

Nicene Parallels: Five Historical Records of the Council of Nicaea in Parallel

This table contains five historical records of the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.), set out in parallel for the reader. The sources are cited and I have divided the material up into sections as indicated here below. This work is an appendix to a larger research project I am conducting on Constantine and the Bishops, and any queries regarding this table or my research can be directed to cgbateman@alumni.ubc.ca. This table is being made available for researchers or other readers who might find it helpful or interesting. The only comment I will make for the reader on this material is that only two of the authors for these sources, Eusebius of Caesarea and Athanasius of Alexandria, were present at the Council itself.

Kind regards,
C.G. Bateman

Impetus to Council (p. 3)
Calling the Council (p. 5)
Council of Nicaea: Attendees and Aims (p. 6)
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Appendix i: Nicene Parallels

Eusebius of Caesarea

Socrates Scholasticus

Salaminius Hermias Sozomenus (Sozomen)

Theodoret

Athanasius

Life of Constantine. Translated by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. 3.4-3.24, 122-131.

Ecclesiastical History, Book 1. Translated by A.C. Zenos. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Second series, vol. 2. *Socrates, Sozomenus: Church Histories*. Editors Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1886-1900; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 1.8-1.9, 8-17.

Sozomen. *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen*, Book 1. Translated & revised by Chester D. Hartranft. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second series, vol. 2. *Socrates, Sozomenus: Church Histories*. Editors Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1886-1900; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 1.17-1.25, 253-257.

The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret, Chapter 6 --General Council of Nicæa. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second series, vol. 3. *Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, & Rufinus: Historical Writings*. Editors Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1886-1900; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 1.6, 91-93.

[1.] *Epistola Eusebii, Council of Nicaea*. Translated and edited by Archibald Robertson. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second series, vol. 4. *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*. Editors Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1886-1900; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 1-11, 74-76.

[2.] [***In Italics***] *Ibid.*, *De Decretis or Defence of the Nicene Definition*. 1.2.1-1.2.4.

Eusebius

Socrates

Sozomen

Theodoret

Athanasius

Book 3.4-3.24. *The Council of Nicaea*.

Chapter VIII.--Of the Synod which was held at Nicæa in Bithynia, and the Creed there [153] put forth.

Chapter XVII.--Of the Council convened at Nicæa on Account of Arius.

Book 1.6. *The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret*, Chapter 6 General Council of Nicæa.

1. *Epistola Eusebii, Council of Nicaea*.
Letter of Eusebius of Cæsarea to the people of his Diocese [413].

Impetus to Council
(Eusebius)

Impetus to Council
(Socrates)

Impetus to Council
(Sozomen)

Impetus to Council
(Theodoret)

...But the effects of the resentment of Envy dreadfully agitating the churches of God in Alexandria, and the evil schism in Thebaid and Egypt, disturbed him considerably. The bishop of one city was attacking the bishop of another, populations were rising up against one another, and were all but coming to physical blows with each other, so that desperate men, out of their minds, were committing sacrilegious acts, even daring to insult the images of the Emperor. But this did not so much rouse him to anger as to mental anguish, as he grieved at the [83]

Such admirable and wise counsel did the emperor's letter contain. But the evil had become too strong both for the exhortations of the emperor, and the authority of him who was the bearer of his letter: for neither was Alexander nor Arius softened by this appeal; and moreover there was incessant strife and tumult among the people. Moreover another local source of disquietude had pre-existed there, which served to trouble the churches,--the dispute namely in regard to the Passover, which was carried on in the regions of the East only. [154]
This arose from some desiring to

When it was found that the event did not answer the expectations of the emperor, but that on the contrary, the contention was too great for reconciliation, so that he who had been sent to make peace returned without having accomplished his mission,

The emperor, who possessed the most profound wisdom, having heard of these things, endeavoured, as a first step, to stop up their fountain-head. He therefore despatched a messenger renowned for his ready wit to Alexandria with letters, in the endeavour to extinguish the dispute, and expecting to reconcile the disputants. But his hopes having been frustrated,...

deranged.

5 (1)

There was already another very dire sickness of longer standing than these, which had been a nuisance to the churches for a long time; the disagreement over the Feast of the Saviour. Some claimed that one ought to follow the practice of the Jews, and some that it was right to observe the exact time of the season and not to err by following those who were outside the grace of the gospel. (2) So in this matter to the congregations everywhere had already for a long time been divided, and the divine ordinances were in disarray, since for one and the same festival the divergence of date caused the greatest difference between astringent and mortification, when others were devoting leisure to relaxation. No human being was able to find a cure for the evil, since both parties were equally vehement in their disagreement; but for almighty God alone it was easy to cure even this, and alone of those on earth Constantine appeared

keep the Feast more in accordance with the custom of the Jews; while others preferred its mode of celebration by Christians in general throughout the world. This difference, however, did not interfere with their communion, although their mutual joy was necessarily hindered.

as his agent for good.

(3) Once he received news of what has been described, and perceived that the letter which he had sent to those in Alexandria had failed, he applied his own mind to the matter, and said that this was another war which he must struggle to win against the invisible enemy disturbing the Church.

Calling the Council
(Eusebius)

6 (1) Then, as if to march against him, he marshalled a legion of God, a world-wide Council, with respectful letters summoning bishops to hasten from every place. It was not a simple command, but the Emperor's reinforced it also with practical action; to some it offered the right to use the public post, to others a generous supply of pack animals. A city was also designated which was appropriate for the Council, one bearing the name of

Calling the Council
(Socrates)

When, therefore, the emperor beheld the Church agitated on account of both of these causes, he convoked a General Council, [155] summoning all the bishops by letter to meet him at Nicæa in Bithynia.

Calling the Council
(Sozomen)

Constantine convened a synod at Nicæa, in Bithynia, and wrote [1115] to the most eminent men of the churches in every country, directing them to be there on an appointed day. [1116]

Calling the Council
(Theodoret)

...he proceeded to summon the celebrated council of Nicæa [333] ; and pledged his word that the bishops and their officials should be furnished with asses, mules, and horses for their journey at the public expense.

victory, Nicaea in the province of Bithynia. (2) So as the announcement circulated everywhere, they all dashed like sprinters from the starting-line, [84] full of enthusiasm. They were drawn by the hope of good things, the opportunity to share in peace, and the spectacle of that strange marvel, to see such a great Emperor.

**Council of Nicaea:
Attendees & Aim**
(Eusebius)

**Council of
Nicaea: Attendees &
Aim**
(Socrates)

**Council of
Nicaea: Attendees &
Aim**
(Sozomen)

**Council of Nicaea:
Attendees &
Aim**
(Theodoret)

**Council of Nicaea:
Attendees &
Aim**
(Athanasius)

So when all had come together, what was happening was seen already to be the work of God. For those who were furthest separated from each other, not only in spirit but in physical presence and territories and places and provinces, were brought together, and one city received them all: a huge ring of priests was to be seen, a crown colour-woven with lovely flowers.

Accordingly the bishops assembled out of the various provinces and cities; respecting whom Eusebius Pamphilus thus writes, word for word, in his third book of the life of Constantine: [156] Wherefore the most eminent of the ministers of God in all the churches which have filled Europe, Africa, and Asia, were convened. And one sacred edifice, dilated as it were by God, contained within it on the

Of those who occupied the apostolic sees, the following participated in this conference: Macarius of Jerusalem, Eustathius, who already presided over the church of Antioch on the Orontes; and Alexander of Alexandria near Lake Mareotis. Julius, [117] bishop of Rome, was unable to attend on account of extreme old age; but his place was supplied by Vito and Vicentius, presbyters

When all those who were capable of enduring the fatigue of the journey had arrived at Nicæa, he went thither himself, with both the wish of seeing the multitude of bishops, and the yearning desire of maintaining unanimity amongst them. He at once arranged that all their wants should be liberally supplied. Three hundred and eighteen bishops were

[1.] 1. What was transacted concerning ecclesiastical faith at the Great Council assembled at Nicæa, you have probably learned, Beloved, from other sources, rumour being wont to precede the accurate account of what is doing. But lest in such reports the circumstances of the case have been misrepresented, we have been obliged to transmit

7 (1) From all the churches that filled all Europe, Libya and Asia the choicest of the servants of God were brought together. : Syrians with Cilicians; Phoenicians and Arabians and Palestinians; besides these, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and those who came from between the rivers. Even a Persian bishop was present at the council, nor was a Scythian lacking from the assembly. Pontus and Galatia, Cappadocia and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia provided their chosen men. Thracians too and Macedonians, Achaeans and Epirotes, and among them those who lived far up-country, were present; and even of the Spaniards the very famous famous one was among those joining the assembly with all the rest. (2) The one in [85] charge of the imperial city was absent because of his old age, but his presbyters were present and deputed for him. Alone in all of history one emperor, Constantine, wove such a crown for Christ with the bond of peace, and to his

same occasion both Syrians and Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs and Palestinians, and in addition to these, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and those who came from Mesopotamia. At this synod a Persian bishop was also present, neither was the Scythian absent from this assemblage. Pontus also and Galatia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia and Phrygia, supplied those who were most distinguished among them. Besides, there met there Thracians and Macedonians, Achaians and Epirots, and even those who dwelt still further away than these, and the most celebrated of the Spaniards himself [157] took his seat among the rest. The prelate [158] of the imperial city was absent on account of age; but some of his presbyters were present and filled his place. Such a crown, composed as a bond of peace, the emperor Constantine alone has ever dedicated to Christ his Saviour, as a thank-offering worthy of God for victory over his enemies, having appointed this convocation among us in imitation of the Apostolic

of his church. Many other excellent and good men from different nations were congregated together, of whom some were celebrated for their learning, their eloquence, and their knowledge of the sacred books, and other discipline; some for the virtuous tenor of their life, and others for the combination of all these qualifications. About three hundred and twenty bishops were present, accompanied by a multitude of presbyters and deacons. There were, likewise, men present who were skilled in dialectics, and ready to assist in the discussions.

assembled. The bishop of Rome [334], on account of his very advanced age, was absent, but he sent two presbyters [335] to the council, with authority to agree to what was done.

