7. In Ch. 5 he relates the story of the Thundering Legion. He also credits Narcissus bishop of Jerusalem with a miracle, and a fulfilled prophecy (*H. E.* vi. 9).

² See Bk. v. 14 and 19.

In many respects Montanism resembled those fanatical movements which have appeared in every part of the Christian Church in all ages. But Eusebius does not hint, what seems to have been the fact, that it was anti-clerical in the sense of being opposed to the authority of the official clergy; and we should know but little, were it not for its appearance in the West as evidenced by Tertullian. At Rome the bishop seems to have welcomed the new prophets, till one Praxeas, whom Tertullian denounces as a heretic for his view of the doctrine of the Trinity, showed the inner purpose of the Montanist movement. The testimony of Eusebius is valuable because he records the impression of the time which he had gathered from contemporary documents.¹

The Fifth Book concludes with some interesting extracts from Irenaeus, notably the letter written by him to Florinus, a former friend who had fallen into heresy, reminding him of the times when they were associated in Asia with the venerable Polycarp. There is also a letter of Irenaeus to Victor of Rome on the controversy about the date of keeping the Paschal festival, relating how Anicetus of Rome and Polycarp of Smyrna agreed each to observe the custom of his Church. The last chapter is an extract of a treatise against Artemon, a teacher who raised the question of the relations of the Persons of the Trinity to one another, a precursor of the controversies which distracted the last days of Eusebius.

¹ Especially in the anonymous document quoted in v. 16, and addressed to Abercius Marcellus.

It is remarkable that, although Eusebius is most careful to enumerate the bishops of Rome, he knows little about them or about the history of their Church. He realised the importance of the Roman see, but he has hardly anything to say about it, nor of the acts of those who presided over it. Yet without Eusebius such important Popes as Anicetus and Victor would be unknown.

Essay IV

ESSAY IV

THE REST OF THE HISTORY AND THE LIFE OF CONSTANTINE

It is hardly too much to say that Eusebius is at his best at the opening of his Sixth Book. For him to write about Origen, whom he and his friend, the martyr Pamphilus, had so admired, was indeed a labour of love. Had he given a brief but connected life of this great man we should read this part of his *History* with real pleasure. As, however, he had, with the co-operation of Pamphilus, already given the world a defence of Origen, Eusebius still adheres to his chronological scheme, and records events in order of time rather than in their logical connection. A glance at the headings of the different chapters will instantly show that his work here, as elsewhere, is rather a chronicle than a literary history, the chief merit of which is the skill with which extracts from contemporary authorities have been collected.

It would certainly be no easy task to construct a life of Origen out of his numerous writings; and, but for Eusebius, we should know but little of the varied career of the most original thinker of the early days of Christianity. But what we know of Origen makes him so interesting a character that we cannot be completely satisfied with the little knowledge we

possess, which leaves us with many a difficult problem in his career unsolved. As his orthodoxy was a question which became a storm centre of ecclesiastical controversy a full generation after the death of Eusebius, we should like to know how far Origen's contemporaries in Alexandria considered his views heretical, and whether this suspicion was one of the causes of his troubles.¹ On this point Eusebius sheds no light.

He begins with the story of the education of Origen, and sketches the system under which youth

¹ The question whether Origen was regarded as heretical by Bishop Demetrius is a perplexing one. Undoubtedly he was forced to leave Alexandria and betake himself to Syria, and he may or may not have returned, but only for a time, in the days of Heraclas, the successor of Demetrius. As is well-known, there was a furious controversy as to his orthodoxy from the end of the fourth century onwards. For the opinions held about Origen before this we have to rely mainly on those who lived more than a century after his death—Epiphanius, Jerome, and so on till Photius (ninth century). To discuss the matter at length would here be out of place. If one may hazard an opinion, the ejection of Origen from Alexandria turned on points of discipline. The first great heresy trial appears to be that of Paul of Samosata, a generation later than Origen's death. The Gnostics were condemned for setting up systems, nominally Christian, but really alien from the Church of tradition. Montanism, Novatianism, and the Meletian schism in Egypt were all due to those who objected to the governmental system of the Church. In the days of Eusebius, Methodius had attacked Origen's school for its over-spiritualising of the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body. The unpopularity of the opinions of Origen, though he was a Scriptural rather than a philosophical teacher, was probably due to the impression that he was a Platonist opposed to the growing isolation of the Church from secular learning and thought.

was trained in Alexandria. This shows the method of instruction as applied to a boy born of devoted Christian parents; for Origen's father, Leonides, was martyred. The boy was put through the regular course of study to which every free-born youth had to submit before being trained for his profession. This, of course, included the classics with their pagan poetry and mythology.¹ But Leonides, in addition, gave his son a thoroughly Christian education, making him learn and recite the Scriptures daily. And here follows one of the really pathetic touches in Eusebius' history. The boy asked such extraordinary questions that he perplexed his father, who rebuked him and told him to wait till he was older. But when the child was asleep he used to kiss his breast reverently, in thankfulness for such a son.² When the time came for Leonides to be led to martyrdom, Origen resolved to share in his father's death, but his prudent mother prevented this by hiding his clothes.³ The persecution was that of Septimius Severus early in the third century, which was especially vigorous on the African continent, notably in Carthage and Alexandria. It is noticeable that

¹ Do what they would, the most devout Christian were unable to dispense with pagan, i.e. classical, learning. There is an excellent chapter on the subject in Gaston Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*. The subjects necessary for a boy who aspired to enter a liberal profession were mathematics, grammar, and rhetoric.

² Bk. vi. 2. 9 ff.

³ Bk. vi. 2. 4 ff. Origen wrote a letter, one sentence of which Eusebius has preserved: "Take care not to change thy mind on our account."

the youthful Origen was as assiduous in his attendance upon the martyrs as Eusebius himself was a century later, and yet neither seems to have been seriously molested. The explanation seems to be that the provincial magistrates, even when strictly ordered to persecute, were somewhat capricious, or perhaps praiseworthily lenient, in selecting their victims. Origen later remarks that "few and easily reckoned are those who died for the Christian religion."¹ Eusebius later gives a description of Origen's school, and his method of instruction.²

A curious light is thrown on the beliefs of that age in the story of Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, who is said to have lived a hundred and sixteen years. This is related in a section which abruptly breaks into Eusebius' life of Origen. Narcissus is credited with one of the few miracles in this history, of turning water into oil for the lamps, part of which was preserved in Jerusalem in memory of the fact.

¹ *Contra Celsum*, iii. 8. In the eighteenth century it was customary for critics of Christianity like the younger Dodwell and Gibbon to maintain that martyrdoms were comparatively rare. This statement is not of the polemical importance it was formerly; and it would appear that till the era of Diocletian, at any rate, the officials of the Empire were unwilling to put Christians to death, and seldom, if ever, without some sort of trial. The three greatest apologists, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius, did not suffer death for the Faith. Many of Origen's pupils and of the friends of Eusebius were martyrs.

² Bk. vi. 30. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Caesarea, in Asia Minor, describes Origen as a teacher in the Panegyric he pronounced on his master. The *Oration* is well summarised in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, II, p. 731.

He was accused of some grievous offence, and predicted a terrible death for each of his three accusers. As his curse was literally fulfilled, his innocence was established; but in the meantime he had retired to lead a "philosophic life" in desolate places, and several men were in turn elected to his bishopric. When he came back to Jerusalem he was welcomed by the people. As he grew old and feeble, he induced a Cappadocian bishop, named Alexander, to act as his coadjutor and successor. Alexander had visited Jerusalem to discharge a vow. Thus we have hints that relics were already shown in churches, that men were seeking the contemplative life in the desert, and that Jerusalem had already become a place of pilgrimage.¹

The student can perhaps best be helped to read this important Sixth Book by the selection of a few of the sections in which Eusebius quotes extracts of interest. In Chapters 12 and 13 we learn how Serapion, bishop of Antioch, heard of a gospel in the name of St. Peter, and declared it to favour the docetic heresy. Parts of this gospel have only recently been discovered and published. In Chapter 19 we have Porphyry's account of Origen. The question of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to

¹ The introduction of matter about Narcissus of Jerusalem is inartistic because it interrupts the story of Origen after relating his rash act, ordination to the priesthood, and the enmity of Demetrius. Eusebius' method is made quite plain in Dean Lawlor's and Mr. Oulton's translation of the *History*. It is arranged by Eusebius under the emperors and he drops Origen after vi. 8, because at the end of the chapter he notes the accession of Antoninus (Caracalla), the son of Septimus Severus in A.D. 211.

the Hebrews is discussed by Clement and Origen in 12 and 25. Chapter 16 gives the story of Origen compiling the *Hexapla*. The chief authority for the later part of the book is Dionysius of Alexandria, who gives a description of the great persecution of Decius in his city (Ch. 41). Dionysius continues to be a prominent figure in Book vii.

