

**FABIOLA**

Of The Church of the Catacombs  
By His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman

(Published by Special Request.)  
CHAPTER XI.  
A TALK WITH THE READER.

Either of these views is erroneous, and we desire to state more accurately the real condition of the Christian Church, under the various circumstances of that most pregnant portion of her history.

When once persecution had broken loose upon the Church, it may be said never entirely to have relaxed its hold till her final pacification under Constantine. An edict of persecution once issued by an emperor was seldom recalled; and though the rigour of its enforcement might gradually relax or cease, through the accession of a milder ruler, still it never became completely a dead letter, but was a dangerous weapon in the hands of a cruel or bigoted governor of a city or province. Hence, in the intervals between the greater general persecutions ordered by a new decree, we find many martyrs, who owed their crowns either to popular fury or to the hatred of Christianity in local rulers. Hence also we read of a bitter persecution being carried on in one part of the empire, while other portions enjoyed complete peace.

Perhaps a few examples of the various phases of persecution will illustrate the real relations of the primitive Church with the State better than mere description, and the more learned reader can pass over this digression, or must have the patience to hear repeated, what he is so familiar with, that it will seem commonplace.

Trajan was by no means one of the cruel emperors; on the contrary, he was habitually just and merciful. Yet, though he published no new edicts against the Christians, many noble martyrs—amongst them St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, at Rome, and St. Simeon at Jerusalem—glorified their Lord in his reign. Indeed, when Pliny the younger consulted him on the manner in which he should deal with Christians who might be brought before him as governor of Bithynia, the emperor gave him a rule which exhibits the lowest standard of justice; that they were not to be sought out; but if accused, they were to be punished. Adrian, who issued no decree of persecution, gave a similar reply to a similar question from Serenus Gracianus, proconsul of Asia. And under him, too, and even by his own orders, cruel martyrdom was suffered by the intrepid Symphoros and her seven sons at Tibur, or Tivoli. A beautiful inscription found in the catacombs mentions Marins, a young officer, who shed his blood for Christ under this emperor. Indeed, St. Justin Martyr, the great apologist of Christianity, informs us that he owed his conversion to the constancy of the martyrs under this emperor.

In like manner, before the Emperor Septimius Severus had published his persecuting edicts, many Christians had suffered torments and death. Such were the celebrated martyrs of Scillia in Africa, and SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, with their companions; the Acts of whose martyrdom, containing the diary of the first noble lady, twenty years of age, brought down by herself to the eve of her death, form one of the most touching, and exquisitely beautiful, documents preserved to us from the ancient Church.

From these historical facts it will be evident, that while there was from time to time a more active, severe, and general persecution of the Christian name all through the empire, there were partial and local cessations, and sometimes even a general suspension, of its rigour. An occurrence of this sort has secured for us most interesting information connected with our subject. When the persecution of Severus had relaxed in other parts, it happened that Scapula, proconsul of Africa, prolonged it in his province with unrelenting cruelty. He had condemned, among others, Mavilus of Adrumetum to be devoured by beasts, when he was seized with a severe illness. Tertullian, the oldest Christian Latin writer, addressed a letter to him, in which he bids him take warning from this visitation, and repent of his crimes; reminding him of many judgments which had befallen cruel judges of the Christians in various parts of the world. Yet such was the charity of those holy men, that he tells him they were offering up earnest prayers for their enemy's recovery!

He then goes on to inform him, that he may very well fulfil his duties without practising cruelty, by acting as other

magistrates had done. For instance, Cincius Severus suggested to the accused the answers they should make to be acquitted. Vespontius Candidus dismissed a Christian, on the ground that his condemnation would encourage tumults. Asper, seeing one ready to yield upon the application of slight torments, would not press him further; and expressed regret that such a case should have been brought before him. Pudens, on reading an act of accusation, declared the file informal, because calumnious, and tore it up.

We thus see how much might depend upon the temper, and perhaps the tendencies, of governors and judges in the enforcing even of imperial edicts of persecution. And St. Ambrose tells us that some governors boasted that they had brought back from their provinces their swords unstained with blood (incruentus enses).

We can also easily understand how at any particular time, a savage persecution might rage in Gaul, or Africa, or Asia, while the main part of the Church was enjoying peace. But Rome was undoubtedly the place most subject to frequent outbreaks of the hostile spirit, so that it might be considered as a privilege of its pontiffs during the first three centuries to bear the witness of blood to the faith which they taught. To be elected Pope was equivalent to being promoted to martyrdom.

