

Sources of Early Christian Thought

A series of new English translations of patristic
texts essential to an understanding of Christian
theology

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The Trinitarian Controversy

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Series Foreword

Christianity has always been attentive to historical fact. Its motivation and focus have been, and continue to be, the span of life of one historical individual, Jesus of Nazareth, seen to be a unique historical act of God's self-communication. The New Testament declares that this Jesus placed himself within the context of the history of the people of Israel and perceived himself as the culmination of the revelation of the God of Israel, ushering into history a new chapter. The first followers of this Jesus and their succeeding generations saw themselves as part of this new history. Far more than a collection of teachings or a timeless philosophy, Christianity has been a movement in, and of, history, acknowledging its historical condition and not attempting to escape it.

Responsible scholarship now recognizes that Christianity has always been a more complex phenomenon than some have realized, with a variety of worship services, theological languages, and structures of organization. Christianity assumed its variegated forms on the anvil of history. There is a real sense in which history is one of the shapers of Christianity. The view that development has occurred within Christianity during its history has virtually universal acceptance. But not all historical events had an equal influence on the development of Christianity. The historical experience of the first several centuries of Christianity shaped subsequent Christianity in an extremely crucial manner. It was in this initial phase that the critical features of the Christian faith were set; a vocabulary was created, options of belief and practice were accepted or rejected. Christianity's understanding of its God and of the person of Christ, its worship life, its communal structure, its

understanding of the human condition, all were largely resolved in this early period, known as the time of the church fathers or the patristic church (A.D. 100–700). Because this is the case, both those individuals who bring a faith commitment to Christianity and those interested in it as a major religious and historical phenomenon must have a special regard for what happened to the Christian faith in these pivotal centuries.

The purpose of this series is to allow an English-reading public to gain firsthand insights into these significant times for Christianity by making available in a modern, readable English the fundamental sources which chronicle how Christianity and its theology attained their normative character. Whenever possible, entire patristic writings or sections are presented. The varying points of view within the early church are given their opportunity to be heard. An introduction by the translator and editor of each volume describes the context of the documents for the reader.

Hopefully these several volumes will enable their readers to gain not only a better understanding of the early church but also an appreciation of how Christianity of the twentieth century still reflects the events, thoughts, and social conditions of this earlier history.

It has been pointed out repeatedly that the problem of doctrinal development within the church is basic to ecumenical discussion today. If this view is accepted, along with its corollary that historical study is needed, then an indispensable element of true ecumenical responsibility has to be a more extensive knowledge of patristic literature and thought. It is with that urgent concern, as well as a regard for a knowledge of the history of Christianity, that *Sources of Early Christian Thought* is published.

WILLIAM G. RUSCH

The Trinitarian Controversy

I.

Introduction

This volume is a collection of primary texts illustrating the most crucial phase of that lengthy process by which the early Christians reached a coherent doctrine of God. The period under discussion, generally known as the trinitarian controversy, dates from around A.D. 319, the preaching of Arius, to about A.D. 419, the completion of Augustine's *On the Trinity*, although the main features of the resolution of this dispute were set by A.D. 381 with the Council of Constantinople. In the sources presented here, there can be observed an interplay of various theological understandings, as well as of personalities and politics. The Christian community did not formulate its doctrine of God as a purely theological exercise, divorced from other pressures. Nontheological factors played a significant, although in the final analysis, minor role. These documents reveal that essentially a theological process is unfolding. The church in this discussion was seeking to distinguish its faith from paganism and to affirm the salvific character of its message.

To understand what is depicted in these texts, the reader must be aware that the commencement of Christian deliberation about God predates by some two centuries the matters which reached their climax in the fourth and fifth centuries. The intention of this introduction is therefore twofold: (1) to narrate, in general terms, the significant developments prior to the year 300, and (2) to provide a context for the documents in this volume, so that they may be allowed to speak for themselves with greater clarity.

