

D. The Edict of Milan, 313

When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, had fortunately met near Mediolanum (Milan), and were considering everything that pertained to the public welfare and security, we thought that, among other things which we saw would be for the good of may, those regulations pertaining to the reverence of the Divinity ought certainly to be made first, so that we might grant to the Christians and to all others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly dispose to us and all who are placed under our rule. And thus by wholesome counsel and most upright provision we thought to arrange that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, or of that religion which he should think best for himself, so that the supreme Deity, to whose worship we freely yield our hearts, may show in all things His usual favor and benevolence. Therefore, your Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians, and now any one of these who wished to observe the Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without any disturbance or molestation. We thought it fit to commend these things most fully to your care that you may know that we have given to those Christians free and unrestricted opportunity of religious worship. When you see that this has been granted to them by us, your worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free

observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made that we may not seem to detract aught from any dignity or any religion. Moreover, in the case of the Christians especially, we esteemed it best to order that if it happens that anyone heretofore has bought from our treasury or from anyone whatsoever, those places where they were previously accustomed to assemble, concerning which a certain decree had been made and a letter sent to you officially, the same shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception. Those, moreover, who have obtained the same by gift, are likewise to return them at once to the Christians. Besides, both those who have purchased and those who have secured them by gift, are to appeal to the vicar if they seek any recompense from our bounty, that they may be cared for through our clemency. All this property ought to be delivered at once to the community of the Christians through your intercession, and without delay. And since these Christians are known to have possessed not only those places in which they were accustomed to assemble, but also other property, namely the churches, belonging to them as a corporation and not as individuals, all these things which we have included under the above law, you will order to be restored, without any hesitation or controversy at all, to these Christians, that is to say to the corporations and their conventicles: providing, of course, that the above arrangements be followed so that those who return the same without payment, as we have said, may hope for an indemnity from our bounty. In all these circumstances you ought to tender your most

efficacious intervention to the community of the Christians, that our command may be carried into effect as quickly as possible, whereby, moreover, through our clemency, public order may be secured. Let this be done so that, as we have said above, Divine favor towards us, which, under the most important circumstances we have already experienced, may for all time, preserve and prosper our successes together with the good of the state. Moreover, in order that the statement of this decree of our good will may come to the notice of all, this rescript, published by your decree, shall be announced everywhere and brought to the knowledge of all, so that the decree of .this, our benevolence, cannot be concealed

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ALEXIUS I COMNENUS (1081-1118) By ANNA COMNENA Book 1

The Emperor Alexius, who was also my father, had been of great service to the Roman Empire even before he reached the throne, for he started campaigning as early as during the reign of Romanus Diogenes. Amongst his contemporaries he shewed himself remarkable, and a great lover of danger. In his fourteenth year he was anxious to join the Emperor Diogenes on the extremely arduous campaign he was conducting against the Persians, and by this very longing he declared his animosity against the barbarians, and shewed that, if he ever should come to blows with them, he would

make his sword drunk with their blood; of such a warlike temper was the boy. However, on that occasion the Emperor Diogenes did not allow him to accompany him, as a heavy sorrow had befallen Alexius' mother, for she was then mourning the death of her firstborn son, Manuel, a man who had done great and admirable deeds for his country. In order that she might not be quite inconsolable, for she did not yet know where she had buried the elder of her sons, and if she sent the younger to the war, she would be afraid of something untoward happening to the lad, and might not even know in what part of the world he fell for these reasons he compelled the boy Alexius to return to his mother. So on that occasion he was indeed parted from his fellow-soldiers, though sorely against his will, but the future opened out to him countless opportunities for valiant deeds; for under the Emperor Michael Ducas, after the deposition of the Emperor Diogenes, he shewed of what mettle he was made in his .war against Ussel