Before we take leave of the Sixth Book it may be well to say a few words regarding the Church in the West. We know a good deal about the African Church and Carthage in Eusebius' time owing to our possessing the works of Tertullian and Cyprian; but of the early history of the Church of Rome we are very much in the dark, except for what we learn from Irenaeus and these two authors. Now, although Eusebius recognises the importance of this great Church, he evidently has but little knowledge of it, except when it comes into contact with the East. He has carefully preserved its list of bishops, but tells us little about them. It is remarkable that, although he mentions Hippolytus as an ecclesiastical writer, and even alludes to his Paschal Canon, he has not the remotest notion who he was or what was his see. Yet the comparatively recent recovery of the *Philosophumena* gives a most curious picture of the domestic side of life in the Roman Church. This ignorance is the more striking because Hippolytus wrote in Greek. The name of Cyprian, by far the greatest Latin-speaking bishop of the third century, only occurs twice in the whole *History*, and Eusebius does not seem to realise his immense importance. He alludes to the controversy con-

cerning the "lapsed"; but says nothing of Cyprian's troubles at Carthage.¹

The Seventh Book begins with the peace after Decius and takes us to the outbreak of persecution under Diocletian. Here we begin to read of repeated councils of bishops—a sure indication of the growing influence and united action of the Church in every part of the Roman world; for Cyprian's activity in summoning assemblies of bishops in Africa for consultation is one of the most noteworthy features of his remarkable episcopate. The opening chapters of the book deal with the question of the validity of heretical baptism.²

¹ Cyprian's name occurs vi. 43. 3, and vii. 2 and 3, in connection with the "lapsed" and with the question of the validity of heretical baptism. Eusebius evidently knew of Cyprian only from two of his letters addressed to Dionysius of Alexandria and the eastern bishops.

² The real question at issue seems to be the nature of the Sacrament. Did its efficacy depend on the element of water and the use of the Trinitarian formula, or was it only valid when the Grace was bestowed by the Church? The insistence on *one* baptism from the earliest times (Eph. iv. 5) was evidently due to the feeling that a post-baptismal sinner could not re-enter the Church by a repetition of the Sacrament. But what about those who had received the new birth outside the Church? The Separatists might be Gnostics, who could hardly be recognised as Christians, or schismatics, whose departure from the Church was not incompatible with orthodoxy in doctrine. The Montanists in the East and the Novatians in the West held the same doctrine as the Church as to the Trinity. Was baptism by these invalid? It is often assumed that Cyprian was uncharitable and Pope Stephen broadminded in their view of *extra ecclesiam* baptism. When it is remembered that those who entered the Church from other Christian bodies often earnestly desired that their first baptism should be reckoned as of no value, that they might enter

In connection with this Eusebius gives an experience of Bishop Dionysius in a letter of his to Xystus (Sixtus II) of Rome. The practice of the Church in most places, though not apparently at Carthage, was that *all* baptism with water in the name of the Trinity was valid by whomsoever administered. This was opposed by Cyprian, who refused to accept any baptism not given by the Church, and it was the cause of his dispute with Pope Stephen, the predecessor of Sixtus II. Dionysius says that an old man, who had been in the Church of Alexandria as a communicant for many years, was present at a baptism, and hearing the questions and answers, was so impressed that he begged for Church baptism, fearing that, with the irregular sacrament by which he had been made a Christian, he had no right to approach the Holy Table. Dionysius of course consoled him as best he could, but the man could never after this communicate without misgivings. Dionysius said he regretted not being able to give comfort by re-administering the sacrament. Thus we see that those who rejected heretical baptism were actuated, not by narrow ecclesiasticism, but by a real desire to give comfort to those who felt the need of beginning anew their spiritual life after they had repudiated the heresy which had kept them outside the Church.

the Church by the Sacrament which gave remission of sins, Cyprian and the Africans may have taken the more charitable and popular line. The Council of Arles (A.D. 314), Can. 8, decided that any baptism in the name of the Trinity is valid. See Benson, Feltoe, Lake in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

In the midst of his valuable extracts from the writings of Dionysius, Eusebius mentions two matters of local interest in Palestine—one a miracle at Paneas, the source of the Jordan; and the other the bishop's throne (!!) of St. James which was preserved by the Church of Jerusalem.¹

The importance of Dionysius as bishop of Alexandria is great, and his memory was evidently held in the highest esteem. Athanasius defends it against any suspicion of unorthodoxy in his treatise *De Sententia Dionysii*, and Jerome gives a list of his writings. Yet but for Eusebius we should know little about him and his writings. What little we have here gives us a good impression of his good sense, moderation and thoroughly Christian spirit, as a single example will suffice.

What is now known as Millenarianism, or the immediacy of the reign of Christ for a thousand years, was prevalent in Egypt in the third century, and as it unsettled men's mind, it was looked upon with disfavour by the responsible authorities of the Church. A man named Nepos maintained this view of the second coming of Christ in a book on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, entitled *Refutation of the Allegorists*, or those who did not take this scripture too literally. Dionysius went to the district where these opinions were held, and not only showed Nepos great consideration, but actually convinced him and his followers of their error. To have done so has been described as one of the greatest of ecclesiastical miracles. Dionysius argued

¹ Book vii. 16 and 19.

that the book of Revelation was not by the Evangelist but by a man of the same name. The presentation of his case by Dionysius is one of the first examples of the Higher Criticism, and has been surpassed by no exercise in that field. Chapter 25 should be read carefully by every student.¹

Book viii has many good passages, notably the account of the great heresy trial of Paulus of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, one of the strangest figures in the history of this period (Ch. 30).² The conclusion of the book, as Eusebius points out, brings us to the time when he began to take an active part in the life of the Church and to the great persecution of which he was an eye-witness. Henceforward we can treat him as an historian of contemporary events. Strange as it may appear, Eusebius is less rather than more complete as an historian, as he approaches his own time. Up to now he has given us the benefit of the records of antiquity. Now he appears, as a rule, more of a martyrologist and a panegyrist of Constantine.

Gibbon makes a damaging charge against

¹ Dionysius was a prolific writer whose survival is mainly due to Eusebius. The most accessible collection of the fragments of this Father is that of Feltoe. Bishop Westcott remarks in his article in the *D.C.B.*, II, p. 851b: "These (the fragments) give a most lively picture of the writer and of his times; and Eusebius with true historical instinct has made them the basis of the sixth and seventh books of his *History*."

² The trial and condemnation of Paul is related in Bk. viii. chs. 29-30. The strange story of his misdeeds is only known to us from the synodical letter of the bishops given here.

Eusebius that he has shown himself unfair in recording only what is to the credit of the Christians, and deliberately suppressing all that was not to their honour. The great historian was, as is well known, an acrid opponent of the Christian religion, and has here let his bitter feelings overcome his discretion. All that is necessary to answer him on this point is to refer the student to the opening chapter of the Eighth Book. When the great persecution commenced, Eusebius was over fifty years of age and writes from personal experience; and nothing can be more severe than his description of the Church at the time. During the long peace after Valerian (260-313) the Church had made great progress, large places of worship were erected by the Christians in the cities, and many of them held high posts in the government. In short, "the divine and heavenly hand was overshadowing His people," who were proving unworthy of such favour and protection. Their faith was sluggish, but their factiousness was great, and the different parties were almost taking arms up one against another. The bishops, who ought to have been shepherds, were intriguing for the supreme power; and the people were as undisciplined as if they had been atheists. In fact, Eusebius, if he prefers to relate the heroic deeds of the martyrs, rather than the many apostasies, is ready to acknowledge that the persecution was a just punishment for the misdeeds of the Church. Gibbon's strictures against Eusebius may be safely disregarded; the worst thing that can here be said of our historian is that he confesses to the amiable

weakness of being unwilling to expatiate on the shortcomings of his friends and co-religionists, and desirous to dwell more on the heroism with which they defended the Faith, than on their lapses in days of trial.¹

But it cannot be denied, as will appear in the sequel, that Eusebius is not always candid or reliable about his own times, though it must be admitted that the history of the period from the accession of Diocletian to the death of Constantine (284-337) is too fragmentary to allow us to pass judgment. At least Eusebius was alive; and most of our authorities belong to a later generation. Eusebius' one contemporary is Lactantius, the tutor of Crispus, the son of Constantine, and possibly the author of the *Death of the Persecutors*. The book is a clever pamphlet written with the object of showing that every emperor who persecuted the Church, including Diocletian, perished miserably. It is brilliantly written, perhaps more with the object of interesting the reader than of recording actual events. Nor may we overlook the fact that, when the author disapproves of an emperor, he does so by exaggerating crimes and imputing the vilest motives to every action. Throughout this period, literature seems to consist either of unsparing panegyric or venomous detraction, nor is Eusebius absolutely free from either. To him all the virtues are embodied in the family of Constantine, and all the vices in their rivals, and every incident which might seem to detract from the merits of the first Christian Emperor is carefully ignored or suppressed. Thus it is well

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XVI.

nigh impossible to form a correct impression of the motives or policy which led to the attempt to put down Christianity by the most brutal methods, or to estimate properly the responsibility of such emperors as Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Maximin and Maxentius for the horrors of the persecution. All that can here be attempted is to state what Eusebius himself actually relates.

The stages of persecution were marked by four successive edicts. By the first all the churches were to be destroyed, the Scriptures were to be burned, and the profession of Christianity punished by civil degradation. The penalty of death was not enforced. Diocletian was next persuaded by Galerius to issue a second edict inflicting capital punishment on the bishops. Then came a third edict intended to be more merciful, in that it allowed those who recanted to be set at liberty—this is mentioned by Lactantius and not by Eusebius. During Diocletian's illness a fourth edict rendered everyone who professed the Christian religion liable to the same penalties as the officials of the Church. In this book Eusebius mentions several martyrdoms, and ends with the description of the loathsome disease which in 311 proved fatal to Galerius, causing him to issue his edict allowing the Christians to resume the worship of their God. Eusebius declares (Ch. 9) that he was in Egypt during the persecution, and witnessed some wholesale executions in the Thebaid; but his statements are vague, and it is difficult to discover when he actually visited the country.¹

¹ See Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, II, p. 276, for the discussion of this point.