At this period many individuals were richly endowed with apostolical gifts; and many, like the holy apostle, bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ [336]. James, bishop of Antioch, a city of Mygdonia, which is called Nisibis by the Syrians and Assyrians, raised the dead and restored them to life, and performed many other wonders which it would be superfluous to mention again in detail in this history, as I have already given an account of them in my work, entitled "Philotheus [337]." Paul, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, a fortress situated on the banks of the Euphrates, had suffered from the frantic rage of Licinius. He had been deprived of the use of both hands by the

to you, first, the formula of faith presented by ourselves, and next, the second, which [the Fathers] put forth with some additions to our words. Our own paper, then, which was read in the presence of our most pious [414] Emperor, and declared to be good and unexceptionable, ran thus:--

Saviour dedicated a thank-offering fit for God for his victory over enemies and foemen, gathering among us this replica of the apostolic assembly. 8 For in their case also the word is that there were gathered 'from every nation under heaven' 'devout men' (Acts 2:5), among whom were 'Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, the resident Romans, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians' (Acts 2: 9-11) – except that they were inferior in that not all consisted of the ministers of God. In the present band the number of bishops exceeded 250 and the attendants who accompanied them was beyond calculation. 9 Among the ministers of God some were outstanding for the word of wisdom, others for their severity of life and patient endurance, others were adorned by their moderation. Some among them were

Assembly. [159] For among them it is said were convened "devout men of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and those who dwelt in Mesopotamia, Judæa and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the part of Libya which is toward Cyrene, strangers from Rome also, both Jews and proselytes with Cretans and Arabs." That congregation, however, was inferior in this respect, that all present were not ministers of God: whereas in this assembly the number of bishops exceeded three hundred; [160] while the number of the presbyters, deacons, and acolyths [161] and others who attended them was almost incalculable. Some of these ministers of God were eminent for their wisdom, some for the strictness of their life, and patient endurance [of persecution], and others united in themselves all these distinguished characteristics: some were venerable from their advanced age, others were conspicuous for their youth and vigor of mind, and others had

application of a red-hot iron, by which the nerves which give motion to the muscles had been contracted and rendered dead. Some had had the right eye dug out, others had lost the right arm. Among these was Paphnutius of Egypt. In short, the Council looked like an assembled army of martyrs. Yet this holy and celebrated gathering was not entirely free from the element of opposition; for there were some, though so few as easily to be reckoned, of fair surface, like dangerous shallows, who really, though not openly, supported the blasphemy of Arius.

When they were all assembled [338], the emperor ordered a great hall to be prepared for their accommodation in the palace, in which a sufficient number of benches and seats were placed; and having thus arranged that they should be treated with

honoured for their length of years, others shone with youth and spiritual energy, some had just reached the road of priestly ministry. For all of these the Emperor had arranged that meals should be generously provided every day. 10-14

The proceedings of the Council
10 (1) On the day appointed for the Council, on which it was to reach a resolution of the issues in dispute, every one was present to do this, in the very innermost [86] hall of the palace, which appeared to exceed the rest in size. Many tiers of seating had been set along either side of the hall. Those invited arrived within and all took their appointed seats. (2) When the whole council had with proper ceremony taken their seats, silence fell upon them all, s they awaited the Emperor's arrival. One of the Emperor's company came in, then a second, then a third. Yet others led the way, not some of the usual soldiers and guards, but only of his faithful friends. (3) All rose at a signal,

but recently entered on their ministerial career. [162] For all these the emperor appointed an abundant supply of daily food to be provided.' Such is Eusebius' account of those who met on this occasion. The emperor having completed the festal solemnization of this triumph over Licinius, came also in person to Nice.

There were among the bishops two of extraordinary celebrity, Paphnutius, bishop of Upper Thebes, and Spyridon, bishop of Cyprus: why I have so particular referred to these two individuals, I shall state hereafter. Many of the laity were also present, who were practiced in the art of reasoning, [163] and each eager to advocate the cause of his own party. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, as was before said, supported the opinion of Arius, together with Theognis and Maris; of these the former was bishop of Nicæa, and Maris of Chalcedon in Bithynia. These were powerfully opposed by Athanasius, a deacon of the Alexandrian church, who was highly esteemed by Alexander his bishop, and on that account

becoming dignity, he desired the bishops to enter in, and discuss the subjects proposed. The emperor, with a few attendants, was the last to enter the room; remarkable for his lofty stature, and worthy of admiration for personal beauty, and for the still more marvellous modesty which dwelt on his countenance. A low stool was placed for him in the middle of the assembly, upon which, however, he did not seat himself until he had asked the permission of the bishops. Then all the sacred assembly sat down around him. Then forthwith rose first the great Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, who, upon the translation of Philogonius, already referred to, to a better life, had been compelled reluctantly to become his successor by the unanimous suffrages of the bishops, priests, and of the Christ-loving laity. He crowned the emperor's

which announced the Emperor's entrance; and he finally walked along between them, like some heavenly angel o God, his bright mantle shedding lustre like beams of light, shining with the fiery brilliance of gold and precious stones. (4) Such was his physical appearance. As for his soul, he was clearly adorned with fear and reverence for God; this was shown by his eyes, which were cast down, the blush on his face, his gait, and the rest of his appearance, his height, which surpassed all those around him... by his dignified maturity, by the magnificence of his physical condition, and by the vigour of his matchless strength. All these, blended with the elegance of his manners and the gentleness of imperial condescension, demonstrated the superiority of his mind surpassing all description. (5) When he reached the upper end of the upper end of the rows of seats and stood in the middle, a small chair made of gold having been set out, only when the bishops assented did

was much envied, as will be seen hereafter. Now a short time previous to the general assembling of the bishops, the disputants engaged in preparatory logical contests before the multitudes; and when many were attracted by the interest of their discourse, one of the laity, a confessor [164], who was a man of unsophisticated understanding, reprov'd these reasoners, telling them that Christ and his apostles did not teach us dialectics, art, nor vain subtilties, but simple-mindedness, which is preserved by faith and good works. As he said this, all present admired the speaker and assented to the justice of his remarks; and the disputants themselves, after hearing his plain statement of the truth, exercised a greater degree of moderation: thus then was the disturbance caused by these logical debates suppressed at this time. On the following day all the bishops were assembled together in one place; the emperor arrived soon after and on his entrance stood in their midst, and would not take

head with the flowers of panegyric, and commended the diligent attention he had manifested in the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs.

The excellent emperor next exhorted the Bishops to unanimity and concord; he recalled to their remembrance the cruelty of the late tyrants, and reminded them of the honourable peace which God had, in his reign and by his means, accorded them. He pointed out how dreadful it was, aye, very dreadful, that at the very time when their enemies were destroyed, and when no one dared to oppose them, they should fall upon one another, and make their amused adversaries laugh, especially as they were debating about holy things, concerning which they had the written teaching of the Holy Spirit. "For the gospels"
(continued he)

he sit down. They all did the same after the Emperor. 11

his place, until the bishops by bowing intimated their desire that he should be seated: such was the respect and reverence which the emperor entertained for these men.

"the apostolical writings, and the oracles of the ancient prophets, clearly teach us what we ought to believe concerning the divine nature. Let, then, all contentious disputation be discarded; and let us seek in the divinely-inspired word the solution of the questions at issue."

These and similar exhortations he, like an affectionate son, addressed to the bishops as to fathers, labouring to bring about their unanimity in the apostolical doctrines.

Council Deliberations
(Eusebius)

The bishop who was first in the row on the right then stood up and delivered a rhythmical speech, addressing the Emperor, and offering a hymn of gratitude for him to God the ruler of all. When he too had sat down, silence [87] fell on all as they gazed intently at the Emperor. He

Council Deliberations
(Socrates)

When a silence suitable to the occasion had been observed, the emperor from his seat began to address them words of exhortation to harmony and unity, and entreated each to lay aside all private pique. For several of them had brought accusations against one another and many had even presented

Council Deliberations
(Sozomen)

And as was usually the case on such occasions, many priests resorted to the council for the purpose of transacting their own private affairs; [1118] for they considered this a favorable opportunity for rectifying their grievances, and in what points each found fault with the rest, he

Council Deliberations
(Theodoret)

Most members of the synod, won over by his arguments, established concord among themselves, and embraced sound doctrine. There were, however, a few, of whom mention has been already made, who opposed these doctrines, and sided with

Council Deliberations
(Athanasius)

2. "As we have received from the Bishops who preceded us, and in our first catechisings, and when we received the Holy Laver, and as we have learned from the divine Scriptures, and as we believed and taught the presbytery, and in the

with shining eyes looked kindly on them all, and then, collecting his thought, in a soft and gentle voice he gave a speech somewhat like this: 12 (1) 'It was the object of my prayers, my friends, to share in your company, and now that I have received this, I know I must express my gratitude to the King of all, because on addition to everything else he has allowed me to see this, which is better than any other good thing; I mean, to receive you all gathered together and to observe one unanimous opinion shared by all. (2) Let no jealous enemy ruin our prosperity; now that the war of the tyrants against God has been swept away by the power of God the Saviour, let not the malignant demon encompass the divine law with blasphemies by other means. For to me internal division in the Church of God is graver than any war or fierce battle, and these things appear to cause more pain than secular affairs. (3) When therefore I won victories over enemies through the favour and

petitions to the emperor the day before. But he, directing their attention to the matter before them, and on account of which they were assembled, ordered these petitions to be burnt; merely observing that Christ enjoins him who is anxious to obtain forgiveness, to forgive his brother.' When therefore he had strongly insisted on the maintenance of harmony and peace, he sanctioned again their purpose of more closely investigating the questions at issue. But it may be well to hear what Eusebius says on this subject, in his third book of the Life of Constantine. [165] His words are these: A variety of topics having been introduced by each party and much controversy being excited from the very commencement, the emperor listened to all with patient attention, deliberately and impartially considering whatever was advanced. He in part supported the statements which were made on either side, and gradually softened the asperity of those who contentiously opposed each other, conciliating each by his

presented a document to the emperor, wherein he noted the offenses committed against himself. As this course was pursued day after day, the emperor set apart one certain day on which all complaints were to be brought before him. When the appointed time arrived, he took the memorials which had been presented to him, and said, "All these accusations will be brought forward in their own season at the great day of judgment, and will there be judged by the Great Judge of all men; as to me, I am but a man, and it would be evil in me to take cognizance of such matters, seeing that the accuser and the accused are priests; and the priests ought so to act as never to become amenable to the judgment of others. Imitate, therefore, the divine love and mercy of God, and be ye reconciled to one another; withdraw your accusations against each other; let us be persuaded, and let us devote our attention to those subjects connected with the faith on account of which

