

mask over his own sordid activities. Domitian exiled and threatened some due to the unwillingness of Christians to deify him. Some were burned (Polycarp), while some were exiled (John) and others were tortured (Perpetua, et al). With this came much public ridicule and abuse. But, as Tertullian observed a bit later.. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.."not an exact translation, I think, but close enough to pass for this time.

Church State relationships would continue on a hostile line until the time of Constantine (4th century). But the church would grow and the openness of its operations would be important as well as apparent, to the Empire. Those interested in the early martyrs may consult Foxe: BOOK OF MARTYRS. For an understanding of the archaeological material and the catacombs, Finegan: LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT PAST has useful material while the traditional lives of the saints may be picked up from Butler's LIVES OF THE SAINTS in which one may struggle to sort actual facts from traditional reportings.

That persecution tended to strengthen the church is apparent. It cut away pretending Christians, forced the movement to move out to other places and made faith a matter of courage. But it made it difficult to study theology, formulate doctrine, and develop practice in polity. Persecution helps to spread the faith and make its life a bit richer but it does not necessarily make it more popular or acceptable.

II.2.c. Church Problems

Representative Church Problems

Problems are part of the stuff of which history is made. It is in meeting them that progress is measured, it is in the understanding of them that we have the force to anticipate declension as well as expansion. They tend to be like the exercises that develop our muscles--painful but toughening. Without them we would not know if we were swimming or just treading water. Our grouping of representative problems is on two lines that will generally be true of the history of the church...internal and external. You will notice that in the long run, the internal group of problems will be the one that has the greatest potential for damage to the testimony.

Internal Problems

Problematic matters developed within the