The treatise on the *Martyrs of Palestine* appears in most editions as a sort of supplement to Book viii. It is more systematically arranged than the previous accounts of the sufferings of the Christians, and contains the story of the martyrdom of Pamphilus, the friend of Eusebius, and his companions at Caesarea. Chapter 9 has the story of an alleged miracle when the pillars which sustained the porticos of Caesarea on a hot day with a perfectly clear sky were covered with moisture, as though shedding tears at the sufferings of the Christians. This, one of the very few miraculous events recorded in the *History*, has been the subject of some ridicule, but may well be assigned to natural causes. In the next chapter a "so-called" Marcionite bishop suffered death for Christ, though his zeal, says Eusebius, was "not according to knowledge."

We may pass by the last two books of the *History*, ix and x, as they can be, if necessary, dealt with when we come to Eusebius' relations with Constantine. The story here culminates in the edict of toleration published by Constantine and Licinius, the generous gifts of Constantine to the Church, and the privileges granted to the clergy, and the rebuilding of magnificent churches in place of those which had been destroyed. Finally we have the persecution of the Christians by Licinius, and his defeat by Constantine, who, as master of the World and patron of the Church, inaugurates a new age of peace and prosperity.

The *Life of Constantine*, about a century after its appearance, was criticised by the Byzantine historian

Socrates for excessive adulation of that Emperor.¹ This view is just; but Eusebius is not without excuse. Constantine may or may not have been a great man, but he assuredly was a great ruler. That he was no ordinary personality is evident from the fact that he is not only an object of extravagant flattery but also of equally unreasonable abuse. His nephew, Julian the Apostate, regarded him with contempt, and poured scorn on him in his *Caesares*, and in the next century the pagan historian Zozimus is also bitterly hostile. On the other hand, his praises are loudly sung by the orator Nazarius, and of course by Eusebius. The part of the life of Constantine which has laid him open to the severest censure is his last visit to Rome in 326 after the Council of Nicaea, when he put to death his gallant son Crispus, and is alleged to have caused his wife Fausta to be strangled. On this Eusebius is discreetly silent, and Nazarius pronounced his panegyric before these things happened. It must be admitted that this brief but eventful time is as obscure as any momentous one in history. Of Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* it is but fair to say that its object was to convince the Christian world of the great advantages of Constantine's administration.²

¹ Socrates, *H. E.* i. preface.

² The visit of Constantine to Rome in 326 is certain. It was very brief, from July to September. Our authorities are the Chronicles compiled in the fourth and fifth centuries. That Crispus was put to death at Pola at this time is probable; and there was evidently some plot against Constantine, in which his son was implicated. Fausta's fate is more uncertain. Our authorities all belong to a

It is not intended here to give a full account of Constantine's career but to relate what Eusebius actually has to say in the four books of the *Life*, premising, however, that this work is, not the production of a courtly bishop eager for preferment, but was written after the death of his benefactor by an aged man who had little to look forward to in this world. In many places the *Life* is more truly a reflection of the mind of Eusebius than it is a sketch of the character of the Emperor. What the historian must have known and deliberately omits is frequently very suggestive.

The proem of the First Book announces that the great Emperor is dead, having the year before celebrated the thirtieth year of his accession. At the time of his death Constantine was the most prosperous of men: the empire was at peace, and three worthy sons had inherited the government. Eusebius feels that he cannot adequately praise the virtues of the deceased Emperor, he must leave that to the immortal God and to His Word (i. 1-2). Constantine is compared to the two great Emperors of antiquity, Cyrus the Persian and Alexander the Great. But whereas Cyrus perished miserably, and

later generation. Eutropius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus, etc., were heathens. It is remarkable that Julian, who hated the memory of Constantine, says nothing of the circumstances which have cast so great a stigma on the character of the Emperor. The historians seem fond of such phrases as "must have been," implying that their account rests on conjecture. The whole episode is mysterious. Something happened to make an impression on posterity; but what it was cannot be known.

Alexander died at the age of thirty, Constantine was the same age when he became Emperor as Alexander was when he died, and he reigned for thirty years. Eusebius, we may note, holds to the same view as Lactantius, that those who have persecuted the true religion die miserably, and its defenders are rewarded by prosperity in their latter days (i. 3-8). The object of the book is not so much history as edification; since the record of one whose life has been pleasing to God must surely be no unprofitable study: for this reason only what is good in the Emperor's reign must be the subject of the *Life* (i. 10-12).¹

Constantine, like Moses the deliverer of Israel, was brought up in the palace of kings, and was the son of a most pious father. The virtues of Constantius are the theme of the next chapters (i. 13-28). That he was, compared to his colleagues, a just and merciful ruler, is admitted by heathen writers; but Eusebius makes him virtually a Christian. When Diocletian complained that Constantius was not collecting enough tribute, an appeal to his people brought in a sum which amazed the ambassadors of the Augustus, but was returned, on their

¹ The religion of Constantine and even of Eusebius is too important and difficult to be discussed in a brief essay. The present writer has seen little reason to change the views he expressed in his *History of the Christian Church*, published forty years ago, when he asserted that, in his opinion, the use of the *labarum* as a talisman of victory marks the beginning of the Middle Ages (p. 282, 5th ed.). But the medieval devotion to the Person of Christ was certainly absent in the popular religion of the circle in which Eusebius moved. Even in the Arian controversy the chief interest was *theological* rather than Christological.

departure, to the subscribers. On one occasion all the members of the household of Constantius were threatened with dismissal unless they offered sacrifice; but those who refused to comply were retained, and the idolaters rejected. Indeed the palace of Constantius differed in no respect from a church of God. When Diocletian abdicated in 306, this excellent prince succeeded as the Senior Augustus.

In the nineteenth chapter we have Constantine portrayed as a youth. Eusebius saw him as he passed through Palestine in the suite of Diocletian in 296 and was impressed by the beauty of the person, and the prudence and wisdom of the future Emperor. His singular merits made Constantine an object of the jealous suspicion of the Emperors and caused him to seek safety in flight and join his father, who was at the point of death. From A.D. 306, when the army proclaimed him Emperor, to 312, we learn nothing from Eusebius save that Constantine was victorious on every side. When, however, he reflected on the miserable end of most of his colleagues and debated "which God he should summon to his assistance" he prayed, and was vouchsafed the vision of the trophy of the cross, bearing the inscription BY THIS CONQUER (i. 28). That night Christ appeared to Constantine, and ordered him to make the standard now called by the Romans *labarum*. The original of this Eusebius says he saw himself and proceeds to describe it (i. 31). We are now told of the abominable wickedness of Maxentius, and how he endeavoured by magical arts to defeat Constantine: the battle of the

Milvian Bridge is related in general terms, followed by a sketch of the generosity of the victor to the Church, his forbearance to the most unreasonable of some of his new subjects (the Donatists) and his successes against the barbarians (i. 33-46). In 316 Constantine celebrates the tenth year of his accession (the *decennalia*) without heathen sacrifices (i. 48). The remainder of the book is very confusing, as it merely touches on the ill-treatment of the Church by Licinius, and the miserable end of the heathen emperors. It is evident, however, that Eusebius is singularly uninformed concerning affairs in the West even in his own time.

The Second Book takes us as far as the outbreak of the Arian controversy. Nineteen chapters are given up to Constantine's campaigns against Licinius. The account of these is hagiology rather than history. Constantine prepares for war with prayer; Licinius' barbarities at Amaseia in Pontus "surpassed every excess of cruelty." To defend the Christians Constantine assembles his army, which marches with the cross at its head, guarded by fifty picked men. Licinius addresses his troops in words which Eusebius assures us were reported by Constantine to him. The war, says Licinius, is to decide whether the old gods or the new God is to be worshipped. As this speech is placed in the first campaign, it is hardly appropriate, for the war ended in a truce between the rival Emperors. Constantine makes a tabernacle for the Cross and prays therein for victory. In the end Licinius, to the joy of the whole world, is defeated. Constantine takes the

title of *Νικητής* or Victor; and the Empire is united under the conqueror who first proclaimed the Unity of God (ii. 19).

After this the book is chiefly made up of copies of laws and decrees made by Constantine for his Eastern dominions, manifesting his favour for the Christian religion, and a very long rescript (ii. 24-42) restoring all property confiscated from the Church and the martyrs, and earnestly exhorting all men to worship the true God. In a letter to Eusebius and other bishops they are ordered to rebuild the churches and to erect new and more magnificent ones. All imperial officials are forbidden to offer heathen sacrifices; but at the same time the Emperor is shown to be opposed to any kind of compulsion in the matter of religion. One mark of genuineness is to be noted in the diffuse addresses which are really sermons under the guise of laws. Although Constantine regarded the Cross with superstitious veneration, in his proclamations he never mentions the name of Christ, nor speaks as one who had been brought to the worship of God through Him; in fact, he writes as any outsider might do, if he professed monotheism. It is hardly too much to say that the Christ, who appeared in a dream and advised the adoption of His Cross as a talisman of victory, cannot be regarded by us as the Christian Christ.