Arius; and amongst them were Menophantus, bishop of Ephesus, Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, Theognis, bishop of Nicæa, and Narcissus, bishop of Neronias, which is a town of the second Cilicia, and is now called Irenopolis; also Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt [339]. They drew up a formulary of their faith, and presented it to the council. As soon as it was read it was torn to pieces, and was declared to be spurious and false. So great was the uproar raised against them, and so many were the reproaches cast on them for having betrayed religion, that they all, with the exception of Secundus and Theonas, stood up and took the lead in publicly renouncing Arius. This impious man, having thus been expelled from the Church, a confession of faith which is received to this day was drawn up by unanimous consent; and, as

Episcopate itself, so believing also at the time present, we report to you our faith, and it is this [415] : "---

[2.] *Chapter II.--Conduct of the Arians towards the Nicene Council.*

Ignorant as well as irreligious to attempt to reverse an Ecumenical Council: proceedings at Nicæa: Eusebians then signed what they now complain of: on the unanimity of true teachers and the process of tradition: changes of the Arians. And do thou, beloved, consider whether it be not so. If, the devil having sowed their hearts with this perverseness [760], they feel confidence in their bad inventions, let them defend themselves against the proofs of heresy which have been advanced, and then will be the time to find fault, if they can, with the definition framed against them [761]. For no

support of the Supreme, I considered that nothing remained but to give thanks to God, and to rejoice also with those who had been liberated by him through our agency. When contrary to all expectation I learnt of your division, I did not defer attention to the report, but, praying that this too might be healed through my ministration, I immediately sent for you all. (4) I rejoice to see your gathering, and I consider that I shall be acting most in accordance with my prayers, when I see you all with your souls in communion and one common, peaceful harmony prevailing among you all, which you, as persons consecrated to God, ought yourselves to be announcing to others. (5) So do not delay, my friends, ministers of God, and good servants of the common Lord and Saviour of us all, to begin now to bring the causes of the division between you into the open, and to loosen all shackles of dispute by the laws of peace. Thus [88] you will both achieve what is pleasing

mildness and affability. And as he addressed them in the Greek language, for he was not unacquainted with it, he was at once interesting and persuasive, and wrought conviction on the minds of some, and prevailed on others by entreaty, those who spoke well he applauded. And inciting all to unanimity at length he succeeded in bringing them into similarity of judgment, and conformity of opinion on all the controverted points: so that there was not only unity in the confession of faith, but also a general agreement as to the time for the celebration of the feast of Salvation. [166] Moreover the doctrines which had thus the common consent, were confirmed by the signature of each individual.'

we are assembled." After this address, in order to make the document of each man nugatory, the emperor commanded the memorials to be burnt, and then appointed a day for solving the doubtful points. But before the appointed time arrived, the bishops assembled together, and having summoned Arius to attend, began to examine the disputed topics, each one amongst them advancing his own opinion. As might have been expected, however, many different questions started out of the investigation: some of the bishops spoke against the introduction of novelties contrary to the faith which had been delivered to them from the beginning. And those especially who had adhered to simplicity of doctrine argued that the faith of God ought to be received without curious inquiries; others, however, contended that ancient opinions ought not to be followed without examination. Many of the bishops who were then assembled, and of the clergy who accompanied

soon as it was signed, the council was dissolved.

one, on being convicted of murder or adultery, is at liberty after the trial to arraign the sentence of the judge, why he spoke in this way and not in that [762] . For this does not exculpate the convict, but rather increases his crime on the score of petulance and audacity. In like manner, let these either prove that their sentiments are religious (for they were then accused and convicted, and their complaints are subsequent, and it is just that those who are under a charge should confine themselves to their own defence), or if they have an unclean conscience, and are aware of their own irreligion, let them not complain of what they do not understand, or they will bring on themselves a double imputation, of irreligion and of ignorance. Rather let them investigate the matter in a docile spirit, and learning what hitherto they have not known,

to the God of all, and you will give extreme gratification to me, your fellow servant.' 13 (1) When he had spoken these words in Latin, with someone interpreting, he made way for the leaders of the Council to speak. Some then began to accuse their neighbours, while the others defended themselves and made countercharges. A great many proposals were made by each side, and there was at first much controversy. The Emperor listened to all, without resentment, and received the proposals with patient flexibility; he took together those whose attitudes conflicted. (2) He addressed each person gently, and by speaking Greek – for he was not ignorant of that language either – he made himself pleasant and agreeable, persuading some and shaming others with his words, praising those who were speaking well, urging all towards agreement, until he had brought them to be of one mind and one belief on all the matters in dispute.

14 Thus the Faith Festival of

them, being remarkable for their dialectic skill, and practiced in such rhetorical methods, became conspicuous, and attracted the notice of the emperor and the court. Of that number Athanasius, who was then a deacon of Alexandria, and had accompanied his bishop Alexander, seemed to have the largest share in the counsel concerning these subjects.

Chapter XVIII.--Two Philosophers are converted to the Faith by the Simplicity of Two Old Men with whom they hold a Disputation.

While these disputations were being carried on, certain of the pagan philosophers became desirous of taking part in them; some, because they wished for information as to the doctrine that was inculcated; and others, because, feeling incensed against the Christians on account of the recent suppression of the pagan religion, they wished to convert the inquiry about doctrine into a strife about words, so as to introduce

cleanse their irreligious ears with the spring of truth and the doctrines of religion [763]

3. Now it happened to Eusebius and his fellows in the Nicene Council as follows:--while they stood out in their irreligion, and attempted their fight against God [764], the terms they used were replete with irreligion; but the assembled Bishops who were three hundred more or less, mildly and charitably required of them to explain and defend themselves on religious grounds. Scarcely, however, did they begin to speak, when they were condemned [765], and one differed from another; then perceiving the straits in which their heresy lay, they remained dumb, and by their silence confessed the disgrace which came upon their heterodoxy. On this the Bishops, having negatived the terms they had invented, published against them the sound

the Saviour was agreed on all sides. The general decisions were also ratified in writing through the individual signatures.

dissensions among them, and to make them appear as holding contradictory opinions. It is related that one of these philosophers, priding himself on his acknowledged superiority of eloquence, began to ridicule the priests, and thereby roused the indignation of a simple old man, highly esteemed as a confessor, who, although unskilled in logical refinements and wordiness, undertook to oppose him. The less serious of those who knew the confessor, raised a laugh [1119] at his expense for engaging in such an undertaking; but the more thoughtful felt anxious lest, in opposing so eloquent a man, he should only render himself ridiculous; yet his influence was so great, and his reputation so high among them, that they could not forbid his engaging in the debate; and he accordingly delivered himself in the following terms: "In the name of Jesus Christ, O philosopher, hearken to me. There is one God, the maker of heaven and

and ecclesiastical faith; and, as all subscribed it, Eusebius and his fellows subscribed it also in those very words, of which they are now complaining, I mean, "of the essence" and "one in essence," and that "the Son of God is neither creature or work, nor in the number of things originated [766], but that the Word is an offspring from the substance of the Father." And what is strange indeed, Eusebius of Cæsarea in Palestine, who had denied the day before, but afterwards subscribed, sent to his Church a letter, saying that this was the Church's faith, and the tradition of the Fathers; and made a public profession that they were before in error, and were rashly contending against the truth. For though he was ashamed at that time to adopt these phrases, and excused himself to the Church in his own way, yet he certainly means to imply all this in his Epistle,

earth, and of all things visible and invisible. He made all things by the power of the Word, and established them by the holiness of His Spirit. The Word, whom we call the Son of God, seeing that man was sunk in error and living like unto the beasts pitied him, and vouchsafed to be born of woman, to hold intercourse with men, and to die for them. And He will come again to judge each of us as to the deeds of this present life. We believe these things to be true with all simplicity. Do not, therefore, expend your labor in vain by striving to disprove facts which can only be understood by faith or by scrutinizing the manner in which these things did or did not come to pass. Answer me, dost thou believe?" The philosopher, astonished at what had occurred, replied, "I believe"; and having thanked the old man for having overcome him in argument, he began to teach the same doctrines to others. He exhorted those who still held his former sentiments to adopt

by his not denying the "one in essence," and "of the essence." And in this way he got into a difficulty; for while he was excusing himself, he went on to attack the Arians, as stating that "the Son was not before His generation," and as thereby rejecting His existence before His birth in the flesh. And this Acacius is aware of also, though he too through fear may pretend otherwise because of the times and deny the fact. Accordingly I have subjoined at the end the letter of Eusebius, that thou mayest know from it the disrespect towards their own doctors shewn by Christ's enemies, and singularly by Acacius himself [767].

4. Are they not then committing a crime, in their very thought to gainsay so great and ecumenical a Council? are they not in transgression, when they dare to confront that good definition against Arianism,

the views he had embraced, assuring them on oath, that he had been impelled to embrace Christianity by a certain inexplicable impulse.

It is said that a similar miracle was performed by Alexander, who governed the church of Constantinople. When Constantine returned to Byzantium, certain philosophers came to him to complain of the innovations in religion, and particularly of his having introduced a new form of worship into the state, contrary to that followed by his forefathers, and by all who were formerly in power, whether among the Greeks or the Romans. They likewise desired to hold a disputation on the doctrine with Alexander the bishop; and he, although unskilled in such argumentative contests, and perhaps persuaded by his life, seeing that he was an excellent and good man, accepted the struggle at the command of the emperor. When the

acknowledged, as it is, by those who had in the first instance taught them irreligion? And supposing, even after subscription, Eusebius and his fellows did change again, and return like dogs to their own vomit of irreligion, do not the present gain-sayers deserve still greater detestation, because they thus sacrifice [768] their souls' liberty to others; and are willing to take these persons as masters of their heresy, who are, as James [769] has said, double-minded men, and unstable in all their ways, not having one opinion, but changing to and fro, and now recommending certain statements, but soon dishonouring them, and in turn recommending what just now they were blaming? But this, as the Shepherd has said, is "the child of the devil [770] ," and the note of hucksters rather than of doctors. For, what our Fathers have delivered, this is truly

philosophers were assembled, since every one wished to engage in the discussion, he requested that one whom they esteemed worthy might be chosen as spokesman, while the others were to remain silent. When one of the philosophers began to open the debate, Alexander said to him, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ not to speak." The man was instantaneously silenced. It is then right to consider whether it is a greater miracle that a man, and he a philosopher, should so easily be silenced by a word, or that a stone-wall should be cleft by the power of a word, which miracle I have heard some attribute to Julian, surnamed the Chaldean. [1120] I have understood that these events happened in the way above narrated.