Through all the turmoil and tomes, there is one basic issue at the center of the debate: What is the relation of the divine in Christ to the divine in the Father? Or, to put the matter somewhat differ-

ently, how is the church, in an intellectually satisfying manner, to integrate the doctrine of one God, Father and Creator, inherited from the Old Testament and Judaism, with the revelation that this God had disclosed himself uniquely in Jesus and had given the Holy Spirit to the church? It will become readily apparent that there were no quick or easily accessible answers that protected both aspects of the tension: the monotheism so deeply ingrained in the biblical tradition, and the distinctiveness and divinity of the Son. The Question

THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

From the Old Testament and the Judaism of the intertestamental period, the early church accepted the conviction that God, the maker of heaven and earth, is one. On occasion it supported this teaching with reference to the Stoicism of its day, a philosophy heavily influenced by Platonism, but the dominant influence was clearly the monotheistic faith unfolded within the Old Testament and Judaism. In addition, even before the canonization of the New Testament books, the apostolic traditions and popular faith of the church were indelibly marked by the notion of a plurality of divine persons. The early catechetical and liturgical formulas refer to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Father the Creator, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

These twofold and threefold patterns are evident within the New Testament itself. The binitarian formulas are found in Rom. 8:11, 2 Cor. 4:14, Gal. 1:1, Eph. 1:20, 1 Tim. 1:2, 1 Pet. 1:21, and 2 John 1:13. The triadic schema is discovered in Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 6:11 and 12:4ff., Gal. 3:11-14, Heb. 10:29, and 1 Pet. 1:2. All these passages indicate that there is no fixity of wording. No doctrine of the Trinity in the Nicene sense is present in the New Testament. However, the threefold pattern is evident throughout, in spite of the fact that there is usually nothing in the context to demand it. The conclusion seems obvious: the idea of the triadic manifestation of the Godhead was present from the earliest period as part of Christian piety and thinking. But no steps were taken to work through the implications of this idea and to arrive at a cohesive doctrine of God. The triadic pattern supplies the raw data from which the more developed descriptions of the Christian doctrine of God will come.

THE SECOND CENTURY

The Apostolic Fathers

Immediately following the New Testament, and indeed overlapping in time with some of the latest books in the New Testament, is a number of writings known collectively as "the Apostolic Fathers." The collection includes writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Hermas, Polycarp, and Papias and the *Letter of Barnabas*, the *Letter to Diognetus*, 2 *Clement*, and the *Didache*. These works do not offer any systematic theology. They are occasional pieces, called forth by contemporary needs, which tend, often in a pedestrian way, to witness to the traditional ideas and language of the churches rather than to attempt to understand the faith. There are passages in this collection that reflect the view of one God, the Creator (1 *Clement* 8, 19, 20; *Didache* 10; *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Visions* 1.1.3). The question of the relation of the Father and the Son is not addressed, but there is evidence of the triadic schema (1 *Clem.* 46 and 58; Ignatius's *Letter to the Magnesians* 13, the *Letter to the Ephesians* 9). Christ is often called "our God," and prayer to Christ is assumed (Ignatius *Eph.* 18, 20). The Spirit is regarded as inspiring the prophets (1 *Clem.* 8, 13, 16; *Barn.* 6.14; 12.2). Christ's preexistence and role in creation and redemption are assumed (2 *Clem.* 3, 9). His divine element is understood often to be preexistent spirit, and there were even attempts to interpret Christ as a supreme angel (*Shepherd of Hermas*, *Similitudes* 8.3.3 and 9.1.1). There is no doctrine of the Trinity in the strict sense in the Apostolic Fathers, but the trinitarian formulas are apparent. The witness of this collection of writings to a Christian doctrine of God is slight and provides no advance in synthesis or theological construction beyond the biblical materials. NT