At the period of our narrative, the Church was in one of those longer intervals of comparative peace, which gave opportunity for great development. From the death of Valerian, in 268, there had been no new formal persecution, though the interval is glorified by many noble martyrdoms. During such periods, the Christians were able to carry out their religious system with completeness, and even with splendour. The city was divided into districts or parishes, each having its title, or church, served by priests, deacons, and inferior ministers. The poor were supported, the sick visited, catechumens instructed; the Sacraments were administered, daily worship was practised, and the penitential canons were enforced by the clergy of each title; and collections were made for these purposes, and others connected with religious charity, and its consequence, hospitality. It is recorded that, in 260, during the pontificate of Cornelius, there were in Rome forty-six priests, a hundred and fifty inferior ministers, who were supported by the alms of the faithful, together with fifteen hundred poor. This number of the priests pretty nearly corresponds to that of the titles, which St. Optatus tells us there were in Rome.

Although the tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs continued to be objects of devotion during these more peaceful intervals, and these asylums of the persecuted were kept in order and repair, they did not then serve for the ordinary places of worship. The churches to which we have already alluded were often public, large, and even splendid; and heathens used to be present at the sermons delivered in them, and each portion of the liturgy was open to catechumens. But generally they were in private houses, probably made out of the large halls, or triclinia, which the nobler mansions contained. Thus we know that many of the titles in Rome were originally of that character. Tertullian mentions Christian cemeteries under a name, and with circumstances, which show that they were above ground, for he compares them to "threshing-floors," which were necessarily exposed to the air.

A custom of ancient Roman life will remove an objection which may arise as to how considerable multitudes could assemble in these places without attracting attention, and consequently persecution. It was usual for what may be called a levee to be held every morning by the rich, attended by dependants, or clients, and messengers from their friends, either slaves or freedmen, some of whom were admitted into the inner court to the master's presence, while others only presented themselves, and were dismissed. Hundreds might thus go in and out of a great house, in addition to the crowd of domestic slaves, tradespeople, and others who had access to it, through the principal or back entrance, and little or no notice would be taken of the circumstance.

There is another important phenomenon in the social life of the early Christians which one would hardly know how to believe, were not evidence of it brought before us in the most authentic Acts of the martyrs, and in ecclesiastical history. It is, the concealment which they contrived to practise. No doubt can be entertained that persons were moving in the highest society, were occupying conspicuous

public situations, were near the persons of the emperors, who were Christians, and yet were not suspected to be such by their most intimate heathen friends. Nay, cases occurred where the nearest were kept in total ignorance of this subject. No lie, no dissembling, no action especially inconsistent with Christian morality or Christian truth, was ever permitted to ensure such secrecy. But every precaution compatible with complete uprightness was taken to conceal Christianity for the public eye.

However necessary this prudential course might be, to prevent any wanton persecution, its consequences fell often heavily upon those who held it. The heathen world, the world of power and influence, and of state, the world which made laws, and beat aided it, and executed them, the world that loved earthly prosperity and hated faith, felt itself surrounded, filled, penetrated by a mysterious system, which spread, no one could see how, and exorcised an influence derived from one knew whence. Families were startled at finding a son or daughter to have embraced this new law, with which they were not aware that they had been in contact, and which, in their heated fancies and popular views, they considered stupid, grovelling, and anti-social. Hence the hatred of Christianity was political as well as religious; the system was considered as un-Roman, as having an unseen and spiritual power. The Christians were pronounced irreligious in Caesar's "dialoys to the emperors," and that was enough. Hence their security and peace depended much upon the state of popular feeling; when any demagogue or fanatic could succeed in rousing this, neither their denial of the charges brought against them, nor their peaceful demeanour, nor the claims of civilised life, could suffice to screen them from such measure of persecution as could be safely urged against them.

After these digressive remarks, we will resume, and untangle, the broken thread of our narrative.

CHAPTER XII.  
THE WOLF AND THE FOX.

The hints of the African slave had not been thrown away upon the boid mind of Corvinus. Her own hatred of Christianity arose from the circumstance, that a former mistress of hers had become a Christian, and had manumitted all her other slaves; but, feeling it wrong to turn so dangerous a character as Africa, or rather Fabula (her proper name), upon the world, had transferred her to another proprietor.

Corvinus had often seen Fulvia at the baths and other places of public resort, had admired and envied him, for his appearance, his dress, his conversation. But with his untoward shyness, or moroseness, he could never have found courage to address him, had he not now discovered that though a more refined, he was not a less profound, villain than himself. Fulvia's wit and cleverness might supply the want of those qualities in his own selfish composition, while his own brute force, and unfeeling recklessness, might be valuable auxiliaries to those higher gifts. He had the young stranger in his power, by the discovery which he had made of his real character. He determined, therefore, to make an effort and enter into alliance with one who otherwise might prove a dangerous rival.