Chapter XIX.--When the Council was assembled, the Emperor delivered a Public Address.

The bishops held long consultations; and after summoning Arius before them, they made an accurate

doctrine; and this is truly the token of doctors, to confess the same thing with each other, and to vary neither from themselves nor from their fathers; whereas they who have not this character are to be called not true doctors but evil. Thus the Greeks, as not witnessing to the same doctrines, but quarrelling one with another, have no truth of teaching; but the holy and veritable heralds of the truth agree together, and do not differ. For though they lived in different times, yet they one and all tend the same way, being prophets of the one God, and preaching the same Word harmoniously [771].

Chapter V.--Defence of the Council's Phrases, "from the essence," And "one in essence." Objection that the phrases are not scriptural; we ought to look at the sense more than the wording; evasion

test of his propositions; they were intently on their guard, not to come to a vote on either side. When at length the appointed day arrived on which it had been decided to settle the doubtful points, they assembled together [1121] in the palace, because the emperor had signified his intention of taking part in the deliberations. When he was in the same place with the priests, he passed through to the head of the conference, and seated himself on the throne which had been prepared for him, and the synod was then commanded to be seated; for seats had been arranged on either side along the walls of the palatial rooms, for it was the largest, and excelled the other chambers.

After they were seated, Eusebius Pamphilus arose and delivered an oration [1122] in honor of the emperor, returning thanks to God on his account. When he had ceased speaking, and silence was restored, the emperor delivered himself in the

of the Arians as to the phrase "of God" which is in Scripture; their evasion of all

explanations but those which the Council selected, which were intended to negative the Arian formulæ; protest against their conveying any material sense.

18. Now Eusebius and his fellows were at the former period examined at great length, and convicted themselves, as I said before; on this they subscribed; and after this change of mind they kept in quiet and retirement [874] ; but since the present party, in the fresh arrogance of irreligion, and in dizziness about the truth, are full set upon accusing the Council, let them tell us what are the sort of Scriptures from which they have learned, or who is the Saint [875] by whom they have been taught, that they have heaped together the

following words: "I give thanks to God for all things, but particularly, O friends, for being permitted to see your conference. And the event has exceeded my prayer, in that so many priests of Christ have been conducted into the same place; now, it is my desire that you should be of one mind and be partakers of a consentient judgment, for I deem dissension in the Church of God as more dangerous than any other evil. Therefore when it was announced, and I understood you were in discord, an unwholesome thing to hear, I was deeply pained in soul; and least of all does it profit you, since you are the conductors of divine worship and arbiters of peace. On this account it is, that I have called you together in a holy Synod, and being both your emperor and your fellow-physician, I seek for you a favor which is acceptable to our common Lord, and as honorable for me to receive, as for you to grant. The favor which I seek is, that you examine the causes of the

phrases, out of nothing [876] , ' and He was not before His generation,' and once He was not,' and alterable,' and pre-existence,' and at the will;' which are their fables in mockery of the Lord. For the blessed Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews says, By faith we understand that the ages were framed by the Word of God, so that that which is seen was not made of things which do appear [877] .' But nothing is common to the Word with the ages [878] ; for He it is who is in existence before the ages, by whom also the ages came to be. And in the Shepherd [879] it is written (since they allege this book also, though it is not of the Canon [880]), First of all believe, that God is one, who created all things, and arranged them, and brought all things from nothing into being;' but this again does not relate to the Son, for it speaks concerning all things which

strife, and put a consentient and peaceful end thereto so that I may triumph with you over the envious demon, who excited this internal revolt because he was provoked to see our external enemies and tyrants under our feet, and envied our good estate." The emperor pronounced this discourse in Latin, and the interpretation was supplied by one at his side.

Chapter XX.--After having given Audience to both Parties, the Emperor condemned the Followers of Arius and banished them. The next debate by the priests turned upon doctrine. [1123] The emperor gave patient attention to the speeches of both parties; he applauded those who spoke well, rebuked those who displayed a tendency to altercation, and according to his apprehension of what he heard, for he was not wholly unpracticed in the Greek tongue, he addressed himself with kindness to each one. Finally all the priests agreed with one another and conceded that the Son is

came to be through Him, from whom He is distinct; for it is not possible to reckon the Framers of all with the things made by Him, unless a man is so beside himself as to say that the architect also is the same as the buildings which he rears.

Why then, when they have invented on their part unscriptural phrases, for the purposes of irreligion, do they accuse those who are religious in their use of them [881] ? For irreligiousness is utterly forbidden, though it be attempted to disguise it with artful expressions and plausible sophisms; but religiousness is confessed by all to be lawful, even though presented in strange phrases [882] , provided only they are used with a religious view, and a wish to make them the expression of religious thoughts. Now the aforesaid grovelling phrases of Christ's enemies have been shewn in these

consubstantial with the Father. At the commencement of the conference there were but seventeen who praised the opinion of Arius, but eventually the majority of these yielded assent to the general view. To this judgment the emperor likewise deferred, for he regarded the unanimity of the conference to be a divine approbation; and he ordained that any one who should be rebellious thereto, should forthwith be sent into banishment, as guilty of endeavoring to overthrow the Divine definitions. I had thought it necessary to reproduce the very document concerning the matter, as an example of the truth, in order that posterity might possess in a fixed and clear form the symbol of the faith which proved pacificatory at the time but since some pious friends, who understood such matters, recommended that these truths ought to be spoken of and heard by the initiated and their initiators [1124] only, I agreed with their council; for it is not unlikely that some of

remarks to be both formerly and now replete with irreligion; whereas the definition of the Council against them, if accurately examined, will be found to be altogether a representation of the truth, and especially if diligent attention be paid to the occasion which gave rise to these expressions, which was reasonable, and was as follows:--

19. The Council [883] wishing to do away with the irreligious phrases of the Arians, and to use instead the acknowledged words of the Scriptures, that the Son is not from nothing but from God,' and is Word' and Wisdom,' and not creature or work, but a proper offspring from the Father, Eusebius and his fellows, led by their inveterate heterodoxy, understood the phrase from God' as belonging to us, as if in respect to it the Word of God differed nothing

the uninitiated may read this book. While I have concealed such of the prohibited material as I ought to keep silent about, I have not altogether left the reader ignorant of the opinions held by the synod.

from us, and that because it is written, There is one God, from whom, all things [884] ;' and again, Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, and all things are from God [885] .' But the Fathers, perceiving their craft and the cunning of their irreligion, were forced to express more distinctly the sense of the words from God.' Accordingly, they wrote from the essence of God [886] ,' in order that from God' might not be considered common and equal in the Son and in things originate, but that all others might be acknowledged as creatures, and the Word alone as from the Father. For though all things be said to be from God, yet this is not in the sense in which the Son is from Him; for as to the creatures, of God' is said of them on this account, in that they exist not at random or spontaneously, nor come

to be by chance [887] , according to those philosophers who refer them to the combination of atoms, and to elements of similar structure,--nor as certain heretics speak of a distinct Framer,--nor as others again say that the constitution of all things is from certain Angels;--but in that (whereas God is), it was by Him that all things were brought into being, not being before, through His Word; but as to the Word, since He is not a creature, He alone is both called and is from the Father;' and it is significant of this sense to say that the Son is from the essence of the Father,' for to nothing originate does this attach. In truth, when Paul says that all things are from God,' he immediately adds, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things [888] ,' in order to shew all men, that the Son is other than all these things which came to be from God (for the things which came to

be from God, came to be through His Son); and that he had used his foregoing words with reference to the world as framed by God [889] , and not as if all things were from the Father as the Son is. For neither are other things as the Son, nor is the Word one among others, for He is Lord and Framer of all; and on this account did the Holy Council declare expressly that He was of the essence [890] of the Father, that we might believe the Word to be other than the nature of things originate, being alone truly from God; and that no subterfuge should be left open to the irreligious. This then was the reason why the Council wrote of the essence.'

20. Again, when the Bishops said that the Word must be described as the True Power and Image of the Father, in all things exact [891] and like the Father, and as unalterable, and as always, and as in

Him without division (for never was the Word not, but He was always, existing everlastingly with the Father, as the radiance of light), Eusebius and his fellows endured indeed, as not daring to contradict, being put to shame by the arguments which were urged against them; but withal they were caught whispering to each other and winking with their eyes, that like,' and always,' and power,' and in Him,' were, as before, common to us and the Son, and that it was no difficulty to agree to these. As to like, 'they said that it is written of us, Man is the image and glory of God [892] : ' always,' that it was written, For we which live are always[s] [893] : ' in Him,' In Him we live and move and have our being [894] : ' unalterable,' that it is written, Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ [895] : ' as to power,' that the caterpillar and the locust are called power' and great power

[896] , ' and that it is often said of the people, for instance, All the power of the Lord came out of the land of Egypt [897] : ' and there are others also, heavenly ones, for Scripture says, The Lord of powers is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge [898] . ' Indeed Asterius, by title the sophist, had said the like in writing, having learned it from them, and before him Arius [899] having learned it also, as has been said. But the Bishops discerning in this too their dissimulation, and whereas it is written, Deceit is in the heart of the irreligious that imagine evil [900] , ' were again compelled on their part to collect the sense of the Scriptures, and to re-say and re-write what they had said before, more distinctly still, namely, that the Son is one in essence [901] 'with the Father: by way of signifying, that the Son was from the Father, and not merely like, but the

same in likeness [902], and of shewing that the Son's likeness and unalterableness was different from such copy of the same as is ascribed to us, which we acquire from virtue on the ground of observance of the commandments. For bodies which are like each other may be separated and become at distances from each other, as are human sons relatively to their parents (as it is written concerning Adam and Seth, who was begotten of him that he was like him after his own pattern [903]); but since the generation of the Son from the Father is not according to the nature of men, and not only like, but also inseparable from the essence of the Father, and He and the Father are one, as He has said Himself, and the Word is ever in the Father and the Father in the Word, as the radiance stands towards the light (for this the phrase itself

indicates), therefore the Council, as understanding this, suitably wrote one in essence,' that they might both defeat the perverseness of the heretics, and shew that the Word was other than originated things. For, after thus writing, they at once added, But they who say that the Son of God is from nothing, or created, or alterable, or a work, or from other essence, these the Holy Catholic Church anathematizes [904] . ' And by saying this, they shewed clearly that of the essence,' and one in essence,' are destructive of those catchwords of irreligion, such as created,' and work,' and originated,' and alterable,' and He was not before His generation.' And he who holds these, contradicts the Council; but he who does not hold with Arius, must needs hold and intend the decisions of the Council, suitably regarding them to signify the relation of the