The Apologists

This is not the case with the works of the Apologists of the second century, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, and Theophilus of Antioch. Although they differ among themselves in several aspects, these authors shared a common concern to present Christianity to the Greco-Roman culture of their day in such a way as to defend Christianity against the charge of atheism. To the

educated classes of the Greco-Roman world, they insisted that the truth of Christianity is that to which the pagan philosophers pointed. In order to substantiate this viewpoint, they employed the concept of the Logos (Word), already known to Judaism and Stoicism. A special debt was owed to the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who taught that the divine Logos had spoken through the prophets and had been the subject of the theophanies of the Old Testament. This Logos also is the reason in which all human beings take part. The Greek word *logos*, which means both "word" and "reason" (rationality), allowed this double sense. According to the Apologists, Christ is the Logos, preexistent before the incarnation as the Father's mind or thought. In Christ the Logos became incarnate, but the incarnation was not the beginning of his being. As revealed in creation and redemption, Christ is the Father's expression or extrapolation. By this concept the Apologists were able to maintain both the pretemporal unity of Christ with the Father, and the Son's manifestation in time and space. They found the Stoic distinction between the *Logos endiathetos* (the immanent Word) and the *Logos prophorikos* (the expressed Word) helpful in this regard and even used this terminology. (For example, Theophilus, who was bishop of Antioch in the late second century, employed it in his *Apology to Autolycus* 22).

However, it is in the works of Justin Martyr, a pagan philosopher who converted to Christianity about A.D. 130 and was martyred about 165, that this approach is readily observable. Justin began with the idea of the *Logos spermatikos* (the seminal Word) planted in all persons incompletely and in a fragmentary manner. Before Christ, human beings had "seeds" of the Word and could reach only fragments of the truth (1 *Apology* 32.8; 2 *Apology* 8.1; 10.2). It is the Logos, Christ himself incarnate, who reveals the source and ground of these fragments of truth (2 *Apol.* 10.1). This Logos was distinct from the Father not only in name but also in number (*Dialogue with Trypho* 128.4). The Logos put forth as the offspring of the Father was with him before all creatures (*Trypho* 62.4). He is divine and God (1 *Apol.* 63.15; *Trypho* 63.5). This identification of Christ with the Logos allowed the Apologists to insist that Christianity was faith in him to whom the Old Testament witnessed

and to whom the pagan philosophers indistinctly pointed. It also offered an explanation of how God, unoriginate, eternal, and nameless, could be involved in a changeable world. For Justin, in addition to the incarnation, the Logos functioned as the Father's agent in creation and in revealing truth (1 *Apol.* 59; 64.5; 5.4; 46).

The immanent Word became the expressed Word by the act of generation or putting forth. The Apologists tried to explain this generation by the analogy of the utterance of human speech or of kindling one fire from another fire (Justin, *Trypho* 61.2; 128.3). These ideas reoccur in Tatian, a native of Assyria and a student of philosophy, who had studied with Justin (*Oration to the Greeks* 5.1); in Athenagoras, a Christian philosopher in Athens (*Supplication to Marcus Aurelius* 10.1ff.); and in Theophilus of Antioch (*Autol.* 2.10; 2.22). Thus the Logos concept enabled the Apologists to make clear the distinction between the Logos and the Father.

The Apologists were also cautious lest the monotheism of the church's faith be destroyed. All were concerned to explain that the expression of the Logos did not mean that the Father was deprived of his Word, nor did it involve a partition of the divine substance. To emphasize the essential identity of the Logos with the Father, they used the biblical image of Son or Child for the Logos, so they spoke of the Logos not as a creature but as the offspring by generation (Justin *Trypho* 62.105, 125; 1 *Apol.* 21). They considered the Logos' eligibility for the title "Son" to date from his expression from the Godhead not from his origination with the Father. They also regarded the term "Father" not a title for the first person, as would be the case in later theologians, but for the one Godhead, the author of whatever existed.