Now this man was a Frank by birth who had been enrolled in the Roman Army, reached a high pitch of prosperity, and after gathering a band, or rather quite a considerable army, of men from his own country, and also of other races, he immediately became a formidable tyrant. For when the hegemony of the Romans had received several checks, and the luck of the Turks was in the ascendancy, and the Romans had been driven back like dust shaken from their feet, at that moment this man too attacked the Empire. Apart from his tyrannical nature, what more especially incited him to

openly establishing his tyranny just then was the depressed state of the imperial affairs, and he laid waste nearly all the Eastern provinces. Although many were entrusted with the war against him, men of high reputation for bravery and of very great knowledge of war and fighting, yet he openly baffled even their long experience. For sometimes he would take the offensive himself and rout his opponents by his meteor-like attacks, and at others he obtained help from the Turks, and was quite irresistible in his onrushes, so that he actually overpowered some of the most powerful chieftains, and utterly confounded their phalanxes. At that time, my father Alexius was under his brother, and openly served as lieutenant under this man, who was invested with the command of all the armies, both of the East and the West. Then, just when the affairs of the Romans were in this critical condition, with this barbarian rushing upon everything like a thunderbolt, my brilliant father Alexius was thought of as the one man able to resist him, and appointed absolute commander by the Emperor Michael. Accordingly he summoned up all his shrewdness and the experience he had gained as general and soldier, and that too, by the way, he had not had much time to gather. (But thanks to his exceeding love of industry and ever alert intellect, the picked men among the Romans considered him to have reached the acme of military experience, and regarded him as that famous Roman Aemilius, or Scipio, or Hannibal the Cartliaginian, for he was quite young and had still "the first down on his cheeks as the saying goes). This young man captured Ussel as he rushed with might against the Romans, and restored the affairs of the East within the space of a few days; for he was quick at discovering what was

expedient, and still quicker in executing it. The manner of his capturing Ursel is told at length by the Caesar in the second book of his history of his own times; but I will relate it too in as far as it .concerns my history

THE SPEECH OF POPE URBAN II AT CLERMONT, NOVEMBER 26, 1095

There are four versions of this speech by persons who were probably present, but who do not pretend to quote Urban's words exactly. He had been asked for help by the Emperor Alexius against the Saljuq Turks, and after presiding at the Council of Piacenza in the spring of 1095, he had-come to France. In the course of the summer he stayed at Toulouse, Cluny, and other places where he dedicated new cathedrals, churches, and altars. While there is disagreement as to why Urban preached the crusade, it is probable that he had worked out the idea in discussions with lay and clerical nobles and that his .speech was not unprepared. This version is by Fulcher of Chartres

Most beloved brethren, moved by the exigencies of the times, I, Urban, wearing by the permission of God the papal tiara, and spiritual ruler of the whole world, have come here to you, the servants of God, as a messenger to disclose the divine admonition. I desire that those whom I have believed to be the faithful servants of God shall show themselves such, and that there shall be no shameful dissimulation. But if there is in you, contrary to God's law, any deformity or crookedness, because you have lost the moderation ofreason and justice, I will earnestly strive to root out the fault

Since, oh sons of God, you have promised the Lord more earnestly than heretofore to maintain peace in your midst and faithfully to sustain the laws of the church, there remains for you, newly fortified by the correction of the Lord, to show the strength of your integrity in a certain other duty, which is not less your concern than the Lord's. For you must carry succor to your brethren dwelling in the East, and needing your aid, which they have SO often demanded.... wherefore, I pray and exhort, nay not I, but the Lord prays and exhorts you, as heralds of Christ, by frequent exhortation, to urge men of all ranks knights and footsoldiers, rich and poor, to hasten to exterminate this vile race from the lands of our brethren, and to bear timely aid to the worshippers of Christ. I speak to those who are present, I proclaim it to the absent, but Christ commands. Moreover, the sins of those who set out thither, if they lose their lives on the journey. by land or sea, or in fighting against the heathen. shall be remitted in that hour, this

.I grant to all who go, through the power of God vested in me

Oh, what a disgrace if a race so despised, degenerate, and slave of the demons, should thus conquer a people fortified with faith in omnipotent God and resplendent with the name of Christ! Oh, how many reproaches will be heaped upon you by the Lord Himself if you do not aid those who like yourselves are counted of the Christian faith! Let those who have formerly been accustomed to contend wickedly in private warfare against the faithful, fight against the infidel and bring to a victorious end the war which ought long since to have begun. Let those who have hitherto been robbers now become

**soldiers of Christ. Let those who have formerly contended against their brothers and relatives now fight as they ought against the barbarians. Let those who have formerly been mercenaries at low wages, now gain eternal rewards. Let those who have been striving to the detriment both of body and soul, now labor for a two-fold
....reward**