When we arrive at the Arian Controversy (ii. 61), it is noteworthy that Eusebius does not inform us what it was about. All he says is that, when all was prosperous in the Church of Alexandria,

“the ‘spirit of envy’ reached the bishops themselves and arrayed them in angry hostility against each other, on pretence of a jealous regard for the doctrine of Divine truth.” On hearing of the outbreak of the dispute, Constantine wrote to Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and Arius, the presbyter who had opposed him, the famous letter given in ii. 64-72, exhorting them to unanimity. The Emperor shows no appreciation of the great issues at stake; but pronounces a dispute on certain obscure passages in the Divine law to be needless. Here, again, he writes as ignorant of the very rudiments of Christianity. The historian Socrates styles this letter as “full of wisdom,” and Cardinal Newman severely censures the presumption of Constantine, an unbaptised layman, for presuming to interfere in a matter in which the clergy alone had a right to an opinion.¹ Nevertheless the letter is one which might well represent the commonsense of a ruler, to whom the matter in dispute would have no interest save as a possible cause of disturbance of the peace of the world. It certainly helps to explain the subsequent policy of the Emperor in regard to the Christian Church. One must notice how careful Eusebius is here not to commit himself on the question, and his reticence in this and other matters as his narrative proceeds.

It would be interesting to know what idea we should have had to form of the Great General Council of Nicaea if we had nothing to guide us but Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*. The historian might

¹ Socrates, *H. E.* i. 7; Newman, *Arians*.

have dismissed it as a splendid pageant, assembled for no more important purpose than to determine the day on which the Christian Passover (Easter) ought to be celebrated. But we know that Eusebius took a deep interest in the assembly and at times a leading part in its deliberations. He tells us himself that it was he who produced a creed, which, with important alterations, was ultimately adopted; and he only signed what the Council had accepted after an earnest consultation with the Emperor. It is not here necessary to give an historical account of this momentous assembly; but rather to place before the student exactly what Eusebius relates. In this way we are able to obtain a just estimate of the character of our historian and of the circumstances under which he wrote. A summary of Chapters 6-23 of the Third Book will sufficiently illustrate his treatment of the subject of the Council. It is ordered to be held at Nicaea in Bithynia, truly named a city of Victory (Ch. 6). All continents, Europe, Libya (Africa), and Asia, are represented (Ch. 7); there were two hundred and fifty bishops present (Ch. 9). Constantine enters the assembly. He appears "like a heavenly messenger of God." The Emperor's shining robe, his noble face and figure, his modest bearing in the presence of the bishops are here described. In Chapters 12 and 13 Constantine impresses the need of harmony upon the assembly, and in Chapter 14 we reach the culmination of his success and that of the Council when all agree as to the time of celebrating Easter! Chapter 15 describes a great banquet in

celebration of the twentieth year of the Emperor's reign, when the bishops feasted at the imperial table. Eusebius here indulges in the bold remark, "One might have thought that a picture of Christ's kingdom was thus shadowed forth, and a dream rather than a reality."

The striking feature in this trivial record is that no names but that of Constantine are mentioned, and nothing is said of the great issues of the First General Council. In justice to Eusebius, however, it must not be forgotten that his main object is to show Constantine's desire to unite the Christian body in one harmonious Church, and that the writer was now a very aged man.¹

Chapters 25-54 deal with the creation of Jerusalem as a holy city, by the building of the church of the Holy Sepulchre on the site of a temple of Venus, the ancestress of the Romans, erected by Hadrian. Nothing is related of the discovery of the Cross by Helena; but the mother of Constantine is said to have erected churches at Bethlehem on the scene of the Nativity, and on the "cavern" of the Ascension on Olivet. The Third Book ends with a triumphant note. Constantine united the Christian Church, and no heresy or division within it was allowed. All Christians who had withdrawn

¹ It is remarkable that Eusebius says nothing in the *Life of Constantine* of the part he took in the debates of Nicaea on the Person of Christ. We have to depend on Athanasius and Socrates for his suggested creed and for the elaborate explanation as to why he accepted the Nicene formula. The *Life* is truly neither history nor biography, but merely a panegyric.

from the fold were deprived of their places of meeting, and heretical books were searched out and destroyed. In short, the persecuting edicts of the successors of Constantine were anticipated, at least in spirit.

Of the Fourth Book it is only necessary to say that it is occupied by edicts, etc., of the later years of the reign. A few points alone can be noticed here. In Chapter 18 Sunday is to be observed by all as a day of rest, and the pagan soldiers are to recite a form of prayer prescribed in Chapter 20. Except for the opening phrase "We acknowledge thee the only God," it is such as any pagan might use, and is characteristic of the Emperor whom we have already described as a patron of the Church, but in religion a non-Christian monotheist. In Chapter 25 combats of gladiators are forbidden. In Chapter 32 Constantine pronounced an oration "to the assembly of saints" in Latin, which Eusebius has translated. It is appended to the *Life* and is a wordy apology for Christianity. But if our Emperor rejoiced in his own eloquence, he was patient to that of others, as he stood respectfully while Eusebius delivered an even longer oration, refusing to sit down because of the dignity of the subject (Ch. 33). Copies of the Scriptures were to be prepared at great expense, and the task was committed to Eusebius (Chs. 26, 27). As his end drew near, the empire was given to his three sons, who were to have Christian instructors (Ch. 51). The church of the Apostles at Constantinople was erected to be the burial place of Constantine, who fell ill at

Heliopolis and was taken to Nicomedia, where he was baptised in the church of the Martyrs (Chs. 61, 62). From the hour of his baptism the Emperor declined to wear the purple and died in the white robe of a neophyte. On his death the army refused to acknowledge any but his sons; but Eusebius says nothing of the murder of all his other relatives except Gallus and Julian. So great was his virtue, that Eusebius likens Constantine to the mythical Phoenix of Egypt, and concludes with these words: "So that no one whether Greek or barbarian, nay, even of the ancient Romans themselves, has ever been presented to us as worthy of comparison with him."

Thus far we have dealt with Eusebius as a Church historian; and, if what has been said appears dull and dry, it does not do him much injustice. Our author was deeply learned, but no one can say he was in any way inspired. Yet upon the whole he may be pronounced honest as a compiler; and had he been more critical in his estimate of what he read, and less original in what he relates, he would not have been of so much value to us. As it is, the only readable parts of his records are found in his quotations from the books of others. Eusebius' rhetoric with its involved and turgid language is very tiresome, although the reader is compelled to acknowledge the heavy debt he owes him as an historian. The *Life of Constantine* is inferior to the *History*, as the last days of Eusebius are less satisfactory than his early career. But it must not be forgotten that the *Life* is more of a funeral oration, in the style of the contemporary panegyric, than a biography. It

is strange, however, that nothing whatever is said of Constantine's last visit to Rome in 326, and even more surprising that there is no allusion to that Emperor's greatest achievement, the foundation of the New Rome which for so many centuries bore his name. All that we have been considering is in the light of an apology, which adds to our difficulty of constructing an historical sequence of events. The object throughout has been to indicate how an early authority can be studied in the light of the material which it actually presents.

Essay V

ESSAY V

EUSEBIUS AS AN APOLOGIST—CONCLUDING REMARKS

IN Bishop Lightfoot's famous article on Eusebius of Caesarea no less than forty-one works, long and short, are admitted to have been produced by our author, and there are others of more doubtful authority. Most of the forty-one are in Greek, a few have been recovered in Latin translations, and recent discoveries have revealed Syriac versions of writings believed to have been lost. To discuss each one is impossible here; and we must content ourselves with but two, after simply enumerating the divisions under which Dr. Lightfoot has classified them, namely (A) Historical, (B) Apologetic, (C) Critical, (D) Doctrinal, (E) Orations and Sermons, (F) Letters.

We have already dealt with Class A (Historical), and in part with Classes E (Orations) and F (Letters), and there remain the Apologetic, Critical, and Doctrinal sections, each one of which would require a full volume. It is enough to say that Eusebius would be one of the most important of the Fathers, if we had only his critical labours to go by. Here we should have to acknowledge our debt to his indefatigable industry, his wide learning, and, in some

instances, his sound judgment. Much of his work in this field is of permanent value, especially the so-called Eusebian Canons of the Gospel. The subject, however, is hardly relevant to our present purpose, despite its interest to scholars. On the doctrinal position of Eusebius we have already touched, and the question of his orthodoxy in the Arian controversy is too thorny a subject to be dealt with except in careful detail, requiring a scrupulous investigation of his language on Christology, and especially of his relations with St. Athanasius. Attention must now be directed to Eusebius in his character of an apologist, and to a description of his two great works, the *Preparation* and *Demonstration*, which together form a unity.

The first part of this apologetic is known as the *Preparation*, and consists of fifteen books; and though by no means easy reading, it is invaluable to the student of ancient philosophy, containing, as it does, extracts from almost every philosopher of note, many of which would never have survived but for Eusebius. It is planned with some skill, and is a veritable monument of the immense knowledge of the author. Nor are his own remarks without point. The book is addressed to heathen, whereas the second part, or *Demonstration*, is intended rather for Christian converts. Eusebius dedicates both treatises to his friend, Theodotus, Bishop of Laodicea; and he evidently wrote before the peace was secured to the Church, at any rate in the East.