Although the Apologists had less to say about the Holy Spirit, they do bear witness to the threefold pattern. Justin coordinates the three persons referring to materials dealing with baptism and the eucharist (1 *Apol.* 61.3-12). For Athenagoras, the Spirit is the inspirer of the prophets (*Supplic.* 7.2). According to Theophilus, the Spirit is identified with Wisdom (*Autol.* 1.7). Such references reveal that the major concern of the Apologists was with the relationship of Christ and the Father and that little attention was given

to the place of the Spirit. Tatian (*Or.* 7.13) does not clearly distinguish the Spirit from the Logos. The Apologists' difficulties about the third entity of the Godhead were compounded by the confusion with the Stoic idea of a wholly immanent spirit within creation and the continuing use of "spirit" as a synonym for "deity" (Athengoras *Supplic.* 16; Tatian *Or.* 4; Theophilus *Autol.* 2.10).

The works of the Apologists divulge the lack of a technical vocabulary sufficient to describe the eternal plurality within the Godhead. Nevertheless, these authors did apprehend the distinctions. To judge the Apologists by post-Nicene theology would be grossly unfair. Isolated passages could be cited to support the notion that the Apologists taught subordination within the deity or that they failed to recognize the preexistence of Christ before his generation, but their total teaching rejects such opinions. The Apologists utilized a picture of a man putting forth his thought and spirit in external activity. This representation allowed them to recognize, although dimly, the eternal plurality in the Godhead and to show how the Word and the Spirit, truly manifested in space and time, could also be within the being of the Father. Their work was a decided contribution to theology, maintaining both the necessary distinction of the plurality and the unity. The Apologists set the future course for trinitarian theology and enabled Christianity to take seriously the presuppositions of Greek philosophy.

Irenaeus of Lyon

Irenaeus from Smyrna studied at Rome and became bishop of Lyon near the end of the second century. His theology formed a bridge between Eastern and Western churches. Building on the accomplishments of the Apologists, Irenaeus reaches a high point in theological reflection in the second century. Irenaeus's trinitarian thought is beholden to his doctrine of creation. God alone, the only Lord, Creator and Father, contained all things and caused them to exist (*Against Heresies* 2.1.1). God is uncreated, ingenerate, the first cause. Irenaeus reconciles his teaching of creation and divine transcendence with the notion of divine immanence in the world by means of the Apologists' teaching of a Logos theology. There are, however, some differences. Even before the ex-

pression of the Logos from the Godhead, Irenaeus describes him as the Son. He did not wish to be understood as teaching that the Logos became the Son of God because of the incarnation (*Her.* 3.17.4). This view may indicate a certain discomfort with the Apologists' teaching of the two-stage concept of the Logos. Irenaeus tended to approach God in two ways: (1) as he exists in his intrinsic being; (2) as he manifests himself in the "economy," the ordered process of his self-disclosure. Irenaeus prefers the idea of the Logos or Son both eternally with God and expressed (*Her.* 2.30.9; 4.20.3), rather than the Apologists' statement of God's immanent Word coming forth. He refuses to explore the means by which the Word is extrapolated, and he shows a clear dislike for the analogy of human speech as employed by the Apologists. For Irenaeus, God in his inner being is ineffably one, although containing from eternity his Word and Wisdom. In his economy God extrapolates the Son and the Spirit. Irenaeus links the Logos and Spirit in the creative process and speaks of them as God's hands (*Her.* 4.20.2ff.; 5.1.3). The Logos in the flesh displayed the true image of God, but it is the Spirit who makes it possible to receive this revelation, (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 7). For Irenaeus the Son is fully divine (*Dem.* 7), as is the Spirit (*Her.* 5.12.2). Thus Irenaeus progressed beyond the Apologists in a fuller recognition of the place of the Spirit and in his idea of economy. Still he is clearly a second-century theologian, as his picture of the Trinity discloses. There is a single personage, the Father, the Godhead itself, with his Word (reason) and his Wisdom. Not only is monotheism reaffirmed, but the real, eternal distinctions in the Godhead are stressed. Irenaeus does this by means of the idea of the economy, the ordered process of the self-disclosure of these distinctions. These distinctions, according to Irenaeus, are only completely revealed in the economy. Nevertheless, they are there from all eternity. Irenaeus's great insight was the use of this imagery to show how the Son and the Spirit disclosed in the economy as other than the Father were also one with him in his intrinsic being. This means of describing the Trinity became known as economic trinitarianism. It was to find both supporters and detractors in the third century.

