

hand to help him in his present difficulties. And while he was thus praying with fervent entreaty, a most incredible sign appeared to him from heaven, the account of which it might have been hard to believe had it been related by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history, when he was honoured with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who could hesitate to accredit the relation, especially since the testimony of aftertime has established its truth? He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and an inscription, CONQUER BY THIS attached to it. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on an expedition, and witnessed the miracle.

He said, moreover, that he doubted within himself what the import of this portent could be. And while he continued to ponder and reason on its meaning, night overtook him; then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies. (Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*, pp. 175-7, and NPNF, altered.)

In Eusebius the vision took place *sometime before* the battle of the Milvian Bridge: in Lactantius the dream occurred in *the night before it*.

28.1: CONQUER BY THIS: the Latin, i.e. original, form is *In hoc signo vinces*.

250 The 'Edict of Milan', 313

Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, 48.2-12

- 2 When we, Constantine Augustus and Licinius Augustus, had happily met at Milan, and were conferring about all things which concern the advantage and security of the state, we thought that amongst other things which seemed likely to profit men generally, the reverence paid to the Divinity merited our first and chief attention. Our purpose is to grant both to the Christians and to all others full authority to follow whatever worship each man has desired; whereby whatsoever Divinity dwells in heaven may be benevolent and propitious to us, and to all
- 3 who are placed under our authority. Therefore we thought it salutary and most proper to establish our purpose that no man whatever should be refused complete toleration, who has given up his mind either to the cult of the Christians, or to the religion which he personally feels best suited to himself; to the end that the supreme Divinity, to whose

- worship we devote ourselves under no compulsion, may continue in all things to grant us his wonted favour and beneficence. Wherefore your
- 4 Dignity should know that it is our pleasure to abolish all conditions whatever which were embodied in former orders directed to your office about the Christians, that what appeared utterly inauspicious and foreign to our Clemency should be done away and that every one of those who have a common wish to follow the religion of the Christians may from this moment freely and unconditionally proceed
- 5 to observe the same without any annoyance or disquiet. These things we thought good to signify in the fullest manner to your Carefulness, that you might know that we have given freely and unreservedly to the
- 6 said Christians toleration to practise their cult. And when you perceive that we have granted this favour to the said Christians, your Devotion understands that to others also freedom for their own worship and cult is likewise left open and freely granted, as befits the quiet of our times, that every man may have complete toleration in the practice of whatever worship he has chosen. This has been done by us that no
- 7 diminution be made from the honour of any religion. Moreover in regard to the legal position of the Christians we have thought fit to ordain this also, that if any appear to have bought, whether from our exchequer or from any others, the places at which they were used formerly to assemble, concerning which definite orders have been given before now, and that by a letter issued to your office—that the same be restored to the Christians, setting aside all delay and
- 8 doubtfulness, without any payment or demand of price. Those also who have obtained them by gift shall restore them in like manner without delay to the said Christians. And those moreover who have bought them, as well as those who have obtained them by gift, if they request anything of our benevolence, shall apply to the Vicarius, that order may be taken for them too by our Clemency. All these things must be delivered over at once and without delay by your intervention
- 9 to the corporation of the Christians. And since the said Christians are known to have possessed, not those places only whereto they were used to assemble, but others also belonging to their corporation, namely to their churches, and not to individuals, we comprise them all under the above law, so that you will order them to be restored without any doubtfulness or dispute to the said Christians, that is to their corporation and assemblies; provided always as aforesaid, that those who restore them without price, as we said, shall expect a com-
- 10 pensation from our benevolence. In all these things you must give the aforesaid Christians your most effective intervention, that our command may be fulfilled as soon as may be, and that in this matter, as well as others, order may be taken by our Clemency for the public
- 11 quiet. So far we will ensure that, as has been already stated, the Divine favour toward us which we have already experienced in so

many affairs shall continue for all time to give us prosperity and
 12 successes, together with happiness for the State. But that the tenor
 of our gracious ordinance may be brought to the knowledge of all
 men, it will be your duty by a proclamation of your own to publish
 everywhere and bring to the notice of all men this present document,
 that the command of this our benevolence may not be hidden.
 (Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*, pp. 171-5, and
 ANCL, altered in accordance with the text of Brandt and Laubmann
 in *CSEL*.)