*radiance to the light, and
from thence gaining the
illustration of the truth.*

Consequum Nicaea

(Eusebius)

Consequum Nicaea

(Socrates)

Consequum Nicaea

(Sozomen)

When these things were finished, the Emperor said that this was the second victory he had won over the enemy of the Church and held a victory-feast to God. 15 (1) At the same time, the twentieth year of his rule was completed, [89] for which general celebrations took place in the other provinces. But for the ministers of God it was the Emperor himself who opened the celebrations, drinking with the reconciled and offering this, like a fitting sacrifice to God, through them; not one of the bishops was missing from the imperial banquet. (2) The event was beyond all description. Guards and soldiers ringed the entrance to the palace, guarding it with drawn swords, and between these the men of God passed fearlessly, and entered the

Such in his own words is the testimony respecting these things which Eusebius has left us in writing; and we not unfitly have used it, but treating what he has said as an authority, have introduced it here for the fidelity of this history. With this end also in view, that if any one should condemn as erroneous the faith professed at this council of Nicæa, we might be unaffected by it, and put no confidence in Sabinus the Macedonian, [167] who calls all those who were convened there ignoramuses and simpletons. For this Sabinus, who was bishop of the Macedonians at Heraclea in Thrace, having made a collection of the decrees published by various Synods of bishops, has treated those who composed the Nicene Council in particular with contempt and derision; not perceiving that he

Chapter XXI.--What the Council determined about Arius; the Condemnation of his Followers; his Writings are to be burnt; certain of the High Priests differ from the Council; the Settlement of the Passover.

It ought to be known, that they affirmed the Son to be consubstantial with the Father; and that those are to be excommunicated and voted aliens to the Catholic Church, who assert that there was a time in which the Son existed not, and before He was begotten He was not, and that He was made from what had no existence, and that He is of another hypostasis or substance from the Father, and that He is subject to change or mutation. This decision was sanctioned by

innermost royal courts. Some then reclined with him, others relaxed nearby on couches on either side. It might have been supposed that it was an imaginary representation of the kingdom of Christ, and that what was happening was 'dream, not fact.' (Homer, *Od.* 19. 547) 16 While the celebrations were proceeding splendidly, the Emperor went still further and received those who were present, magnanimously honouring every one according to his rank with gifts from himself. He transmitted the record of this Council also to those who were not present by a personal letter, which I will attach to this present account of him as a permanent record. It went like this:

thereby charges Eusebius himself with ignorance, who made a like confession after the closest scrutiny. And in fact some things he has willfully passed over, others he has perverted, and on all he has put a construction favorable to his own views. Yet he commends Eusebius Pamphilus as a trustworthy witness, and praises the emperor as capable in stating Christian doctrines: but he still brands the faith which was declared at Nicæa, as having been set forth by ignorant persons, and such as had no intelligence in the matter. And thus he voluntarily contemns the words of a man whom he himself pronounces a wise and true witness: for Eusebius declares, that of the ministers of God who were present at the Nicene Synod, some were eminent for the word of wisdom, others for the strictness of their life; and that the emperor himself being present, leading all into unanimity, established unity of judgment, and agreement of opinion among them. Of Sabinus, however, we shall make further

Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia; by Theognis, bishop of Nicæa; by Maris, bishop of Chalcedon; by Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis; and by Secundus, bishop of Ptolemaïs in Libya. [1125] Eusebius Pamphilus, however, withheld his assent for a little while, but on further examination assented. [1126] The council excommunicated Arius and his adherents, and prohibited his entering Alexandria. The words in which his opinions were couched were likewise condemned, as also a work entitled "Thalia," which he had written on the subject. I have not read this book, but I understand that it is of a loose character, resembling in license Sotadus. [1127] It ought to be known that although Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, and Theognis, bishop of Nicæa, assented to the document of this faith set forth by the council, they neither agreed nor subscribed to the deposition of Arius. The emperor punished Arius with exile, and dispatched edicts to

mention as occasion may require. the bishops and people of every country, denouncing him and his adherents as ungodly, and commanding. that their books should be destroyed, in order that no remembrance of him or of the doctrine which he had broached might remain. Whoever should be found secreting his writings and who should not burn them immediately on the accusation, should undergo the penalty of death, and suffer capital punishment. The emperor wrote letters to every city against Arius and those who had received his doctrines, and commanded Eusebius and Theognis to quit the cities whereof they were bishops; he addressed himself in particular to the church of Nicomedia, urging it to adhere to the faith which had been set forth by the council, to elect orthodox bishops, to obey them, and to let the past fall into oblivion; and he threatened with punishment those who should venture to speak well of the exiled bishops, or to adopt their

sentiments. In these and in other letters, he manifested resentment against Eusebius, because he had previously adopted the opinions of the tyrant, and had engaged in his plots. In accordance with the imperial edicts, Eusebius and Theognis were ejected from the churches which they held, and Amphion received that of Nicomedia, and Chrestus that of Nicæa. On the termination of this doctrinal controversy, the council decided that the Paschal feast should be celebrated at the same time in every place. [1128]

Chapter XXII.--Acesius, Bishop of the Novatians, is summoned by the Emperor to be present at the First Council.

It is related, that the emperor, under the impulse of an ardent desire to see harmony re-established among Christians, summoned Acesius, bishop of the church of the Novatians, [1129] to the council, placed before him the

definition of the faith and of the feast, which had already been confirmed by the signatures of the bishops, and asked whether he could agree thereto. Acesius answered that their exposition defined no new doctrine, and that he accorded in opinion with the Synod, and that he had from the beginning held these sentiments with respect both to the faith and to the feast. "Why, then," said the emperor, "do you keep aloof from communion with others, if you are of one mind with them?" He replied that the dissension first broke out under Decius, between Novatius and Cornelius, [1130] and that he considered such persons unworthy of communion who, after baptism, had fallen into those sins which the Scriptures declare to be unto death; [1131] for that the remission of those sins, he thought, depended on the authority of God only, and not on the priests. The emperor replied, by saying, "O Acesius, take a ladder and ascend alone to heaven." By

this speech I do not imagine the emperor intended to praise Acesius, but rather to blame him, because, being but a man, he fancied himself exempt from sin. [1132]

Chapter XXIII.--Canons appointed by the Council; Paphnutius, a certain Confessor, restrains the Council from forming a Canon enjoining Celibacy to all who were about to be honored with the Priesthood.

Zealous of reforming the life of those who were engaged about the churches, the Synod enacted laws which were called canons. [1133] While they were deliberating about this, some thought that a law ought to be passed enacting that bishops and presbyters, deacons and subdeacons, should hold no intercourse with the wife they had espoused before they entered the priesthood; but Paphnutius, [1134] the confessor, stood up and testified against this proposition; he said that marriage was honorable and

chaste, and that cohabitation with their own wives was chastity, and advised the Synod not to frame such a law, for it would be difficult to bear, and might serve as an occasion of incontinence to them and their wives; and he reminded them, that according to the ancient tradition of the church, those who were unmarried when they took part in the communion of sacred orders, were required to remain so, but that those who were married, were not to put away their wives. Such was the advice of Paphnutius, although he was himself unmarried,

and in accordance with it, the Synod concurred in his counsel, enacted no law about it, but left the matter to the decision of individual judgment, and not to compulsion. The Synod, however, enacted other laws regulating the government of the Church; and these laws may easily be found, as they are in the possession of many

individuals.

Chapter XXIV.--Concerning Melitius; the Excellent Directions made by the Holy Council in his Complications.

After an investigation had been made into the conduct of Melitius when in Egypt, the Synod sentenced him to reside in Lycus, [1135] and to retain only the name of bishop; and prohibited him from ordaining any one either in a city or a village. Those who had previously been ordained by him, were permitted by this law, to remain in communion and in the ministry, but were to be accounted secondary in point of dignity to the clergy in church and parish. [1136] When by death an appointment became vacant, they were allowed to succeed to it, if deemed worthy, by the vote of the multitude, but in this case, were to be ordained by the bishop of the Church of Alexandria, for they were interdicted from exercising

any power or influence in elections. This regulation appeared just to the Synod, for Melitius [1137] and his followers had manifested great rashness and temerity in administering ordination; so that it also deprived the ordinations which differed from those of Peter of all consideration. He, when he conducted the Alexandrian Church, fled on account of the persecution then raging, but afterwards suffered martyrdom.