THE THIRD CENTURY

Monarchianism

During the third century a backlash against the Logos doctrine occurred in the Western church. It was a movement based largely on a fear that the Logos theology endangered the unity of God. Because this reaction wished to accentuate that God was an absolute monad without distinctions within the unity, it became known as monarchianism. Modern handbooks on early Christian doctrine tend to speak of both a modalist monarchianism and a dynamic monarchianism, but among the church fathers "monarchianism" as a term was applied only to the former.

Dynamic monarchianism is another expression for adoptianism, the view that Christ was a mere man upon whom the Spirit descended. Thus, although it was a christological deviation, it was motivated by a concern for divine unity. A number of names are associated with this type of theology. Individuals who lived in Rome in the second and third centuries, Theodotus, Asclepiodotus, and Artemas (or Artemon). More important is Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, who was condemned at a synod in that city in 268. It is difficult to arrive at an accurate picture of what Paul taught. He probably held to a strict unitarian view of God, believing that Son and Spirit were merely names for the inspired person Jesus Christ and the grace given to the apostles. There are similarities between Paul's teaching and economic trinitarianism. Yet his starting point was not the unfolding of an eternal Trinity. It appears that for Paul the Logos is an impersonal communication from God, without individual subsistence so that God is one person, and the threefold distinctions refer only to abstractions except as they are used as traditional terms as Son and Spirit with reference to the man Jesus and the grace of God in the church. A possible source for Paul's thought is the sixth-century work, *De Sectis* 3.3, probably not written by Leontius of Byzantium, an anti-Monophysite theologian.

In spite of its similar aim, to safeguard the unity of the Godhead against the teaching of two Gods, modalist monarchianism is quite

different. At its simplest, it is the teaching that there is one Godhead which could be designated indifferently as either the Father or the Son. These terms did not indicate any essential distinctions; they were names to be applied to God at different times. God was a monad. There were no numerical distinctions within the monad. This position was taught by Noetus of Smyrna, who lived in Rome at the end of the second century. The sources for this information are Hippolytus, who set himself up in Rome as an antipope in the early third century (in his *Against Noetus*); and Epiphanius, the fourth-century bishop of Salamis (in his *Refutation of All Heresies*, esp. chap. 57). Noetus may have been identical with a certain Praxeas, against whom Tertullian wrote (*Against Praxeas* 5).

On a more astute and philosophical level, this form of monarchianism was expounded by Sabellius, who was in Rome during the early years of the third century. Sabellianism taught that God was a monad, expressing itself in three operations. Apparently, the Father projected himself first as Son and then as Spirit (Epiphanius *Ref.* 62.1.4ff.). This teaching suggests that Sabellius realized some of the problems of the modalism of Noetus and his disciples, and attempted to use features of economic trinitarianism to correct these difficulties. Unfortunately, there is considerable uncertainty in these matters. Most of the evidence comes from over a century after Sabellius and is often confused with the views of Marcellus of Ancyra, a fourth-century writer.

Hippolytus and Tertullian

The trinitarian teaching of Hippolytus and Tertullian can be comprehended only against the backdrop of the rise of monarchianism. Tertullian, who has been described as the father of Latin theology, was born in Carthage. He authored a long list of polemical works and ended his life as a member of the Montanist sect. Ostensibly he was hostile to Greek philosophy, but in fact he was greatly influenced by it, especially by Stoicism. Despite his view of authority as that handed down by the apostles in the rule of faith, his flexibility in treating that tradition allowed him to come to terms with the contributions of the Apologists. Over against cer-