There is a translation into Greek of this document in Eusebius, *HE*, x.5.2-14.

As given by Lactantius, this document is a letter of Licinius directed to the
 governors of the provinces formerly subject to Maximinus Daia. It probably
 embodies the toleration already granted by Constantine in the West.

At the meeting at Milan the marriage of Licinius to Constantia, half-sister of
 Constantine, also took place.

The document embodies, (1) complete religious toleration, a principle on which
 Constantine never went back (see 275), though his toleration of paganism became
 more contemptuous; (2) provisions for the restoration of property of which the
 Christians, either individually or corporately, had been deprived during the
 persecution, with state compensation for any who suffered loss by this measure.

251 The Inscription on the Arch of Constantine at Rome, 315

CIL, VI.1139

To the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantine, Maximus, Pius, Felix,
 Augustus, the Roman Senate and People dedicated this arch,
 decorated with his victories, because, by the prompting of the
 Divinity, by the greatness of his mind, he with his army, at one
 moment by a just victory avenged the State both on the tyrant and on
 all his party.

To the liberator of the city. To the establisher of peace.

The arch is an official war memorial. Its sculptures carry no Christian symbols,
 even on the shields of the soldiers. The gods of Constantine are the Sun God and
 Victory.

252 Restitution of Property to the Church, 313

Letter of Constantine to Anulinus, Proconsul of Africa, in Eusebius,
HE, x.5.15-17

15 Greeting, Anulinus, our most honoured Sir. It is the custom of our
 benevolence, that we will that whatsoever appertains by right to

another should not only not suffer harm, but even be restored, most
 16 honoured Anulinus. Wherefore we will that, when thou receivest this
 letter, if aught of those things that belonged to the Catholic Church
 of the Christians in any city, or even in other places, be now in the
 possession either of citizens or of any others: these thou shouldest
 cause to be restored forthwith to these same churches, inasmuch as
 it has been our determination that those things which these same
 churches possessed formerly should be restored to them as their right.
 17 Since, therefore, thy Devotedness perceives that the order of this our
 command is most explicit, do thy diligence that all things, whether
 gardens or buildings or whatsoever belonged to these same churches
 by right, be restored to them with all speed; so that we may learn that
 thou hast yielded the most careful obedience to this our order. Fare
 thee well, Anulinus, our most honoured and esteemed Sir. (Lawlor
 and Oulton, *Eusebius*, I, p. 317.)

Letters such as this were probably sent to governors generally to follow up the
 'Edict of Milan'. It is improbable that Constantine had yet heard of the Donatist
 schism in Africa. Anulinus was soon to hear of it and report on it to Constantine
 (260).

253 Constantine makes a Grant of Money to the Catholic Clergy of the African Provinces, 313

Constantine to Caecilian of Carthage, in Eusebius, *HE*, x.6

1 Constantine Augustus to Caecilian bishop of Carthage. Forasmuch as
 it has been our pleasure in all provinces, namely the African, the
 Numidian and the Mauretanian, that somewhat be contributed for
 expenses to certain specified ministers of the lawful and most holy
 Catholic religion, I have despatched a letter to Ursus, the most dis-
 2 tinguished finance minister of Africa, and have notified to him that
 he be careful to pay over to thy Firmness three thousand 'folles'. Do
 thou therefore, when thou shalt secure delivery of the aforesaid sum
 of money, give orders that this money be distributed among all the
 above-mentioned persons in accordance with the schedule sent to thee
 3 by Hosius. But if, after all, thou shalt find that there is aught lacking
 for the fulfilment of this my purpose in respect of them all, thou
 shouldest ask without doubting whatsoever thou findest to be necess-
 ary from Heraclides, the treasurer of our estates. For indeed when
 he was here I gave him orders that if thy Firmness should ask any
 money from him, he should be careful to pay it over without any
 4 scruple. And since I have learnt that certain persons of unstable mind
 are desirous of turning aside the laity of the most holy and Catholic