

Christians by that time and when you have 99% of the people of an empire calling themselves as belonging to a certain religion, it's pretty hard to keep that religion from being a state religion. But that Constantine made it such is utterly unhistorical. It is unfortunate that people who are experts in one field often make references to another without checking the information before they make it. Now this 4th century that is so tremendously important as I have mentioned in two ways. I hope you have both ways in mind before we are through because we are going through more or less chronologically, noting how events happened and the two ways are naturally interrelated. Each of them affects the other, yet in order to understand it properly you ought to be able to take one phase of this and notice how it is affected by the other. But to not pay attention to the points in the one that did not affect this particular aspect. Now we have been dealing to quite an extent with the one thing, the Spread of Christianity and its increase in standing in the Roman Empire during this period during which there was a greater change made than any other century in history as far as the spread of Christianity in that area is concerned.

The other - the Conflict of Arianism - is one of the most important developments in the whole history of the Christian church. If it were not for the tremendous importance of the reformation which is so much nearer to us, we would certainly want to spend a month on the controversy with Arianism. As it is, it is so far back from now that all we can do is hit the main truths and try to get some understanding. It is such a vital thing in the whole history of the Christian church and has some parallels and analogies to events in other centuries and to our own day that it is tragic that so few leaders of the Christian church have such a bare knowledge of the facts.