**Nicene Statement of Faith:
Closing Words**
(Eusebius)

**Nicene Statement of Faith:
Closing Words**
(Socrates)

**Nicene Statement of Faith:
Closing Words**
(Sozomen)

**Nicene Statement of
Faith: Closing Words**
(Athanasius)

Constantine's Letter to the Churches

But the agreement of faith, assented to with loud acclamation at the great council of Nicæa is this:

Chapter XXV.--The Emperor prepared a Public Table for the Synod, after inviting its Members to Constantinople, and honoring them with Gifts, he exhorted all to be of One Mind, and forwarded to Alexandria and every other place the Decrees of the Holy Synod. At the very time that these decrees were passed by

3. "We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Son Only- begotten, first-born of every creature, before all the ages, begotten from

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible:--and in one [168] Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only- begotten of the Father, that is of

17 (1) *Constantinus Augustus to the churches. Having learnt from experience of the prosperity of public affairs how great is the grace of the divine Power I have judged it appropriate for me that my aim*

before all else should be that among the most blessed congregations of the universal Church a single faith and a pure love and a religion that is unanimous about Almighty God be observed. (2) This however could not achieve [90] an irreversible and secure settlement unless, after all or the great majority of the bishops had gathered in the same place, a decision were taken upon each of the points affecting the most holy religion. For this reason when most had been assembled, and I myself as one of you was also among those present (for I would not wish to deny that in which I most delight, that I am your fellow-servant), all topics were subject to proper discussion until the point was reached where the doctrine pleasing to the all-seeing God of al was brought to light as the basis for unanimous agreement, so that nothing remained to cause further difference of opinion or dispute about faith. 18 (1) Thereupon, since a controversy had broken out on the subject of the most holy Day of Easter,

the substance of the Father; God of God and Light of light; true God of true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial [169] with the Father: by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and on earth: who for the sake of us men, and on account of our salvation, descended, became incarnate, and was made man; suffered, arose again the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. [We] also [believe] in the Holy Spirit. But the holy Catholic and Apostolic church anathematizes those who say "There was a time when he was not," and "He was not before he was begotten" and "He was made from that which did not exist," and those who assert that he is of other substance or essence than the Father, or that he was created, or is susceptible of change.' [170]

This creed was recognized and acquiesced in by three hundred and eighteen [bishops]; and being, as Eusebius says,

the council, the twentieth anniversary [1138] of the reign of Constantine was celebrated; for it was a Roman custom to have a feast on the tenth year of every reign. The emperor, therefore, thought it to be opportune, and invited the Synod to the festival, and presented suitable gifts to them; and when they prepared to return home, he called them all together, and exhorted them to be of one mind about the faith and at peace among themselves, so that no dissensions might henceforth creep in among them. After many other similar exhortations, he concluded by commanding them to be diligent in prayer, and always to supplicate God for himself, his children, and the empire, and after he had thus addressed those who had come to Nicæa, he bade them farewell. He wrote to the churches in every city, in order that he might make plain to those who had not been present, what had been rectified by the Synod; and especially to the Church of

the Father, by Whom also all things were made; Who for our salvation was made flesh, and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the quick and dead. And we believe also in One Holy Ghost:"

"believing each of these to be and to exist, the Father truly Father, and the Son truly Son, and the Holy Ghost truly Holy Ghost, as also our Lord, sending forth His disciples for the preaching, said, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [416] ." Concerning Whom we confidently affirm that so we hold, and so we think, and so we have held aforetime, and we maintain this faith unto the death, anathematizing every godless heresy. That this we have ever thought

it was unanimously decided that it would be best for everyone everywhere to celebrate it on the same day. For what could be better for us, and more reverent, than that this festival, from which we have acquired our hope of immortality, should be observed invariably in every community on one system and declared principle? (2) In the first place it was decreed unworthy to observe that most sacred festival in accordance with the practice of the Jews; having sullied their own hands with a heinous crime, such bloodstained men are as one might expect mentally blind. It is possible now that their nation has been rejected, by a truer system which we have kept from the first day of the Passion to the present, to extend the performing of this into future periods also. Let there be nothing in common between you and the detestable mob of Jews! (3) We have received from the Saviour another way; a course is open to our most holy religion that is both lawful and proper. Let us

unanimous is expression and sentiment, they subscribed it. Five only would not receive it, objecting to the term homoousios, of the same essence,' or consubstantial: these were Eusebius bishop of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nice, Maris of Chalcedon, Theonas of Marmarica, and Secundus of Ptolemais. For,' said they since that is consubstantial which is from another either by partition, derivation or germination; by germination, as a shoot from the roots; by derivation, as children from their parents; by division, as two or three vessels of gold from a mass, and the Son is from the Father by none of these modes: therefore they declared themselves unable to assent to this creed.' Thus having scoffed at the word consubstantial, they would not subscribe to the deposition of Arius. Upon this the Synod anathematized Arius, and all who adhered to his opinions, prohibiting him at the same time from entering into Alexandria. At the same time an edict of the emperor sent Arius himself into exile, together with Eusebius and Theognis and their

Alexandria he wrote more than this; urging them to lay aside all dissent, and to be harmonious in the faith issued by the Synod; for this could be nothing else than the judgment of God, since it was established by the Holy Spirit from the concurrence of so many and such illustrious high priests, and approved after accurate inquiry and test of all the doubtful points.

from our heart and soul, from the time we recollect ourselves, and now think and say in truth, before God Almighty and our Lord Jesus Christ do we witness, being able by proofs to shew and to convince you, that, even in times past, such has been our belief and preaching." 4. On this faith being publicly put forth by us, no room for contradiction appeared; but our most pious Emperor, before any one else, testified that it comprised most orthodox statements. He confessed moreover that such were his own sentiments, and he advised all present to agree to it, and to subscribe its articles and to assent to them, with the insertion of the single word, One-in-essence, which moreover he interpreted as not in the sense of the affections of bodies, nor as if the Son subsisted from the Father in the way of division, or any severance; for that the

with one accord take up this course, right honorable brothers, and so tear ourselves away from that disgusting complicity. For it is surely quite grotesque for them to be able to boast that we would be incapable of keeping these observances without their instruction. (4) What could those people calculate correctly, when after that murder of the the Lord, after that parricide, they have taken leave of their senses, and are moved, not by [91] by any rational principle, but by uncontrolled impulse, wherever their internal frenzy may lead them? Hence it comes about that in this very matter they do not see the truth, so that nearly always they get it wrong, and instead of the proper calculation they observe the Pascha a second time in the same year. Why then do we follow those who are by common consent sick with fearful error? We would never allow the Pascha to be kept a second time in the same year. But even if that argument were absent, your Good Sense ought

followers; Eusebius and Theognis, however, a short time after their banishment, tendered a written declaration of their change of sentiment, and concurrence in the faith of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, as we shall show as we proceed.

At this time during the session of the Synod, Eusebius, surnamed Pamphilus, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, who had held aloof for a short time, after mature consideration whether he ought to receive this definition of the faith, at length acquiesced in it, and subscribed it with all the rest: he also sent to the people under his charge a copy of the Creed, with an explanation of the word homoousios, that no one might impugn his motives on account of his previous hesitation. Now what was written by Eusebius was as follows in his own words: 'You have probably had some intimation, beloved, of the transactions of the great council convened at Nicæa, in relation to the faith of the Church, inasmuch as rumor generally

immaterial, and intellectual, and incorporeal nature could not be the subject of any corporeal affection, but that it became us to conceive of such things in a divine and ineffable manner. And such were the theological remarks of our most wise and most religious Emperor; but they, with a view [417] to the addition of One in essence, drew up the following formula:-

Nicene Statement of Faith

The Faith dictated in the Council.

"We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible:"-- "And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, One in essence with the Father,

to make it the continual object of your effort and prayer, that the purity of your soul should not by any resemblance appear to participate in the practices of thoroughly evil persons. (5) It is furthermore easy to see that in such an important matter, and for such a religious feast, it is wrong that there should be a discrepancy. Our Saviour has passed on the day of our liberation as one, the day, that is, of his holy passion and it is his purpose that his universal Church be one. However much its parts may be separated in many different places, nevertheless it is cherished by the one Spirit, that is, by the divine will. (6) But let your Holiness's good sense reflect how dreadful and unseemly it is that on the same days some should be attending to their fasts while others are holding drinking parties, and that after the days of Pascha some should be busy with feasts and recreation while others are dedicating themselves to the prescribed fasts. That is the reason therefore why divine Providence intends that this

outruns true account of that which has really taken place. But lest from such report alone you might form an incorrect estimate of the matter, we have deemed it necessary to submit to you, in the first place, an exposition of the faith proposed by us in written form; and then a second which has been promulgated, consisting of ours with certain additions to its expression. The declaration of faith set forth by us, which when read in the presence of our most pious emperor, seemed to meet with universal approbation, was thus expressed:

"According as we received from the bishops who preceded us, both in our instruction [171] [in the knowledge of the truth], and when we were baptized; as also we have ourselves learned from the sacred Scriptures: and in accordance with what we have both believed and taught while discharging the duties of presbyter and the episcopal office itself, so now we believe and present to you the distinct avowal of our faith. It is this:

"We believe in one God, the

by Whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and cometh to judge quick and dead." "And in the Holy Ghost." "And those who say, Once He was not,' and Before His generation He was not,' and He came to be from nothing,' or those who pretend that the Son of God is Of other subsistence or essence [418] , ' or created' or alterable,' or mutable,' the Catholic Church anathematizes."

5. On their dictating this formula, we did not let it pass without inquiry in what sense they introduced "of the essence of the Father," and "one in essence with the Father." Accordingly questions and explanations took place, and the meaning of the

matter should achieve the proper settlement and be brought under one regulation, as I presume all are aware. 19 (1) Since therefore it was proper that the matter should be adjusted in such a way that nothing be held in common with that nation of parricides and Lord-killers, [92] and since a decent system exists, which all the churches of the western southern and northern parts of the world observe, and also some of the churches in the eastern areas, and as I consequence all have at this time judged that it is right (ad I have personally given my word that it will please your Good Sense), that what is observed with one harmonious will in the city of Rome, in Italy and all Africa, in Egypt, the Spains, the Gauls, the Britains the libys, the whole of Greece, the administrative region of Asia, Pontus and Ciclicia, your intelligence also will gladly embrace when you reflect that not only is the number of the churches in the places mentioned greater, but also that it is a supremely holy thing

Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible:--and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of light, Life of life, the only-begotten Son, born before all creation, [172] begotten of God the Father, before all ages, by whom also all things were made; who on account of our salvation became incarnate, and lived among men; and who suffered and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. We believe also in one Holy Spirit. We believe in the existence and subsistence of each of these [persons]: that the Father is truly Father, the Son truly Son, and the Holy Spirit truly Holy Spirit; even as our Lord also, when he sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, said, [173] Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Concerning these doctrines we steadfastly maintain their truth, and avow our full confidence in them; such also have been our sentiments hitherto, and such

words underwent the scrutiny of reason. And they professed, that the phrase "of the essence" was indicative of the Son's being indeed from the Father, yet without being as if a part of Him. And with this understanding we thought good to assent to the sense of such religious doctrine, teaching, as it did, that the Son was from the Father, not however a part of His essence [419] . On this account we assented to the sense ourselves, without declining even the term "One in essence," peace being the object which we set before us, and stedfastness in the orthodox view.

6. In the same way we also admitted "begotten, not made;" since the Council alleged that "made" was an appellative common to the other creatures which came to be through the Son, to whom the Son had no

for all to hold in common what seems both to be required by correct computation and to have nothing to do with Jewish perjury; (2) and to put the most important point concisely, by unanimous verdict it was determined that the most holy feast of Easter should be celebrated on one and the same day, since it is both improper that there should be a division about a matter of such great sanctity and best to follow that option, in which there is no admixture of alien error and sin.