In the *Preparation* he quotes extensively from Porphyry, the greatest and most skilful opponent of

the Christian religion; but he often makes his adversary support arguments in favour of the Faith. Porphyry and the Neoplatonists generally, as we have seen, desired to have it in both ways. On the one hand they hoped to preserve the worship of antiquity, and on the other to take advantage of the more spiritual ideas for which Christianity was largely responsible.¹ Eusebius shows the impossibility of this, by pointing out that the paganism of the time was in origin an entirely unspiritual religion, and a corruption of the simpler faith of the first age of man.² To explain away its superstitions and abominations is, in fact, to be untrue to history. Philosophical and physiological attempts to account for paganism are futile. Bloody sacrifices, for example, which Porphyry himself condemns, were inherent in the religion of the Greeks, and the oracles cannot be explained away, because they are not

¹ These sections have been wrongly attributed to the Christian Ammonius from a misunderstanding of Eusebius' letter to Carpianus, in which he explains the system. There he says he will follow a *different method* (καθ' ἑτέραν μέθοδον) from Ammonius. Eusebius aimed to avoid the difficulties of a *diatessaron*, in which the individual Gospels could not be read consecutively. So he wrote the Gospels out one after the other, dividing them into sections. At the end he affixed 10 tables or Canones (δέκα κανόνες). The first contained the sections common to the four gospels, the second those common to three, and so on, till the last table had the sections which were peculiar to each Evangelist. In the margin of the text he wrote the section number. As a harmony which preserves the order of the Gospels and facilitates quick reference it is a monumental work that has never been superseded.

² See above, Essay I.

entirely due to fraud any more than they are the utterances of gods; but, according to Eusebius and his Christian contemporaries, they proceed from evil beings or daemons who desire to deceive mankind.¹

Before going further it may be of interest to note the main objections to Christianity in the days of the last of the persecutions. The opponents ask if the believers claim to be Greeks or Jews, because they reject the opinions of the one, and the custom of the other.² The Greeks say the Christians are atheists for rejecting their ancestral gods, and they deserve punishment for becoming zealots for the foreign mythologies of the Jews; as, when they do this, they ally themselves with a people who are impious enemies of all mankind. The Jews, on the other hand, maintain that the new sect use and misinterpret Scriptures to which they have no right, and claim that the Messiah, who is foretold as the

¹ This is the main argument of the first books of the *Preparation*. Eusebius holds that there was a primitive *revealed* religion, which was of the essence of Christianity.

² The argument here throws a light on popular Christianity from the earliest times. Those who accepted the Faith believed in the pagan gods even more firmly than their adversaries. They considered, not without some authority from the New Testament, that the world was full of daemonic beings seducing and ill-using mankind. These were the gods of heathenism, not mere phantoms of the imagination, but actual beings occupied in inducing men to worship them. These daemons were real, but not terrible to the believer, because Christ was more powerful than they. The oracles were the real utterances of evil beings, but they had ceased about the time of the coming of Christ. Plutarch admits this in his *De defectu Oraculorum*.

Saviour of the Chosen Nation, has come to all peoples, asserting that the good things promised to those who keep the law are reserved for those who deliberately break it.

In their polemic against paganism the Christians are consistent opponents of the doctrine of necessity. St. Augustine's theories of Divine determinism and grace were yet in the future; and Eusebius fully recognises that fatalism is destructive alike of law and morality; and he has some really valuable remarks on this subject. He summons Porphyry to his aid; for it is noteworthy that this foe to Christianity is often singularly in accord with the Christians in respect to the popular superstitions of the time. Indeed a really valuable contribution might be made out of Eusebius' use of Porphyry. On the subject of Free Will as a human privilege our author gives an extract, which would otherwise have been lost, from Bardesanes, the Syrian Gnostic, who is elsewhere ranked by him among the heretics.¹ Here Eusebius acknowledges that Bardesanes, whose book *On Fate* he quotes, "pursued his inquiries to the highest point of Chaldaean science." A considerable section of the *Preparation* is devoted to the

¹ Of Bardesanes or Bardaisan little is known; but he was certainly a most interesting character. He lived in Edessa in the third century A.D. There is a long article in the *D.C.B.* by Dr. Hort on his opinions. Eusebius evidently had a high opinion of his book on *Fate*. In the *History* (Bk. iv. 30) it is said that Bardesanes had been a Valentinian who joined the Church. Eusebius adds that he never entirely threw off the heresy with which he had been infected. For Bardesanes, see Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*.

Hebrew religion, in which Eusebius uses Josephus' *Apion*, though he calls the book the *Antiquities*. In addition there are various interesting quotations in the *Preparation* from the Jewish author.¹

It is by no means easy to do justice to so long a work as the *Preparation*, which, it must be confessed, is tedious and laborious reading, made up of extracts from many authors. Yet it is much more than a compilation. It is a real answer to heathenism at the very moment of its apparent triumph. In this respect it is in marked contrast to St. Augustine's more famous *De Civitate Dei*. When that great work appeared, the old religion was in its last throes, as was also the Roman Empire in the West. Then the charge against the Christian religion was that it had resulted in the ruin of the civilisation of the world which had been fostered by the ancient worship of Rome. It was otherwise in the days of Eusebius. Whilst he was writing the Church was on the losing side, especially with such Emperors as Galerius and Maximin Daza; and in the East the New Platonism was in the ascendant. Moreover, the religion of Rome was not that of the Hellenic World. Its strength lay in its antiquity and in its value as a political institution, whereas the Church in the East was opposed to a philosophy which

¹ The long quotation from Josephus is found in *Apion* ii. 16. The *Apion* only exists in one MS. and a Latin translation made in the sixth century. Niese, the editor of Josephus, ranks these testimonies of Eusebius as of the highest importance, and of more value than the one Greek Codex (L). St. John Thackeray in the Loeb Series, *Josephus*, I.

aimed at outbidding its rival by offering a speciously similar scheme of theological speculation and practical morality, which would preserve the ancient cults by reinterpreting them.

Thus the concluding books of the *Preparation* are largely made up of quotations from Plato, most of whose sentiments win the approval of Eusebius, who labours to show that, though they may be sound, they are in every way inferior to the Christian system. The scrupulous courtesy of Eusebius towards his opponents contrasts favourably with much of the earlier apologetic.¹ His character was eminently conciliatory, and this explains much of his subsequent career. He had a natural dislike of all who seemed to him to make trouble, even though they were contending for the truth.

Two more points in connection with the *Preparation* deserve notice, the first is the original remarks of Eusebius, and the second our debt to him for the preservation of ancient authorities which would otherwise have been lost.

It is easy to abuse Eusebius. Bishop Lightfoot, who has a high admiration for his learning and wisdom in selection, and an evident liking for the man, freely acknowledges his defects. The criticism

¹ In marked contrast to Tertullian's savage attack on heathenism. But Eusebius' object is not to attack his opponents, but to show that the philosophers are often right in their views, which are imperfect compared with the message of the Christ. Still the *Preparation* is a remarkable book to have appeared in, or just after, an age of persecution.

of Eusebius in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* is worth quotation:—

“ His gigantic learning was his master rather than his slave. He had great conceptions, which he was unable adequately to carry out. He had valuable detached thoughts, but he fails in continuity of argument. . . . His style is especially vicious. . . . In his *Life of Constantine* his language becomes hopelessly turgid and unnatural.”

Yet in justice to our author it is only fair to try to set forth some of his “valuable detached thoughts” in the *Preparation* which is, after all, a noble apology. Eusebius clearly recognises that the religion opposed to the Christianity of his day is an entirely new one, designed to bolster up the faith of antiquity practised by the vulgar.

“Such was the ancient theology which was transformed by certain moderns of yesterday’s growth, who boasted of having a more reasonable philosophy, and introduced what they called the more physical view of the history of the gods, by devising more respectable and ingenious explanations of the legends.”¹

Again, in speaking of the scientific rationalism of his age, which sought to explain the myths of antiquity as referring to the visible universe, Eusebius finely says: “The Gospel teaches us not to stand in awe of the visible parts of the cosmos and all that can be apprehended by fleshly sense . . . but to marvel only at the mind which in all these exists unseen, and

¹ *Prep.* ii. 6.

which creates both the whole and each several part, etc."¹

Later on our author shows that this attempt to combine the old religion with the new rationalism, and, one may add, the new spirituality, which the Neoplatonists shared with the Christians, must fail. He remarks that the philosophers

"After their long and manifold philosophical speculation . . . fell down from their high places, as it were from the loftiest mountain top, and . . . were swept away with the polytheistic delusion of the ancients, pretending that they glorified the like deities with the multitude . . . increasing, and still further strengthening, the vulgar opinion of the legendary stories concerning the gods."²

There are some very valuable remarks in the discussion of Porphyry's admission that "since Jesus began to be honoured, no one ever heard of any public assistance from the gods, because neither Asclepius nor the other gods were any longer resident." Here Eusebius says of Jesus: "But He even after death ever continues to be honoured every day among all nations, plainly showing the certainty and divinity of the life after death to those who are able to discern it."³

The argument against astrological determinism is well put and could be used now with effect against the materialistic determinism of much of the pseudoscience of our own day. This doctrine, Eusebius says, would abolish all laws made for the benefit of mankind. If it were true it would make it of no

¹ *Prep.* ii. 6.

² *Prep.* iii. 14.

³ *Prep.* v. 2.

use either to punish the guilty, or even to admire and try to reward those who have performed the noblest of actions.¹

Indeed, throughout the *Preparation* when Eusebius speaks for himself he usually makes good points, and it may be he shines more as an apologist for his religion, than as its historian. Perhaps the wealth of his authorities hampers his power of reflection, though we cannot be too grateful for the use he has made of his library. Yet, like some other scholars, he is at his best when he frees himself from the books on his table and writes plainly the thoughts which he desires to express.

Of the learning displayed in the *Preparation* there can be no dispute. No less than twenty-one of Plato's works are referred to. Here, however, it will be sufficient to enumerate only a few specimens of the width of Eusebius' reading and to mention here and there books which would have utterly perished but for their preservation by him. These are noted in Dr. Gifford's learned preface to his translation of the *Preparation*.

