

/ era that the church didn't simply grow without resistance, but that it had tremendous resistance at times, and culminating in the greatest persecution of all, the one that came at the very end of the period. And so it is a period of growth ~~is~~ accompanied with most serious opposition in these persecutions. It is a period of growth in which they were faced not merely with difficulties from outside, the persecutions, but they were faced with difficulties, I don't know whether you would say from inside, but they were difficulties of whether they could maintain their integrity as a group, holding a unified, generally unified viewpoint. Or whether they would break up into a dozens of different religions having comparatively little ~~xxx~~ relationship to one another. And that, of course, is the importance of the question of the rise of heresy.

From an historical viewpoint it is not a matter of whether a certain individual held a different viewpoint from the church, as a whole, it is a question of whether the group would split into several ~~is~~ different groups, which would eventually become completely different religions. Well, during this period we have groups which ~~is~~ split off into groups ~~is~~ groups which split off with entirely different ~~is~~ viewpoints, which have been considered by the church subsequently as the utterly heretical groups, not Christian at all. We have other groups which split off, with differences over minor points, and some of these groups had so little difference that actually it is hard to see how one group was any more Christian or less Christian than the other. It is(9) So we have different splits, and ~~is~~ different divisions during this period which could conceivably, could very easily, have resulted in there being not one Christian movement, but a group of movements having comparatively little in common with one another. So that we ~~is~~ are interested, during this ~~is~~ period, of learning something about these different movements that came about.

Now we are going into this period and we are interested in learning how the church ~~is~~ grew, and in the course of it, how it met the arguments and the viewpoints of the world about it. We are interested in the men who tried to convince, learned men, what arguments did they use, what did they say, what methods did they use to try to reach them. And we have much more ~~is~~