THE ORIGIN OF THE TEMPLARS. 1119 By WILLIAM OF TYRE

**The Middle Age had two ideals, the monk and the soldier. The monk was the spiritual, the soldier the military hero. The military monkial-orders, whose members were both monks and soldiers, represent a fusion of these two ideals. The fact that all these orders arose on the borderland between Christians and Muslims, that is in Palestine and Spain, would indicate their close connection with the
.spirit of the crusades**

In the same year (1118-1119) certain nobles of knightly rank, devout, religious, and God-fearing, devoting themselves to the service of Christ, made their vows to the patriarch (of Jerusalem) and declared that they wished to live forever in chastity, obedience, and poverty, according to the rule of regular canons. Chief of these were Hugo de payens and Geoffrey of St. Omer. Since they had neither a church nor a house, the king of Jerusalem gave them a temporary residence in the palace which stands on the west side of the temple. The canons of the temple granted them, on certain conditions, the open space around the aforesaid palace for the erection of their necessary

buildings, and the king, the nobles, the patriarch, and the bishops, each from his own possessions, gave them lands for their support

The patriarch and bishops ordered that for the forgiveness of their sins their first vow should be to protect the roads and especially the pilgrims against robbers and marauders. For the first nine years after their order was founded they wore the ordinary dress of a layman, making use of such clothing as the people, for the salvation of their souls, gave them. But in their ninth year a council was held at Troyes (1128) in France at which were present the archbishops of Rheims and Sens with their suffragans, the cardinal bishop of Albano, papal legate, and the abbots of Citeaux, Clairvaux, and Pontigny, and many others. At this council a rule was established for them, and, at the direction of the pope, Honorius III, and of the patriarch of Jerusalem, Stephen, white robes were appointed for their dress. Up to their ninth year they had only nine members, but then their number began to increase and their possessions to multiply. Afterward, in the time of Eugene III, in order that their appearance might be more striking, they all, knights as well as the other members of a lower grade, who were called serving men, began to sew crosses of red cloth on their robes

Their order grew with great rapidity, and now (about 1180) they have 300 knights in their house clothed in white mantles, besides the serving men, whose number is almost infinite. They are said to have immense possessions both here (in Palestine) and beyond the sea (in Europe). There is not a province in the whole Christian world which has not given property to this order, so that they may be said to have

possessions equal to those of kings. Since they dwelt in a palace at the side of the temple they were called 'Brothers of the army of the temple. For a long time they were steadfast in their purpose and were true to their vows, but then they forgot their humility, which is the guardian of all virtues, and rebelled against the patriarch of Jerusalem who had assisted in the establishment of their order and had given them their first lands, and refused him the obedience which their predecessors had shown him. They also made themselves very obnoxious to the churches by seizing their titles and first-fruits and plundering their possessions

THE BLACK DEATH. 1348

The following extracts from the Chronicle of Henry Kington show some of the consequences of the Black Death. Although he was only a boy when the plague struck England, there is no reason to doubt his memory on the average, about ne-third to one-half of the population of Europe died in two years. It is not difficult to imagine the psychological, social, and economic consequence of such a Catastrophe. In this (1348) and the following year there was a general death of people throughout the world. It began first in India, then it passed to Tharsis, thence to the Saracens, Christians and Jews in the course of one year, from one Easter to the next

In one day there died 812 people in Avignon according to the reckoning made to the pope... 358 Dominicans died in Provence in Lent; in Montpellier only seven friars were left from 149.. At Marscilles .only one Franciscan remained of 150

Then the grievous plague came to the seacoasts from Southampton, and came to Bristol, and it was there as if they strength of the town had died, as if they had been hit with sudden death, for there were few who stayed in their beds more than three days, or two days or even one half a day. Then the death broke out everywhere the sun .goes

And more than 380 died at Leicester in the small parish of St. Leonard. More than 400 died in the parish of the Holy Cross; 700 died in the Parish of St. Margaret of Leicester. And so it was in greater number in each parish. Then the bishop of Lincoln sent throughout his diocese and gave general power to each and every priest, regular as well as secular, to hear confessions and absolve with full and complete Episcopal authority, except only in the instance of debt. In which case, if he was able by himself while he lived he should pay it, or others surely would do this for him from his possessions after his death. Likewise the pope granted full remission of all sins to whoever was absolved while in peril of death, and he granted this power to last from Easter to the next following. And everyone could elect his .confessor as it pleased him