To enumerate all Eusebius has preserved would be tedious: it is perhaps advisable to take a few specimens almost at random. Numerous poetical fragments are quoted, especially in the long extract from the history of the Jews by Alexander Polyhistor, who was brought as a slave to Rome in the days of Sulla († 78 B.C.), and wrote a world history which has been lost, devoting a long section to the Jews, in which are several extracts from Hebrew poets

¹ *Prep.* vi. 6.

who wrote in Greek,—Ezekiel, Theodotus and a certain Philo, called by Josephus “the older Philo.” Some lost classical poetry is recovered in fragments from Plutarch, Euripides, Pindar, and the Orphic hymn to Zeus. Of historical extracts preserved by Eusebius, most interesting is one contained in a fragment of Porphyry’s lost work *Against the Christians*, where it is said that another Philo (of Byblus) translated the eight or nine books of *Phoenician History* by Sanchuniathon, which Eusebius consulted independently. Philo, has, however, been the subject of much criticism as to whether he invented or really translated the *History* which would have been unknown to us but for our author.¹

“It is in the region of Greek philosophy,” says Gifford, “that the wealth of quotation is most remarkable.” One of the most interesting extracts is from the writings of Atticus, a Platonist, who lived in the time of Marcus Aurelius. But for Eusebius Atticus would be practically unknown; his defence of Plato as against Aristotle is of real value, as is his division of philosophy into Ethics, Physics and Logic. Numenius, one of the most important of the Neoplatonists, and also Porphyry, owe a considerable debt to Eusebius for preserving parts of their writings. Euhemerus, whose theory that the gods are really deified men has made his name famous, is preserved in a fragment from Diodorus Siculus, found only in the *Preparation*, in which the whole system is set forth briefly but clearly.²

¹ *Prep.* i. 9.

² Atticus, *Prep.* ix. 2, xv. 3; Numenius, ix. 7. Euhemerus

When the reader lays aside the *Preparation*, it may be that it is not without a sense of relief, but certainly with a feeling that the Christian bishop cannot have been surpassed by his learned contemporaries in his knowledge of the non-Christian literature of the age.

If the *Preparation* is designed to win the heathen over to Christianity, the *Demonstration* continues the argument for the benefit of those who have embraced the Faith. Out of the fifteen books only ten have survived, more than seven of which are devoted to proving that all concerning Christ was foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. Interesting as this part of the work may be as illustrative of Eusebius' mastery of the Bible and his methods of exegesis, the space at our disposal compels us to concentrate on only a few points which are treated of in the earlier books, and notably in the Third.

It has already been noted that one of the charges against the Christians was that, having deserted the customs of the Jews, they had unwarrantably appropriated their Scriptures, the other being that the religion of Jesus was a complete novelty, and consequently unworthy of acceptance. Eusebius shows that, as the religion of Abraham was designed for the whole human race, the Scriptures which have foretold all embodied in it are the common property of humanity, and that Christianity, "the third form of religion midway between Judaism and Hellenism, is the most ancient and venerable of all religions."

is mentioned in ii. 2. He is often used by Christian apologists, because his theory (Euhemerism) is that the gods are only deified men.

These subjects are treated of in the first two Books, which Eusebius declares are a prolegomenon to the rest of his treatise. We will now concentrate our attention upon the Third and Fourth Books, in the first of which we find Christ set forth as the perfection of humanity, after which we have to consider His divine nature as the Logos of the Father, and the system of Christology adopted from Origen by Eusebius.

Having remarked that the arguments of the sacred oracles are only for believers, our author goes on to reply to those who advance objections to the work and teaching of Jesus. As many of these are quite modern in tone and Eusebius is at his best in his replies to them, they deserve our careful consideration, and are a reason for somewhat hastily dismissing the rest of the treatise. Book iii., Chapter 3, is headed: "Addressed to those that suppose that the Christ of God was a deceiver."

Although the arguments advanced by Eusebius in his Third Book are in many respects excellent and useful even in our own day, it cannot be denied that he falls into the mistake of making the teaching of Our Lord square with what men at that time demanded, namely, the sort of philosophy in vogue with the best thinkers, Christian and pagan, in the early days of the fourth century. Christ is said to have taught that the world was created (*γενητός*), and to have declared a doctrine of angels and daemons, etc.; for this was the primitive religion of the ancient Hebrews before Moses: a point on which much stress is laid. Our author is far more interesting

when he meets the objection that the religion of Jesus was invented by His disciples after His death. Why, he asks, did those who deserted Christ when He was alive stand by Him after the shameful death on the Cross? How was it that the disciples, men ignorant of any language but Syrian—an interesting testimony from a native of Palestine like Eusebius—go forth to convert the world? How could such men invent a fictitious story of Jesus? And then Eusebius invents a speech of the Apostles, in which they are made to declare that in order to deceive mankind they will pretend that Jesus, who after all was really an unscrupulous and selfish deceiver, was really the best man who ever lived, and agree among themselves that they would endure all suffering and even death to propagate this error.¹ His argument is much the same as that of Paley towards the close of the eighteenth century.

To prove the good faith of the disciples, Eusebius has a striking disquisition on their modesty. Matthew, for example, in his list of the Apostles, calls himself, "the publican," and takes the second place after Thomas, whereas Luke omits the mention of Matthew's disgraceful occupation, and puts his name before that of Thomas. It is the same with Peter, whose denial is more stressed by Mark, his disciple, than by the other evangelists. Here we cannot fail to notice the comparative treatment of the Gospel narratives, on which, in his critical labours, Eusebius

¹ *Demonstration* iii. 5. This valuable apologetic utterance can be read in English, translated by W. J. Ferrar, *Translation of Christian Texts*, Series I, 1. (S.P.C.K.)

lays so much stress. Again, he quotes the much disputed testimony of Josephus to Christ. In this book we also find the words of our Lord as read by Eusebius in Matt. xxviii. 19: "Go and make disciples of all nations in My Name."¹ At the end of this section we are reminded of the great benefit to the world due to the unification of civilised humanity under the one Empire of Rome, and of the comparative peace which it had enjoyed since the days of Augustus. At least this had been a factor in the spread of the Gospel. Thus we reach the very vexed question of the belief of Eusebius in regard to the relation of the Divine Son to God the Father. To discuss this would require fuller treatment than is here possible, and it may be sufficient for the present to suggest some topics for consideration which are occasionally overlooked.

Eusebius was born about A.D. 260 and he was dead by A.D. 340; consequently he lived nearly eighty years. When the Diocletian persecution broke out he was past forty-five years of age, and when he was raised to the bishopric of Caesarea he must have

¹ In the New Testament Baptism was administered in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts xix). The Trinitarian formula was very early (*Didache* 7, etc.). It has been argued that the *Received Text* of this Matt. xxviii. 19, arose about the middle of the Second Century in the old Latin (African) versions with a view of supporting the current baptismal liturgies. If this is so, it is supposed that the Eusebian form is the earlier and more correct. But it is just as likely that the phrase is original with the author of the First Gospel, and anyhow, as the baptismal reference was not relevant to the immediate purpose of Eusebius, he may himself have shortened the verse.

been well over fifty. When Arius made trouble in Alexandria, Eusebius was nearly sixty, and the great Council of Nicaea was held in his sixty-fifth year. He was over seventy when he became an opponent of Athanasius, who became bishop of Alexandria in 326, and was therefore some forty years younger than Eusebius. These dates are necessary to remember in order to do justice to his theological position.

His early years during the long peace of the Church after the death of Valerian (260) were, so far as we know, uneventful, but spent in the accumulation of those vast stores of learning which he displays in his later writings. But during this period his opinions must have definitely advanced. Under the guidance of his friend and master Pamphilus, he absorbed the system of Origen and his school; and it is highly probable that before those of Arius had come into vogue Eusebius had arrived at a clear notion as to his own theological views. Briefly they were those of the third century, during which some forty years of his life were spent.

Now the main feature of Origen's Christology may be summarised, though inadequately, as follows. The Divine Logos manifested in Jesus existed from all eternity, coming forth always from the Father (the Eternal Generation of the Logos). But the Logos has a personality of his own and is distinct from that of the Father. Therefore the Trinity is no mere manifestation of the One under three aspects. Father, Son and Spirit have each an eternal existence, and thus all "modalistic" inter-

pretations like that of Sabellius must be rejected. Lastly this distinction of Persons makes the Logos in some sense, subordinate to the Father. All Origen's doctrine is based on Scripture.

When the Arian controversy arose, our Eusebius, as an Origenist, could not have been in sympathy with either party, for Arius seems to have denied what is implied in the Eternal Generation of the Logos, and his opponent Bishop Alexander's explanation verged perilously on Sabellianism. By the time of the holding of the Nicene Council, Eusebius was strongly anti-Sabellian in doctrine, and at first mistrusted the use of the word *homoousios*, which did not appear in his proposed creed. He expressed his scruples to Constantine, and finally signed the formula of the Council in the interest of peace. But it would have been little short of a miracle that a man of sixty-five, justly regarded as the most learned man of his age, and, in addition, a Christian bishop of many years' standing, should have abandoned all the convictions, and, one may add, the prejudices of a lifetime.

