

that turned away from it. But he was a nominal Christian who turned away. He had turned away ten years before he became Emperor. He became emperor at the age of 30. For at least ten years before that he had been secretly a pagan and worked with pagan groups, taking the ceremonies with the pagan cults in secret so that his uncle would not hear of it. Well he recognized that to the restoration of the pagan glories of ancient Rome; Christianity was the greatest obstacle. You know that Diocletian at the end of his reign had tried to destroy Christianity and that he had failed. Julian felt that Diocletian had gone after it in quite the wrong way. He said the way to do a thing is not to use compulsion and try to destroy people; that might have worked when Christianity was a small group - you could have killed off all of the Christians in 200 AD and if they had established a system of spies and seeking them out, they might very easily have gotten rid of all the Christians. I say easily - there would have been considerable numbers scattered throughout the empire but it could have been done. In 100 AD it would have been very easy. But by the time of Diocletian there were so many of them that you couldn't kill off the Christians without wrecking the empire. Julian said "anyway the way to win is not by force but by proving to people the absurdity of this faith - by simply convincing them of the superiority of paganism - of the much higher moral standards of neo-platonism, than the standards of these Christians. They are always bickering among themselves and fighting. The thing to do is give them freedom in their quarrels, encourage them in their quarrels, proceed in such a way as to make it clear to all thinking people that it is just world superstition that these people believe." So Julian's attitude then had two aspects - one of helping the pagan churches, temples, pagan groups, philosophers - anything they wanted he was ready to give them. Negatively of trying to make it difficult for Christianity to grow. To get people to understand that the way to advance in the empire was to be against the Christians but to get the intelligent people to think it is an unreasonable thing anyway.