

Actually it was a good thing for true Christianity that Constantius, the son of Constantine who ruled the empire after the death of the other sons, espoused the Arian cause and used imperial power to advance it. Orthodoxy was persecuted, and had to trust to spiritual weapons alone, in its struggle for survival. In the end moral strength and intellectual superiority triumphed, but more than half a century passed by before the ^{First} Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the decisions of Nicea, and Arianism ceased to be a factor in the Roman empire, though it lingered on among the barbarians for several centuries.

Many men took part in the work that eventually won the victory for full belief in the Trinity. Outstanding among them was Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, whose writings fill a volume of this series. No man was ever more loved than this inspiring leader, this clear thinker and writer, this single-eyed defender of God's Truth. Yet no man was ever more hated than this one, who seemed for a time to stand alone against all the world. Five times he was banished from Egypt by order of one or another of the several emperors who ruled during his lifetime. Once he had to hide for months in the desert, to save his life. Every imaginable charge was brought against him, even including the claim that he was keeping the grain ships from taking Egyptian produce to Constantinople. Athanasius bore all the slander and abuse without wavering in his clear testimony to the truth of God's Word. Though he did not live to see the end of Arianism, it was his efforts, more than those of any other, that broke its hold, and when Athanasius died, the downfall of Arianism was already beginning to appear on the horizon. ¶ Three other doughty figures contributed much to the downfall of Arianism, and three volumes of our series are largely devoted to their writings. Had their reputations not been overshadowed by the greater one of Athanasius,