After the Council those who are happily styled "the Conservatives" in the Church showed a tendency to shelve the creed as having settled the Arian dispute, and to admit those who desired to re-enter the Church on easier terms. On the other hand those who were more zealous for orthodoxy than comprehension wanted to use the symbol as a defence of the pure doctrine of the Church. The leader of the first group was the other Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, with whom our Eusebius had

a certain sympathy. These men had much influence with the Emperor himself, who upheld the Council, but not at the price of further dissension in the Church. The *orthodoxasts* were led by two bishops, Eustathius of Antioch and Marcellus of Ancyra. Eustathius was the neighbour of Eusebius and his metropolitan. He had taken an important part in the Nicene Council and had used all the authority of his great position to suppress Arianism. Eusebius regarded him as a Sabellian, and supported by the bishop of Nicomedia resolved to deprive Eustathius of his see. A Council was held at Antioch, where the bishop was accused as a heretic guilty of immorality, and also as a disturber of the peace. With the consent of the Emperor he was deprived of his see and exiled. The whole transaction was discreditable to the two Eusebii and the bishops of their party, as Eustathius was famed alike for his learning and his piety, and was greatly beloved by the people of Antioch.

Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra in Galatia, now known as Angora, was distinguished for his vehemence, and not too judicious support of Nicene orthodoxy. He was condemned at a synod at Constantinople (335), and Eusebius was asked to write a refutation of his errors, which has survived in a long treatise of three books. Marcellus' subsequent career belongs to the period after the death of Eusebius. It is sufficient here to remark that his enthusiasm for the settlement of Nicaea caused more embarrassment to his friends, especially to Athanasius, his most loyal supporter, than to his

enemies; and Eusebius, as Bishop Lightfoot admits, had decidedly the better of him in controversy, by demonstrating his errors and misinterpretations of Scripture with effect.

There remains Athanasius, whose treatment by Eusebius it is hard to excuse, especially when he sat among his judges and joined in his condemnation at Tyre. But one must admit that some justification is due to Eusebius for his part in the affair. Athanasius' long career proved that he was not only right in the part he took in the Arian controversy, but also that his personal conduct throughout was characterised by wisdom and moderation. Nevertheless it is undeniable that the two men were naturally antagonistic, and that Athanasius had not yet won his place among the heroes of the Faith.

When Eusebius and Athanasius were at Tyre it must not be forgotten that two generations were represented in their persons—Eusebius, then an aged man, standing for the period before the great persecution, and Athanasius for the years that followed it. They also belonged to two different schools of thought, those of Antioch and Alexandria. Further, when the Arian controversy broke out in 319, Eusebius was a scholar already of established reputation, with some years of knowledge of episcopal administration, and Athanasius, though already a theological writer, was little more than a boy. The experiences of the two men were as different as their ages. Eusebius had lived through the terrible years of the persecution and saw it in Palestine, where it was at its worst. He had shared

the imprisonment and witnessed the death of Pamphilus, his dear friend and master. He had admired the constancy of many martyrs. At last relief had come in the victories of Constantine, and to Eusebius it must have appeared a miracle of Divine favour. Then followed about ten years, when the fate of the Church in Palestine seemed to hang in the balance, till all the clouds were lifted by the victory of Constantine over Licinius. On his arrival in the East Eusebius became Constantine's ecclesiastical adviser, and eagerly supported the Emperor's policy of securing peace in the Church at any price. The bishop's theological opinions were already formed, and he was too old to change them, although he had conformed at Nicaea. What both he and the Emperor wanted was that controversy should cease and that the bishops, as Constantine had advised the Alexandrians, should be like the philosophers, and agree to differ on mysterious matters of theology. To Eusebius anyone who threatened to disturb the harmony of the Church was the enemy, and any formula which would unite the Christian Church was the one most to be desired. He was naturally a man prone to compromise within the Church, and as such was ready to sacrifice ideal truth to the necessities of the hour.

When Athanasius stood before the bishops at Tyre he presented a complete contrast to Eusebius. Comparatively young, he had still thirty-eight years of active life before him, he was the bishop of the greatest See in the East, and of a city of vital

importance to the Empire; for, as we saw, Egypt was the granary of the great cities and Alexandria its distributing centre. The theology of the learned school of this city had triumphed at Nicaea, where Athanasius, though in the humble capacity of Alexander's deacon, had no doubt contributed to the victory. He had returned to Alexandria to become its bishop, though he must have been under the age of thirty when elected. Ardent and full of youthful enthusiasm he had set to work to purge his church alike of heresy and schism. In consequence of his zeal he was beset by episcopal enemies bent on his destruction. But these were careful not to bring up the question of Athanasius' religious opinions. Constantine was still reigning, and it would be of no avail to bring forward anything contrary to the decrees of the Council in which he had taken so keen an interest. The accusers of Athanasius confined themselves to showing that he had been a menace to the peace of the Church, and the tranquillity of the State. That the proceedings at Tyre were unscrupulous, and the charges advanced ridiculous and unfounded there can be no doubt. Indeed their absurdity is revealed by the dramatic action of Athanasius. He had been accused of murdering Arsenius and cutting off his right hand to use it for magical purposes. He produced him alive, with both hands. Nevertheless these charges would have been impossible, had not the youthful bishop, by his enforcement of the formula of the Council and by his severity towards the Meletian schismatics, given some pretext for them by troubling

the peace of the great country under his jurisdiction. To a conciliatory ecclesiastical statesman, like Eusebius, Athanasius at this time, though he learned wisdom by experience, must have appeared as a young man whose zeal was likely to impair the good work which the Emperor had begun in securing the position of the Christian Church in his dominions. As a result of the intrigues of the Eusebians, Athanasius was deprived of his See and sent into exile in Gaul, where he was honourably welcomed by Constantine II, who was administering affairs at Trèves. We may justly blame Eusebius, but so much may be said in his excuse.

After this too brief sketch of the life, labours, and character of this famous bishop, we may recapitulate what has been said by again calling attention to his immense output and his indefatigable zeal to the day of his death, at the same time regretting that so many of his literary works have here been perforce passed by in silence. Before, however, concluding one may be permitted to raise a question which can never be solved, but at the same time is worthy of attention and interest. One of the most remarkable, and, at the same time, indisputable features of the Diocletian persecution was the ruthless destruction of Christian books by the imperial officers. In no place was the persecution more severe than at Caesarea. Yet here and at Jerusalem were probably the best Christian libraries in the world, in which Eusebius worked before, probably during, and certainly after, the Peace of the Church. The Scriptures were specially sought for, and at

Caesarea the most extraordinary Bible in the world, Origen's *Hexapla*, was deposited. Yet there is no record, so far as one knows, of any raid being made on these great collections of Christian books, a remarkable, but no less perplexing fact.

A complete catalogue of the books Eusebius had read would be as long, and even more interesting, than a list of the books written about him in the last fifty years. In erudition he may be compared to the great Origen, though not comparable to him in originality or depth of thought. Still he assuredly deserves the title of Adamantius as worthily as the predecessor he so highly revered.

Here he has been treated mainly as an historian, and his defects have assuredly not been passed over. Yet no one who has followed him in the dreary and intricate paths of ecclesiastical history has been able to dispense with him, and every successor in that field is his debtor. What now seems to be needed is a guide to the student to read him with profit. His work is put into the hands of every pupil, but even those who teach need assistance to estimate it aright. As has been pointed out, his style is "vicious," being pompous and inflated, and often obscure, as is nearly invariably the fate of all who deliberately endeavour to write fine language at the expense of simplicity. But when all has been said by way of depreciation, the great merits of Eusebius cannot be denied. He is honest in that he takes his readers back to the best primary authorities he can discover and enables them to judge for themselves. He is certainly discriminating,

as we can see from his rejection of the whole pseudo-Clementine literature, which must have been known to him but is completely set aside. He is valuable for his estimation of the genuine parts of the New Testament. He is remarkable for his ignoring all Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, which were extant long before his own day. His avoidance of those elements of hagiology and miracle which were accepted among Christians is very striking. Here and there he may be accused of being over-credulous, but his refusal to accept popular stories of miracles is quite notable. His extracts from ancient writers, as has been noticed, are remarkably judicious; and if his eloquence is open to censure, the same cannot be said of his judgment on the whole. If his conceptions are greater than his execution, the same can be said of most scholars who are over-weighted by the extent of their erudition.

His merits as an apologist are great. He falls short, indeed, of the vigour of Tertullian, the originality of Origen, the eloquence of Lactantius. His *Preparation* and *Demonstration* together equal in length Augustine's *City of God*; but they possess neither its genius nor its lasting effects on the world. At the same time Eusebius has been, and not wrongly, described as the greatest of Christian apologists. He knows exactly what he has to do to answer the objections to Christianity in his own day, and these were exceptionally formidable and insidious; for seldom has more ability been displayed by any opponents of the Faith than by the Neoplatonists of the third century. It is hardly a

paradox to say that an effective apology must rapidly become out of date, if only because the arguments which appeal to one age have little, if any, appeal when applied to another. England has provided great apologists, yet to appreciate Butler one must be acquainted with the Deistic writers of his day, nor does Paley answer our modern difficulties, but those of Hume and the rationalists of his century. One may be permitted to doubt whether even Newman's *Apologia* in answer to Charles Kingsley's objections to Roman Catholicism, though one of the best expressed literary statements of a Christian's position since the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, would be effective to-day. The value of each of these *apologiae* is that it was suited to the difficulties men were feeling at the time of its being written. The same may be said of Eusebius, whose chief merit is that he met squarely the criticism of his opponents in such a way as to subject them neither to abuse nor to misrepresentation; but while recognising what was good in them to use their arguments to prove his point. We can bid him farewell as a man of enormous learning, who, with all his shortcomings, displayed a rare combination of Christian erudition and piety of life.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON EUSEBIUS'
CHRONOLOGY

DURING the Diocletian Persecution, which was raging with especial severity in Syria and Egypt, Eusebius was fighting the battle of the Church with his pen; and his *History*, begun after the peace which followed the edict of Galerius in 311, was the culmination of his apologetic labours. In his Preface he tells us he made a special preparation for the task by drawing up chronological tables to assist him in the great work he had undertaken. These he used throughout the *History*, arranging events under the successive Emperors. To this method he adheres consistently, even breaking off the sequence of his narrative when he notes the accession of a new ruler.