tain dualistic views of his day, Tertullian asserted that God the Creator is one (*The Testimony of the Soul* 1; 2). But he refused to understand this in such a way as to be compatible with monarchianism. God did exist in unique solitariness eternally. Nevertheless, he had immanently his Word or reason. Here the analogy of the Apologists is utilized. Both Hippolytus and Tertullian used this image (*Noet.* 10; *Prax.* 5). Tertullian sharpens the individuality of the Word more than his predecessors. The Word is *alius* (*Prax.* 5). Like the Apologists, Hippolytus and Tertullian teach that the threefoldness of God's intrinsic being is disclosed in creation and redemption (*Noet.* 7.10.14 and *Prax.* 2). Tertullian is actually the first to introduce the Latin *trinitas* into Christian literature. The three are numerically distinct. To explain their roles he uses the Greek term *economy*. What he means by the word is not always clear. Apparently Tertullian means by the term that God's unity is subject to the disposition of the single Godhead into the Father and Son and Spirit to create and redeem. The Word is a person (*persona*) by which he means the concrete presentation of an individual, a second addition to the Father (*Prax.* 7). The Spirit is the representation of the Son (*The Prescription of Heretics* 13). Tertullian took an important step in recognizing the trinitarian distinction of the three persons. In so doing, he also made a special effort to maintain God's essential unity. The threeness of the economy is not incompatible with the unity. The distinction between the three does not involve division or separation. Images of root and its shoot, source, and river are employed (*Apology* 21.11-13; *Prax.* 8). Tertullian states that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one in substance (*Apol.* 21.12; *Prax.* 25). Threeness involves only grade or aspect of these persons of one substance. Tertullian's clear distinction between the three that are of one substance will be an important element in the Nicene formulation.

Hippolytus's ideas are similar but less fully worked out. He too speaks of one God, yet two persons by economy, and third the grace of the Holy Spirit (*Noet.* 14). The need for the threefold structure presents him with difficulties. He is hard-pressed to speak convincingly of the role of the Spirit. For Hippolytus the promi-

nence of the Holy Spirit in the liturgical setting of baptism is acknowledged, but intellectually it is beyond his ability to explain it. Some difference exists between Hippolytus and Tertullian over the use of the title Son. For Hippolytus, the sonship of the Logos begins with the incarnation; for Tertullian, it begins with the Logos' primal generation for creation (*Noet.* 15; *Prax.* 7).

Both Hippolytus and Tertullian then followed in the directions set by the Apologists and Irenaeus in teaching that the three disclosed in the economy are manifestations of a plurality comprehended somewhat obscurely in the inner being of the Godhead. They moved beyond their predecessors in their attempts to indicate the oneness of the substance of which the three were aspects, and in their recognition of the three as persons when revealed in the economy.

Novatian

During this time the theology of the church of Rome tended to be conservative and monarchian in character. Popes like Zephyrinus and Callistus in the early third century were suspicious of the Logos doctrine and of references to distinctions within the Godhead. A more sophisticated theology was developed in Rome by the presbyter Novatian, who became a rigorist and was consecrated an antipope in the year 251. Novatian's thinking showed similarities with Tertullian's, although it contained some older features. In his major writing Novatian declared the Father to be the one Godhead who through his will generated a Son, his Word. This Word existed substantially before creation (*On the Trinity* 16; 31). Novatian defined their relationship in terms of moral unity. He preserves monotheism by speaking of the priority arising from the derivation of the Son. By being begotten, the Son is God, but the derivation shows there is but one God. Here is more than a hint of subordinationism. Novatian also speaks about the deity bestowed by the Father on the Son ever reverting to the Father, and the divine attributes belonging exclusively to the Son (*On Trin.* 31). This teaching implies a mutual interpenetration. In the final analysis, Novatian avoids the notion of two Gods by subordinating the

Son to the Father or by making the Son a moment in the divine life of the Father. Little mention is made of the Holy Spirit. The treatment of the Spirit is rudimentary, a description of the work of the Holy Spirit in prophecy, baptism, and sanctification (*On Trin.* 29). The implication is made that the Holy Spirit is a creature (*On Trin.* 7; 8). Novatian's work represents a regression from the levels reached by the Apologists, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.

