

Romans would be enough to account for it. But these very sad episodes in his life having occurred at that time would lead some people to question the sincerity of his being a Christian. Now we must say about that however that he was in a position which very few men ever are in. He was in a position where he had absolute control. He could give orders to slay anyone he wanted in the empire. His word was absolute law. The old Roman custom gave the head of the family the right to kill members of the family if he chose. Constantine of course did not believe in that custom and ordered it changed and had given individual rights to people. He said he did not believe in acting on any mere whim or in an arbitrary way. He doubtless came to be convinced that his wife and son were conspiring against him and that it was necessary for the good of the state that they be killed. If this was all we knew about Constantine we might put him in the category with Peter the Great and some of the other pirates of history who were cruel and ruthless and brutal. But we know so much of the real devotion of Constantine and so much of his attempt to introduce Christian principles throughout the empire. We know so much about his attitude in general that it is reasonable to say that these particular acts are in line with the attitude of the usual emperors of the day - men who were constantly involved in fighting and who had to fight for their existence - for their position which had been gained in fighting in most cases and who had these very stern laws which they either enforced or went under. It is an instance where Constantine fell in line with the traditional attitude of emperors rather than where he followed the principles of which his Christian interests would lead him to follow. Constantine certainly was very far from a perfect man. In the East they call him St. Constantine. In the West he has always been honored as a great leader but has never been recognized as a Saint. He was very far from a perfect man, but you know I have never seen a perfect man in my life. I have never stuck one. You will not find one anywhere and it is the principle of the scripture that it is the attitude of the heart before God which matters rather than the external act. We