But in addition to this Eusebius is careful to inform the reader of the succession of the bishops who occupied the great sees.¹ This is evident from the very beginning, to take one example.

- ii. 19. Nero succeeds to the principate.
- ii. 24. Eighth year of Nero, Annianus becomes bishop of Alexandria.
- iii. 2. Linus becomes bishop of Rome.
- iii. 5. Galba, Otho . . . Vespasian.
- iii. 13. Linus "hands over" (*παραδίδωσι*) the bishopric of Rome to Anencletus.

¹ The purpose of Eusebius in recording these successions of the Bishops was certainly apologetic. He was trying to prove that the faith of the fourth century was in no way different from that of the apostles. This is evident from passages of the *History*, see *H. E.* v. 22.

From this it is evident that it would be easy to construct a chronological table out of the notices in the *History*; and it may legitimately be inferred that Eusebius wrote with his own constantly before him.

The whole chronological work of Eusebius was divided into two parts. The first of those was the *Chronography*, a treatise which outlined the history of each of the five great nations of the world,¹ giving tables of their kings and discussing their systems of chronology. This was supplemented by the *Canons* or comparative tables of dates compiled in columns for easy reference.² Unfortunately the original Greek of Eusebius has perished, but the *Canons* have been preserved for us in a Latin Translation by Jerome (c. A.D. 382), while both parts of the work are extant in an Armenian version of the seventh century. Eusebius acknowledges his debt to Africanus, who has been mentioned in these Essays; but he has used many other authorities in the field. The drawing up of tables of dates must have been a work most congenial to a man of Eusebius' temperament, since he was above all things a scholar of methodical tastes; and here, and in his studies of the Gospels, he is at his best at collecting and arranging his materials.

¹ The nations are the Assyrians, Hebrews, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans.

² Each nation was given a column in which year by year the reigns of the succeeding monarchs were recorded. It was thus possible to see at a glance the contemporary kings of the various nations. Beside the appropriate columns, Eusebius also added very brief notices of the outstanding events in the history of these nations.

But Eusebius was not content with arranging a chronology for a history of the Church. His controversy with heathenism may be said to have turned on the assertion of his opponents that Christianity was a new religion, whereas he maintained that it was the primitive faith of humanity, which had been corrupted by pagan mythology and Jewish legalism. The man who had received the truth was Abraham, and the course of human history, so far as the argument against heathenism goes, must be traced back to the patriarch, and then forward to the dispensation of Jesus Christ.

As might be expected, Eusebius does not begin his chronology with Abraham, but treats of the earlier period, generally following the Scriptures according to the reckoning of the LXX, which differs materially from the Hebrew.¹ But he also makes use of the Egyptian and Chaldaean chronology. He is, however, sceptical as to the immense antiquity of Egypt and Babylonia, and gives as his opinion that the *sari* of the Chaldees, which were supposed to be periods of 3600 years, were in reality much shorter, and that Egyptian years may be no more than months. His method is analogous to that of modern scholars who reduce the "thousands" in incredible numbers in the Old Testament to groups or families. Africanus had proposed this

¹ The reason that the *Canon* starts with Abraham and not with Creation is that the chief chronological discrepancies between the LXX and the Hebrew Text are to be found in the period between Creation and Abraham. This is fully discussed by Eusebius in the *Chronographia*, under the section "on the Hebrews."

solution of the problem of the years of remote antiquity adopted by Eusebius.

For our purpose it is sufficient to begin with the birth of Abraham, which Eusebius asserts to have taken place 810 years before the fall of Troy. The contemporary monarchs were Ninus, King of Assyria, Europs of Sicyon, and the kings of the sixteenth dynasty in Egypt. Eusebius dates from Abraham's birth, partly because he is here able to synchronise his dates with the kings mentioned in his authorities, and thus to construct tables which include the history of Israel with that of other nations. He fully recognises the fact emphasised by Josephus, following Plato, that the Greeks, compared with other great nations, were comparatively modern on the stages of history.

As the work proceeds, the number of columns of regnal years increases till it amounts to nine, and the reader is assisted to understand this somewhat complicated arrangement by the employment of different coloured inks,¹ which are also adopted to facilitate the method of the arrangement of the *Canons* in the comparison of the Four Gospels. When we reach the Roman imperial period the columns are naturally reduced, and the whole work is greatly simplified. Twelve centuries after Abraham, Eusebius is able to place side by side with the "years of Abraham," something more intelligible to his readers, in the form of the Olympiads, the first of which, in 776 B.C., apparently marks, in the author's opinion, the real commencement of authentic Greek history.

¹ Cf. Jerome's Preface to the *Canon*.

All this gives us a real insight into the methods and character of Eusebius as an historian. He is laboriously anxious to make his meaning unmistakable. At the same time he is quick to recognise difficulties and discrepancies in the biblical statements as to dates, notably in the period between the exile and the building of Solomon's temple. Far from trying to show that no sacred scripture can be contradictory, after the manner of many modern exegetes, Eusebius boldly asserts that we must not look to the Bible as an infallible guide in matters of chronology, pointing out that, where 1 Kings gives 480 years and St. Paul only 450, the Apostle's object was not to teach scientific chronology, but to preach the saving doctrine of Christ; and that our Lord Himself had warned his disciples that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons (Acts i. 7). Lastly the most casual glance at the authorities employed is a testimony to the unflagging energy and omnivorous reading of the historian. The *Chronicle* may be both difficult and tedious to study; but, if for no other reason, it throws much light on the great scholar who first ventured into the hitherto untrodden paths of ecclesiastical history, and increases our respect and gratitude for his labours as a pioneer.

It is not possible to do more here than to indicate the character of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, which demands careful and expert treatment. All that seems here advisable is to give a specimen of the *Canon*, showing the method of Eusebius, and trying to explain to the reader the use to which his work can be put by the student.

As we have already noticed, the *Canon* is arranged in columns which record the rulers of the various nations and some outstanding events. As our specimen of the *Canon* we may select a period about 767 B.C. Here we have eight columns representing the Kingdoms of the Medes, the Judaeans, the Israelites, the Athenians, the Latins, the Macedonians, the Lydians and the Egyptians. In the left hand margin are recorded the years of Abraham, while the Olympiads are inserted in the first column. We may note here that various MSS. of the *Canon* have slightly differing arrangements. To save space we will only reproduce four of the columns.

<i>Medorum.</i>	<i>Hebraeorum Juda 13 Joathan an. 16.</i>	<i>Hebraeorum Israel.</i>	<i>Macedonum Tyrennias an. 38.</i>
19	1	3	1
2 Olymp'.			
20	2	4	2
21	3	5	3
22	4	6	4
23	5	7	5
3 Olymp'.			
24	6	8	6
1250 25	7	9	7
26	8 profetabant Osee	10	8 Hesiodus secundum
27	9 Johel Esaias	11	9 quosdam clarus
4 Olymp'.	Oded		habetur
28	10	12	10

The explanation of this table is really simple. Let us start with the second column. This tells us that Joathan was the thirteenth King of Judah and reigned sixteen years. The seventh year of his reign coincided with the 1250th year of Abraham,

and about that time lived the prophets, Osee, Johel, etc. With them Hesiod was contemporaneous (see fourth column), and it so happened that the seventh year of Joathan's reign was the seventh of Tyrennius, the third king of the Macedonians. This was also the second year of the third Olympiad. We may notice that only every tenth year of Abraham is recorded, and generally the corresponding regnal years are underlined. The student will find it helpful to remember the following rule for transforming the years of Abraham to dates B.C. and A.D. For years of Abraham up to 2016 subtract the year of Abraham from 2017 and the answer is B.C. For the years of Abraham from 2017 upwards, subtract 2016 from the Abrahamic year, and the answer is A.D. The year of Abraham 2016 is thus B.C. 1, and the year of Abraham 2017 is A.D. 1. When this rule is applied it will be found that Eusebius is remarkably correct in his calculations. Of course in the earlier part of the *Canon* Eusebius had only very imperfect records to guide him. From the time of Augustus onwards, his dates of the Emperors are almost exact.

The *Chronicle* had an enduring influence on later knowledge, and the Latin version of the *Canon* became the foundations of Medieval Annals. It would seem, however, that Byzantine chronology remained mainly dependent on Africanus, but Jerome's version displaced its predecessor in the West. Its popularity can be seen from the number of early MSS. that have been preserved of it, after all the barbaric destruction of libraries during the Dark Ages and medieval wars. In the fifth century

an abridgement was made by Prosper of Aquitaine, and it is evident that this was widely distributed. When Augustine wrote his *De Civitate Dei*, some thirty-one years after the translation of Jerome, he took many of his notices and all his chronological material from the Latin version. Subsequent historians speak of this work of Eusebius in terms of the highest praise. And no greater tribute can be paid to his indefatigable scholarship than the persistent belief of the Middle Ages that his chronology was more exact and reliable than all others.

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