It was about ten days after the meeting last described, that Corvinus went to stroll in Pompey's gardens. These covered the space round his theatre, in the neighbourhood of the present Piazza Farnese. A configuration in the reign of Octavian had lately destroyed the scene, as it was called, of the edifice, and Diocletian had repaired it with great magnificence. The gardens were distinguished from others by rows of plane-trees, which formed a delicious shade. Statues of wild beasts, fountains, and artificial brooks, profusely adorned them. While wandering about, Corvinus caught a sight of Fulvia, and made up to him.

"What do you want with me?" asked the foreigner, with a look of surprise and scorn at the slovenly dress of Corvinus.

"To have a talk with you, which may turn out to your advantage—and mine."

"What can you propose to me, with the first of these recommendations? No doubt at all as to the second."

"Fulvia, I am a plain-spoken man and have no pretensions to your cleverness and elegance; but we are both of one trade, and both consequently of one mind."

Fulvia started, and deeply coloured then said, with a contemptuous air: "What do you mean, sirrah?"

(To be continued.)

**Five Minute Sermon**

The Testimony of the Holy Ghost.

Christ promised that the Holy Ghost would give testimony of His divine mission, and of the truth of His doctrine. The promise was fulfilled. The world has acknowledged Jesus to be the only-begotten Word clothed in our flesh; it has recognized Him to be the Messiah foretold by the prophets and foreshadowed in the law; it was convinced of the holiness of His doctrine, by which truths not known before were taught, and precepts inculcated worthy of the God Who taught them and worthy of man, who was called to put them in practice with the help of divine grace.

Christ sent the apostles to preach the gospel. Now what would they think of Him when they would find that they raised a most furious persecution against themselves, that they were everywhere hunted to death and abandoned to the fury of their enemies? They might have been tempted to believe that they had been betrayed and sacrificed by the Divine Master. Wherefore Christ told them, all they would have to suffer and by so doing He gave another proof of His divinity and also of His power to help them in the battles they were to fight in His name; and thus He anticipated and obviated all in order that they might not lose their faith when those trials came upon them.

In a certain sense these words were also intended for us. We also bear witness to Jesus, by leading a life according to His holy law; we also, by sincerely professing the faith and by observing the laws of the gospel, may expect, as St. Paul says, to be persecuted; we also who find ourselves objects of persecution must be encouraged by the hope of our eternal reward in heaven.

**Weekly Church Calendar**

Sunday May 15—Gospel, St. John, xv. 26, 27, xvi. 7-14. St. Sophia, virgin and martyr.  
Monday 16—St. John Nepomucene, martyr.  
Tuesday 17—St. Paschal Bayten, confessor.  
Wednesday 18—St. Venantius, martyr.  
Thursday 19—St. Peter Celestin, pope and confessor.  
Friday 20—St. Bernardine of Siena, confessor.  
Saturday 21—St. Felix of Cantalicio, Fast, confessor.

**Forty Hours Devotion**

The devotion of the "Forty Hours" will be held in the churches of the diocese of Rochester as follows:  
May 15—Nunda: Clifton Springs, Union Springs, West Bloomfield, St. Mary's, Elmira, Drumsburg.

**Railroad Notes.**

Special home-seekers' excursions via the Nickel Plate Road, extremely low rates to all points in the West and Southwest, first and third Tuesday of each month to April, 1904. Good return limit. Full particulars of local agents or write R. E. Payne, Gen'l Agt. Buffalo, N. Y.

Sound reasons for the Nickel Plate Road's popularity. In making a long railway journey, the two principal points to be considered are Cost and Comfort. The first of these is the least, and the second the greatest, if you select the Nickel Plate Road. For the rates to whatever point you wish to reach are always the lowest via that line. And the degree of comfort is greatest, not only on account of an excellent roadbed and the highest standard of equipment, but from the fact that your welfare is personally looked after throughout the journey.

If you contemplate a trip to any part of the West, full information as to rates, service, etc., will be cheerfully furnished on application to R. E. Payne, General Agent, 291 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y.

\$82.00 to Los Angeles and San Francisco and return via the Nickel Plate Road. Tickets on sale April 22nd to May 1st inclusive. Good returning until June 30th, 1904. Stop at privileges. For full particulars see local agents, or write R. E. Payne, general agent, 291 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y.

