

Now that is the general position of hist. and its application to church hist. The ancient church, the medieval church, and the modern church. But I want to speak ~~x~~ briefly of the divisions that are a little smaller than that. The main divisions of ch. hist. The first natural division into which ch. hist. would come would be number 1, from the time of Christ up to ~~300~~ 313 A.D. That is an era which belongs together. It belongs together because it is the time ~~in~~ of the fact that at 313 A.D. a very vital change was made in the relationship of the church to the whole world. During those nearly three hundred years after the death of Christ, we have period in which a little group of people hardly known outside of the immediate situations, spread until within 300 years they came to be the largest group, the most influential group in the whole of Europe. The largest single group, not the majority by any ~~means~~ means. But the largest, probably a third of the people, the largest ~~single~~ single group, and the most <sup>influential</sup> ~~influential~~ group in the whole of Europe. The group that in the Roman Empire, including the larger part near Asia, they ~~f~~ grew into that in the course of these 300 years. So it is a period of growth from a little ~~insignificant~~ insignificant beginning to a tremendous large and ~~influential~~ influential thing. It is what we are interested in this first period, is how did the church grow, and what do we see as signs of its growth. Now in the course of its growth many things were established, and how did these things get established. How did different attitudes become general throughout the church. The hist. of the growth of the church is the vital thing during this period. Now in the course of its growth it naturally had opposition to it, and it is a great period of persecution of the church. Actually there were far less people killed during this period than during the period of the reformation, for their religion. Persecution was on a far wider scale in the days of the reformation and afterward than it ever was during the Roman Empire, but there were brief periods when it was very extensive.

But there was a long period over which there were occasional persecutions, and as the church has looked back on this period the persecutions are the thing that have stood out in the recollections of the people. It was a very important