

Religious Toleration for All: The Edict of Milan

Constantine and Licinius
(313)

When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, had fortunately met near Mediolanum (Milan), and were considering everything that pertained to the public welfare and security, we thought that among other things which we saw would be for the good of many, that those regulations pertaining to the reverence of the Divinity ought certainly to be made first, so that we might grant to the Christians and to all others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us, and all who are placed under our rule. And thus by this wholesome counsel and most upright provision, we thought to arrange that no one whatever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion or of that religion which he should think best for himself, so that the supreme Deity, to whose worship we freely yield our hearts, may show in all things his usual favor and benevolence. Therefore, your Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians, and now any one of these who wishes to observe the Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without any disturbance or molestation. ... When you see that this has been granted to them by us, your Worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made that we may not seem to detract aught from any dignity or any religion. ...

Printed from Houghton Mifflin Company's History Companion