The Fate of a Passport.  
The circus press agent is at work in St. Petersburg. An Englishman, who has charge of the elephants in the Aquarium in that city, hastened to his embassy one morning to get a new passport. He reported that two of his elephants had seized his coat, which had been hanging on a nail, and had fought fiercely for possession of it. Finally they tore it in two, and the elephant which got the half containing the passport extracted that valuable paper from the pocket and ate it.

**Correspondence**

**Our Agent.**

Mr. A. Herinshaw will call on subscribers in Ithaca, Elmira, Corning, Hornellsville next week. Kindly have amount ready, when he calls, as we cannot afford to carry subscribers longer than a year.

**SHORTSVILLE.**

St. Dominic's Society has made arrangements to hold their party at Manchester in Pratt's Hall, May 16th. The proceeds of this party will go towards new statuary for the church.

Miss McCarthy of Syracuse, as the guest of her cousin, Miss Jennie McCarthy.

Announcement has been made of the marriage of Miss Carrie Burns and Frank Shaw, both formerly of this place, which occurred in the west, the latter part of April.

James Martin of Cleveland, Ohio, is the guest of his parents at Manchester. Finley Chiam and family are preparing to move to Bolivar soon.

Miss Anna Owens of Macedon, is spending the week with Miss McElroy and family at Manchester.

Mrs. James O'Hara is confined to her home by illness.

**LIMA.**

Thursday being the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, high mass was celebrated at 8:30 o'clock in the morning with rosary and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the evening.

The opening of May was appropriately celebrated here Sunday, May 9th. High vespers was sung followed by a very instructive discourse on the Resurrection by Rev. Father Garvey of Livonia. The children of Mary walked in procession through the church bearing the banner of the Blessed Virgin, while the choir sang the Litany of Loreto. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was then given.

An anniversary high mass was sung on the morning of May 9th for the soul of Julia Kenney.

**GALESDONIA.**

Mr. Joseph Moore died at his home south of the village Saturday, April 10th. Mr. Moore had been ill with pneumonia but a few days. The funeral was held Monday at St. Columba's church. Rev. G. J. Kialer officiating. Burial in the Scotchville Cemetery.

The mass on Ascension Thursday was at 6 o'clock to give all who wish an opportunity of attending. May devotions are held on Wednesday and Sunday evenings during the month of May.

Mrs. M. D. Cullen of Batavia, was a guest over Sunday of her sister Mrs. Patrick Carroll.

**DANVILLE.**

Rev. Father Dunn will attend Forty Hours at Elmira this week.

The opening of May services at St. Patrick's church last Sunday evening was largely attended. The children of Mary wearing the badge of the Rosary and the little girls of the sisters school, crowned in white and crowned with wreaths occupied seats at the left of the middle aisle. Hymns were sung in honor of our Blessed Mother. Father Dunn read Bishop Colton's Prefatory to Father Baker's "Manual of May Devotions" with extracts on humility, holiness of life and obedience. The services closed with the recitation of the Litany and benediction. May devotions during the month are on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday evenings at 7:30. Rev. Father Dunn is much pleased with the attendance so far.

Frank J. McNeil and Frank Blinn attended the Knights of Columbus convention at Syracuse last week.

Miss Kate McLane of Colorado, is visiting her mother.

Miss Katharine A. Driscoll's school in Ossian observed Arbor Day with appropriate exercises.

Next Sunday is the regular monthly communion day for the Rosary, Altar and Scapular societies.

Contractor D. E. Driscoll has been taking a much needed rest.

Mrs. D. Foley and Miss Clara Foley were in Rochester last week.

Misses Anna M. and A. Helen Brogan teachers in the D. B. R. have accepted positions in Tonawanda, both young ladies are excellent teachers.

On last Monday Rev. Father Dunn celebrated high mass for the happy repose of the soul of his mother and on Saturday for the happy repose of the soul of his father, it being the eighth anniversary of their death.

**AUBURN.**

On Wednesday evening the Knights of Columbus will give concert to the friends of the council. The program will be in charge of Lecturer James A. Hennessy and will consist of vocal and instrumental music by local and out of town talent.

The Young Ladies Sodality of the Holy Family church held a May supper in the basement of the church on Monday night which was attended by a large crowd and netted a handsome sum for the society.

Always remember, when purchasing a summer suit, to get the best value for the money. The best suits are made of the finest materials, and are made to order. The best suits are made of the finest materials, and are made to order.

Charles J. Duggan, of the firm of Duggan & Co., has been elected to the office of Alderman of the City of Rochester. He was elected by a large majority of the voters.

The funeral of the late John A. Duggan, of the firm of Duggan & Co., was held on Monday, May 10th, at 10 o'clock in the morning. The funeral was held in the church of St. John the Baptist, and was attended by a large number of friends.

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