Clement of Alexandria

Developments of another sort were taking place simultaneously in the Eastern church, around the city of Alexandria, a leading center for the study of Platonism. Clement of Alexandria is one of the important figures involved in these events. Clement was head of the catechetical school at Alexandria around the year 200. He recognized the truth of Greek philosophy but also its partial character. Clement taught that God is transcendent, ineffable, and incomprehensible. He is a unity beyond unity and a monad embracing all reality (*The Tutor* 1.71; *The Stromata* 2.6.1; 5.65.2; 5.78.3; 5.81.3). This is the God who can only be known through his Word or Son. The Son is the image of the Father, his mind or rationality. He is the mediator between the utterly transcendent God, the One, and the world which he contains (*The Exhortation to the Greeks* 98.3; *Strom.* 5.16.3). This Word, both a unity and a plurality, contains the Father's ideas and the forces by which the Father animates the world (*Strom.* 4.156.1ff.). The generation of the Word from the Father is without beginning. The Word is essentially one with him (*Strom.* 4.162.5; 7.22; *Tutor* 1.62.4; 3.101.1). Clement speaks of the Spirit as the light from the Word who enlightens the faith. The Spirit is also the power of the Word, which pervades creation and attracts individuals to God (*Strom.* 6.138.1ff.; 7.9.4). Clement presents in a Platonic framework an image of the Trinity which he linked with the Christian triad of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Who Is the Rich Man That Is Saved?* 34.1). Understandably, Clement's trinity, although Christian in character, has a strong resemblance to the triad of Neoplatonism, the One, Mind and World Soul.

Origen

Origen in the first quarter of the third century succeeded Clement as the head of the catechetical school at Alexandria. This voluminous author, biblical scholar, and theologian moved beyond Clement in constructing a theological system that weds the church's threefold understanding of God to the categories of Middle Platonism. Origen's imaginative work represents one of the most significant episodes in the history of theology. Those who succeeded him might oppose his teaching; they were unable to ignore it. Origen began by acknowledging that God is incomprehensible, transcending being itself. God is alone and ingenerate (*First Principles* 1.1.5; 6). God is thus known only indirectly at best, by inference from the universe and the created order. God being perfect brought into existence a world of spiritual beings, souls, co-eternal with himself. Origen believes that God must always have a universe related to him, but the universe is not regarded as a second uncreated principle alongside God (*Princ.* 1.2.10; 2.9.1). It is to mediate between the unity of God and the plurality of spiritual beings that God has his Son, his express image, the meeting place of the plurality (*Against Celsus* 2.64). The relationship between God, the Father, and his Son, the Word (Logos), is eternal. Unlike the Apologists, with their distinction between the immanent Word and the expressed Word, Origen teaches that the "external" expressed relationship is without beginning. The Word's generation is eternal (*Princ.* 1.2.4). It cannot be said that "there was once when he was not," a phrase around which much debate will focus in the next century. This generation cannot be compared with any corporeal process. It is like the emergence of will from mind (*Princ.* 1.2.6). It is an act of the Father's will, a continuous exercise of will, not a single act for economy. Origen's conception of the generation of the Logos is one place where he parted company with philosophy. In Plotinus's thought, the Neoplatonist of the third century, the Mind is not generated by the purposeful will of the One.

The unity between the Father and the Word is described in vari-

ous ways: in terms of operation, a reflection of a mirror, through the analogy of the union of husband and wife (*Princ.* 1.2.6; *Discussion with Heraclides* 3). Origen realized the importance of the oneness of the Son with the Father. He wished to avoid both monarchianism and the risk of denying Christ's divinity. Origen presented the union as one of love and action. He may also have described it as a substantial union, using the word *homousios*, but this is not clear (*Fragments on the Epistle to the Hebrews* in *Patrologia Graeca* 14.1308).