20 (1) *In these circumstances, then, accept gladly the heavenly grace and this truly divine command; for all the business transacted in the holy assemblies of bishops has reference to the divine will.*

(2) *So once you have explained to our beloved brothers what is written above you ought now to accept and institute the stated method of computation and the strict observance of the most holy day, so that when I come, as I have long desired, to see the state of your affairs, I may be able to celebrate the holy festival which you on every*

we shall continue to hold until death and in an unshaken adherence to this faith, we anathematize every impious heresy. In the presence of God Almighty, and of our Lord Jesus Christ we testify, that thus we have believed and thought from our heart and soul, since we have possessed a right estimate of ourselves; and that we now think and speak what is perfectly in accordance with the truth. We are moreover prepared to prove to you by undeniable evidences, and to convince you that in time past we have thus believed, and so preached."

When these articles of faith were proposed, there seemed to be no ground of opposition: nay, our most pious emperor himself was the first to admit that they were perfectly correct, and that he himself had entertained the sentiments contained in them; exhorting all present to give them their assent, and subscribe to these very articles, thus agreeing in a unanimous profession of them, with the

likeness. Wherefore, say they, He was not a work resembling the things which through Him came to be [420] , but was of an essence which is too high for the level of any work; and which the Divine oracles teach to have been generated from the Father [421] , the mode of generation being inscrutable and incalculable to every originated nature.

7. And so too on examination there are grounds for saying that the Son is "one in essence" with the Father; not in the way of bodies, nor like mortal beings, for He is not such by division of essence, or by severance, no, nor by any affection, or alteration, or changing of the Father's essence and power [422] (since from all such the unoriginate nature of the Father is alien), but because "one in essence with the Father" suggests that the Son of

count, as I observe [93] that devilish savagery has by the divine power and through our actions been obliterated, while our faith and peace and concord are everywhere flourishing. God preserve you, dear brothers. (3) The Emperor sent out a text to the same effect as this letter to each of the provinces, enabling his readers to see reflected in his thinking the utter purity of his holy devotion to the Divinity.

The Emperor, delighted at his success, had by means of letters distributed rich fruit among those who had not been present at the council; and he ordered ample grants of money to be made among the congregations both in the country and in the urban areas, thus celebrating the festival of the twentieth anniversary of his accession.

23. When all were at peace, however, among the Egyptians alone the mutual bitterness remained undiluted, so that the Emperor was troubled yet again, though still not roused to anger. So with every

insertion, however, of that single word "homousios" (consubstantial), an expression which the emperor himself explained, as not indicating corporeal affections or properties; and consequently that the Son did not subsist from the Father either by division or abscission: for said he, a nature which is immaterial and incorporeal cannot possibly be subject to any corporeal affection; hence our conception of such things can only be in divine and mysterious terms. Such was the philosophical view of the subject taken by our most wise and pious sovereign; and the bishops on account of the word homousios, drew up this formula of faith. The Creed. [174] "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible:-- and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father; God of God, Light of light, true God of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father; by [175] whom all things were made both which are in heaven

God bears no resemblance to the originated creatures, but that to His Father alone Who begat Him is He in every way assimilated, and that He is not of any other subsistence and essence, but from the Father [423] . To which term also, thus interpreted, it appeared well to assent; since we were aware that even among the ancients, some learned and illustrious Bishops and writers [424] have used the term "one in essence," in their theological teaching concerning the Father and Son.

8. So much then be said concerning the faith which was published; to which all of us assented, not without inquiry, but according to the specified senses, mentioned before the most religious Emperor himself, and justified by the forementioned considerations. And as to

deference he addressed them as 'fathers' or rather as 'prophets of God', summoned them a second time, again mediated tolerantly between the same people, and again honoured them with gifts. He also announced the arbitration through a letter, and to ratify the decrees of the Council he his seal upon them. He urged them to cling to peaceful harmony and not to split and splinter the Church, but to bear in mind the judgement of God. The Emperor gave these injunctions too in a letter of his own. 24 (1) He also wrote countless other things of the same kind, and composed a great many letters. In some he gave instructions to bishops about what affected the churches of God; but on occasion he also addressed the congregations themselves, and then the Thrice-blessed would call the laity of the Church his own 'brothers' and 'fellow-servants'. (2) But there may be an opportunity to assemble these in a special collection, so as not to disrupt the sequence of our present account.

and on earth; who for the sake of us men, and on account of our salvation, descended, became incarnate, was made man, suffered and rose again on the third day; he ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead. [We believe]

also in the Holy Spirit. But those who say 'There was a time when he was not,' or 'He did not exist before he was begotten,' or 'He was made of nothing' or assert that 'He is of other substance or essence than the Father,' or that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or susceptible of change, the Catholic and apostolic Church of God anathematizes." Now this declaration of faith being propounded by them, we did not neglect to investigate the distinct sense of the expressions "of the substance of the Father, and consubstantial with the Father." Whereupon questions were put forth and answers, and the meaning of these terms was clearly defined; when it was generally admitted that *ousias* (of the essence or substance)

the anathematism published by them at the end of the Faith, it did not pain us, because it forbade to use words not in Scripture, from which almost all the confusion and disorder of the Church have come. Since then no divinely inspired Scripture has used the phrases, "out of nothing," and "once He was not," and the rest which follow, there appeared no ground for using or teaching them; to which also we assented as a good decision, since it had not been our custom hitherto to use these terms.

9. Moreover to anathematize "Before His generation He was not," did not seem preposterous, in that it is confessed by all, that the Son of God was before the generation according to the flesh [425].

10. Nay, our most religious Emperor did at

simply implied that the Son is of the Father indeed, but does not subsist as a part of the Father. To this interpretation of the sacred doctrine which declares that the Son is of the Father, but is not a part of his substance, it seemed right to us to assent. We ourselves therefore concurred in this exposition; nor do we cavil at the word "homousios" having regard to peace, and fearing to lose a right understanding of the matter. On the same grounds we admitted also the expression "begotten, not made": "for made," said they, "is a term applicable in common to all the creatures which were made by the Son, to whom the Son has no resemblance. Consequently he is no creature like those which were made by him, but is of a substance far excelling any creature; which substance the Divine Oracles teach was begotten of the Father by such a mode of generation as cannot be explained nor even conceived by any creature." Thus also the declaration that "the Son is consubstantial with the Father" having been discussed, it was agreed that this

the time prove, in a speech, that He was in being even according to His divine generation which is before all ages, since even before He was generated in energy, He was in virtue [426] with the Father ingenerately, the Father being always Father, as King always, and Saviour always, being all things in virtue, and being always in the same respects and in the same way.

11. This we have been forced to transmit to you, Beloved, as making clear to you the deliberation of our inquiry and assent, and how reasonably we resisted even to the last minute as long as we were offended at statements which differed from our own, but received without contention what no longer pained us, as soon as, on a candid examination of the sense of the words, they appeared to us to coincide with what we ourselves

must not be understood in a corporeal sense, or in any way analogous to mortal creatures; inasmuch as it is neither by division of substance, nor by abscission nor by any change of the Father's substance and power, since the underived nature of the Father is inconsistent with all these things. That he is consubstantial with the Father then simply implies, that the Son of God has no resemblance to created things, but is in every respect like the Father only who begat him; and that he is of no other substance or essence but of the Father. To which doctrine, explained in this way, it appeared right to assent, especially since we knew that some eminent bishops and learned writers among the ancients have used the term "homoousios" in their theological discourses concerning the nature of the Father and the Son. Such is what I have to state to you in reference to the articles of faith which have been promulgated; and in which we have all concurred, not without due

have professed in the faith which we have already published.

examination, but according to the senses assigned, which were investigated in the presence of our most highly favored emperor, and for the reasons mentioned approved. We have also considered the anathema pronounced by them after the declaration of faith inoffensive; because it prohibits the use of illegitimate [176] terms, from which almost all the distraction and commotion of the churches have arisen. Accordingly, since no divinely inspired Scripture contains the expressions, "of things which do not exist," and "there was a time when he was not," and such other phrases as are therein subjoined, it seemed unwarrantable to utter and teach them: and moreover this decision received our sanction the rather from the consideration that we have never heretofore been accustomed to employ these terms. We deemed it incumbent on us, beloved, to acquaint you with the caution which has characterized both our examination of and concurrence in these things: and that on justifiable grounds we resisted

to the last moment the introduction of certain objectionable expressions as long as these were not acceptable; and received them without dispute, when on mature deliberation as we examined the sense of the words, they appeared to agree with what we had originally proposed as a sound confession of faith.'

Such was the letter addressed by Eusebius Pamphilus to the Christians at Cæsarea in Palestine. At the same time the Synod itself also, with one accord, wrote the following epistle to the church of the Alexandrians, and to believers in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis. Chapter IX.--The Letter of the Synod, relative to its Decisions: and the Condemnation of Arius and those who agreed with him.

To the holy, by the grace of God, and great church of the Alexandrians, and to our beloved brethren throughout Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, the bishops assembled at Nicæa, constituting the great and holy

Synod, send greeting in the Lord.

Since, by the grace of God, a great and holy Synod has been convened at Nicæa, our most pious sovereign Constantine having summoned us out of various cities and provinces for that purpose, it appeared to us indispensably necessary that a letter should be written to you on the part of the sacred Synod; in order that ye may know what subjects were brought under consideration and examined, and what was eventually determined on and decreed.

