

## Church History

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They say we must judge Constantine's life as a whole and I think judging with the situations and opportunities which he had, and the power he had, and the flattery he had from everyone. I don't think there is any question but that his character from the viewpoint of general goodness would rank way head of most men who ever sat on the throne of emperor, and way ahead of most Christians most I say, who never had opportunity with such as he had. But Constantine was a layman, a politician, a general - he was not a theologian. He was not a church leader or anything of the kind. He was a man who in the position was tremendously interested in the church and anxious ~~and~~ to advance the church and the evidence is that he sincerely tried most of the time, to do what he thought was for the welfare of the church and for the welfare of Christianity. Now, how much was his understanding? What did he understand, just how clearly did he understand Christian doctrine? Well, if one of you were in my position and had to lecture on church history for a year or on Old Testament problems or on some phase of theology most any time - with a sizable class, even though everyone in this class is a college graduate - then at the end of the semester were to read the papers, the test papers, I am sure that if you read some of them you would feel exactly as I feel - you would wonder what was the matter that you couldn't get your ideas across easier than you seem to have done. I have a friend who preached in a rather fine church. He was just graduating from seminary, he went there for the summer and he said there was a very fine man there, a leader in the church, a man whose character was exemplary, who sat in the front row of the church in the service every time with most enthusiastic support. This man told me how he preached Sunday after Sunday on the theme that salvation is free, there is nothing you can do to earn it, you must simply take it as a gift of the grace of God, and he said about the 8th time that he preached on it, he saw a ~~ll~~ - come over this man's face and when he ended this man came rushing up to him, "Pastor, I got a new idea tonight while you were preaching". "While you were preaching I suddenly got a realization that salvation is actually free, there is nothing we