In the first place, then, the impiety and guilt of Arius and his adherents were examined into, in the presence of our most religious emperor Constantine: and it was unanimously decided that his impious opinion should be anathematized, with all the blasphemous expressions he has uttered, in affirming that the Son of God sprang from nothing,' and that there was a time when he was not'; saying moreover that the Son of God, because possessed of free will,

was capable either of vice or virtue; and calling him a creature and a work. All these sentiments the holy Synod has anathematized, having scarcely patience to endure the hearing of such an impious opinion, or, rather, madness, and such blasphemous words. But the conclusion of our proceedings against him you must either have been informed of already or will soon learn; for we would not seem to trample on a man who has received the chastisement which his crime deserved. Yet so contagious has his pestilential error proved, as to drag into perdition Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus of Ptolemaïs; for they have suffered the same condemnation as himself. But when the grace of God delivered us from those execrable dogmas, with all their impiety and blasphemy, and from those persons, who had dared to cause discord and division among a people previously at peace, there still remained the contumacy of Melitius [to be dealt with] and those who had been ordained by him; and we now state to you,

beloved brethren, what resolution the Synod came to on this point. It was decreed, the Synod being moved to great clemency towards Melitius, although strictly speaking he was wholly undeserving of favor, that he remain in his own city but exercise no authority either to ordain or nominate for ordination; and that he appear in no other district or city on this pretense, but simply retain a nominal dignity. That those who had received appointments from him, after having been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, should be admitted to communion on these conditions: that they should continue to hold their rank and ministry, but regard themselves as inferior in every respect to all those who have been ordained and established in each place and church by our most-honored fellow-minister, Alexander, so that they shall have no authority to propose or nominate whom they please, or to do anything at all without the concurrence of some bishop of the Catholic Church who is one of Alexander's suffragans. On

the other hand, such as by the grace of God and your prayers have been found in no schism, but have continued in the Catholic Church blameless, shall have authority to nominate and ordain those who are worthy of the sacred office, [177] and to act in all things according to ecclesiastical law and usage. When it may happen that any of those holding preferments in the church die, then let these who have been thus recently admitted be advanced to the dignity of the deceased, provided that they should appear worthy, and that the people should elect them, the bishop of Alexandria also ratifying their choice. This privilege is conceded to all the others indeed, but to Melitius personally we by no means grant the same license, on account of his former disorderly conduct, and because of the rashness and levity of his character, in order that no authority or jurisdiction should be given him as a man liable again to create similar disturbances. These are the things which specially affect Egypt, and the most holy church

of the Alexandrians: and if any other canon or ordinance has been established, our Lord and most-honored fellow-minister and brother Alexander being present with us, will on his return to you enter into more minute details, inasmuch as he has been a participator in whatever is transacted, and has had the principal direction of it. We have also gratifying intelligence to communicate to you relative to unity of judgment on the subject of the most holy feast of Easter: for this point also has been happily settled through your prayers; so that all the brethren in the East who have heretofore kept this festival when the Jews did, will henceforth conform to the Romans and to us, and to all who from the earliest time have observed our period of celebrating Easter. Rejoicing therefore in these conclusions and in the general unanimity and peace, as well as in the extirpation of all heresy, receive with the greater honor and more abundant love our fellow-minister and your bishop Alexander, who has greatly

delighted us by his presence, and even at his advanced age has undergone extraordinary exertions in order that peace might be re-established among you. Pray on behalf of us all, that the things decided as just may be inviolably maintained through Almighty God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

This epistle of the Synod makes it plain that they not only anathematized Arius and his adherents, but the very expressions of his tenets; and that having agreed among themselves respecting the celebration of Easter, they readmitted the heresiarch Melitius into communion, suffering him to retain his episcopal rank, but divesting him of all authority to act as a bishop. It is for this reason I suppose that even at the present time the Melitians in Egypt are separated from the church, because the Synod deprived Melitius of all power. It should be observed moreover that Arius had written a treatise on his

own opinion which he entitled Thalia; but the character of the book is loose and dissolute, similar in its style and metres to the songs of Sotades. [178] This production also the Synod condemned at the same time. Nor was it the Synod alone that took the trouble to write letters to the churches announcing the restoration of peace, but the emperor Constantine himself also wrote personally and sent the following address to the church of the Alexandrians.

The Emperor's Letter.

Constantine Augustus, to the Catholic church of the Alexandrians.

Beloved brethren, hail! We have received from Divine Providence the inestimable blessing of being relieved from all error, and united in

the acknowledgment of one and the same faith. The devil will no longer have any power against us, since all that which he had malignantly devised for our destruction has been

entirely overthrown from the foundations. The splendor of truth has dissipated at the command of God those dissensions, schisms, tumults, and so to speak, deadly poisons of discord. Wherefore we all worship one true God, and believe that he is. But in order that this might be done, by divine admonition I assembled at the city of Nicæa most of the bishops; with whom I myself also, who am but one of you, and who rejoice exceedingly in being your fellow-servant, undertook the investigation of the truth. Accordingly, all points which seemed in consequence of ambiguity to furnish any pretext for dissension, have been discussed and accurately examined. And may the Divine Majesty pardon the fearful enormity of the blasphemies which some were shamelessly uttering concerning the mighty Saviour, our life and hope; declaring and confessing that they believe things contrary to the divinely inspired Scriptures. While more than three hundred bishops remarkable for their moderation and intellectual

keenness, were unanimous in their confirmation of one and the same faith, which according to the truth and legitimate construction of the law of God can only be the faith; Arius alone beguiled by the subtlety of the devil, was discovered to be the sole disseminator of this mischief, first among you, and afterwards with unhallowed purposes among others also. Let us therefore embrace that doctrine which the Almighty has presented to us: let us return to our beloved brethren from whom an irreverent servant of the devil has separated us: let us go with all speed to the common body and our own natural members. For this is becoming your penetration, faith and sanctity; that since the error has been proved to be due to him who is an enemy to the truth, ye should return to the divine favor. For that which has commended itself to the judgment of three hundred bishops cannot be other than the doctrine of God; seeing that the Holy Spirit dwelling in the minds of so many dignified persons has effectually

enlightened them respecting the Divine will. Wherefore let no one vacillate or linger, but let all with alacrity return to the undoubted path of duty; that when I shall arrive among you, which will be as soon as possible, I may with you return due thanks to God, the inspector of all things, for having revealed the pure faith, and restored to you that love for which ye have prayed. May God protect you, beloved brethren. Another Epistle. [181]

Constantine Augustus, to the Churches.

Having experienced from the flourishing condition of public affairs, how great has been the grace of divine power, I judged this to be an object above all things claiming my care, that one faith, with sincere love, and uniform piety toward Almighty God should be maintained amongst the most blessed assemblies of the Catholic Church. But inasmuch as I perceived that this could not be

firmly and permanently

established, unless all, or at least the greatest part of the bishops could be convened in the same place, and every point of our most oly

religion should be discussed by them in council; therefore as many as possible were assembled, and I myself also as one of you was present; for I will not deny what I especially rejoice in, that I am your fellow-servant. All points were then minutely investigated, until a decision acceptable to Him who is the inspector of all things, was published for the promotion of uniformity of judgment and practice; so that nothing might be henceforth left for dissension or controversy in matters of faith. There also the question having been considered relative to the most holy day of Easter, it was determined by common consent that it should be proper that all should celebrate it on one and the same day everywhere. For what can be more appropriate, or what more solemn, than that this feast from

which we have received the hope of immortality, should be invariably kept in one order, and for an obvious reason among all? And in the first place, it seemed very unworthy of this most sacred feast, that we should keep it following the custom of the Jews; a people who having imbrued their hands in a most heinous outrage, have thus polluted their souls, and are deservedly blind. Having then cast aside their usage, we are free to see to it that the celebration of this observance should occur in future in the more correct order which we have kept from the first day of the Passion until the present time. Therefore have nothing in common with that most hostile people the Jews. We have received from the Saviour another way; for there is set before us both a legitimate and accurate course in our holy religion: unanimously pursuing this, let us, most honored brethren, withdraw ourselves from that detestable association. For it is truly absurd for them to boast that we are incapable of rightly observing these things

without their instruction For on what subject will they be competent to form a correct judgment, who after that murder of their Lord, having been bereft of their senses, are led not by any rational motive, but by an ungovernable impulse, wherever their innate fury may drive them? Thence it is therefore, that even in this particular they do not perceive the truth so that they constantly erring in the utmost degree, instead of making a suitable correction, celebrate the Feast of Passover a second time in the same year. [182] Why then should we follow the example of those who are acknowledged to be infected with grievous error? Surely we should never suffer Easter to be kept twice in one and the same year! But even if these considerations were not laid before you, it became your prudence at all times to take heed, both by diligence and prayer, that the purity of your soul should in nothing have communion, or seem to do so with the customs of men so utterly depraved. Moreover this should also be considered, that

in a matter so important and of such religious significance, the slightest disagreement is most irreverent. For our Saviour left us but one day to be observed in commemoration of our deliverance, that is the day of his most holy Passion: he also wished his Catholic Church to be one; the members of which, however much they may be scattered in various places, are notwithstanding cherished by one Spirit, that is by the will of God. Let the prudence consistent with your sacred character consider how grievous and indecorous it is, that on the same days some should be observing fasts, while others are celebrating feasts; and after the days of Easter some should indulge in festivities and enjoyments, and others submit to appointed fastings. On this account therefore Divine Providence directed that an appropriate correction should be effected, and uniformity of practice established, as I suppose you are all aware. Since then it was desirable that this should be so amended that we should have nothing in common

with that nation of parricides, and of those who slew their Lord; and since the order is a becoming one which is observed by all the churches of the western, southern, and northern parts, and by some also in the eastern; from these considerations for the present all thought it to be proper, and I pledged myself that it would be satisfactory to your prudent penetration, that what is observed with such general unanimity of sentiment in the city of Rome, throughout Italy, Africa, all Egypt, Spain, France, Britain, Libya, the whole of Greece, and the dioceses of Asia, Pontus, and Cilicia, your intelligence also would cheerfully accept; reflecting too that not only is there a greater number of churches in the places before mentioned, but also that this in particular is a most sacred obligation, that all should in common desire whatever strict reason seems to demand, and what has no communion with the perjury of the Jews. But to sum up matters briefly, it was determined by common consent that the most

holy festival of Easter should be solemnized on one and the same day; for it is not even seemly that there should be in such a hallowed solemnity any difference: and it is more commendable to adopt that opinion in which there will be no intermixture of strange error, or deviation from what is right. These things therefore being thus consistent, do you gladly receive this heavenly and truly divine command: for whatever is done in the sacred assemblies of the bishops is referable to the Divine will. Wherefore, when ye have indicated the things which have been prescribed to all our beloved brethren, it behooves you to publish the

above written statements and to accept the reasoning which has been adduced, and to establish this observance of the most holy day: that when I arrive at the long and earnestly desired view of your order, I may be able to celebrate the sacred festival with you on one and the same day; and may rejoice with you for all things, in seeing Satanic cruelty frustrated

by divine power through our efforts, while your faith, peace and concord are everywhere flourishing. May God preserve you, beloved brethren.