At the same time, Origen wished to indicate the distinction between the Father and the Word. He insists that the Son is other in subsistence than the Father. They are two things in respect to persons (*On Prayer* 15.1; *Cel.* 8.12). The Father and Son differ from each other in *hypostasis* (*The Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* 2.2.10). Originally *hypostasis* and *ousia* were synonyms, the former Stoic and the latter Platonic, meaning real existence or essence. Although *hypostasis* has this original sense in Origen, it is often used in the sense of individual subsistence. The Father is absolutely God, in Greek *the* God, the Word is not. Thus, when the Word is addressed by the title "God" it is *theos* and not *ho theos*. Origen even speaks of the Word as a second God to stress the distinction (*Cel.* 5.39). The Son is the first of Gods; he is the archetype and model. His deity is derived from the fountainhead, the Father. The Word is the archetype because he is always with the Father (*Com. on John* 2.2.10). Thus Origen understands that the Word is God by derivation. In spite of the fact that the Word is one with the Father, he stands on a lower level in the hierarchy. As a mediator between the Father, the Word reflects him to the rational or spiritual creatures who obtain their relation to God through the Word. Here Origen is directly indebted to the Platonism of his day, especially for the view of the need for co-eternal spiritual beings (*logikoi*, whose relation to the Word parallels at a higher level the Word's relation to the Father). Origen, again in the Platonist tradition, sees the Word's derivation of deity from the Father as a continual process of contemplation. Such statements show how Origen thinks of God as being eternally broadened downward by a number of relationships from the foun-

tainhead, the Father, to rational creatures. In this scheme the Word is the mediator between the Father and many rational creatures, which are called by Origen both *logikoi* and *theoi*. Once more, Origen is drawing upon Platonic and Philonic philosophy.

Origen also speaks of the Holy Spirit in the triadic Godhead. The Holy Spirit is not a force or energy of God. He is an active, personal substance (*Fragment 37 on the Gospel of St. John*). Origen describes the Spirit as chief in rank of all things originated by the Father through Christ (*Com. on John* 2.10.75). This suggests that Origen's Trinity is conceived hierarchically. The Father's action extends to the whole universe, the Son's is restricted to rational creation, the Spirit's to those who are holy (*Princ.* 1.3.5-8). Yet Origen acknowledged that the Spirit operated in creation. The Spirit knows the Father and is one of the Trinity (*Princ.* 1.1.1-5).

It is not accurate to conclude that Origen teaches a triad of disparate beings rather than a trinity. When his Platonic background is noted, it is possible to see how he is holding to a genuine trinitarianism, although with a strongly pluralistic strain. In the final analysis, Origen's use of philosophy was always controlled by his Christian faith. Origen's greatest contribution—and here he decidedly moved beyond all his predecessors—was the teaching that the three (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are of the eternal mode of God's being and not just determined or evoked by the needs of the economy.

Origen's insight into the Christian understanding of God was of such a caliber that it was to have a lasting impact. But his theological construct was so vast and variegated that his successors often fell into the trap of emphasizing one element of his thought at the expense of other portions, and so failed to keep the required tension that Origen himself had been able to maintain. Therefore, some theologians gave prominence to Origen's insistence on the Son's essential kinship to the Father, for example, Theognostus, head of the catechetical school at Alexandria in the middle of the third century. Others, like Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, accentuated Origen's subordinationist strand. Dionysius was accused of sharply separating the Father and the Son, denying the eternity of the Son and declaring him to be a creature of a different substance

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from the Father. Because of these charges, Dionysius of Alexandria entered into correspondence with the Roman pope, also named Dionysius.

This series of letters clearly illustrates the differing ways in which Western and Eastern theology was developing. Some difference was occasioned by the use of two different languages, Latin and Greek. For example, there was misunderstanding over *hypostasis* and its etymological equivalent *substantia*. But the accents of Western and Eastern theology were caused by more than language. Western theology had for some time been characterized by a monarchian bent. Western theologians put emphasis on the divine unity. Though convinced of the reality of the distinctions within the unity, they had difficulty expressing them apart from the economy. Eastern theologians, much more than their Western counterparts, worked in an atmosphere of Neoplatonism, and so with this legacy developed an approach to the Godhead that, although it recognized the unity, highlighted the distinctions within the unity. Ultimately the issue was two differing approaches to the Christian doctrine of God. These alternate theological perceptions would be evident later in heated contention over the nature of the Christian Trinity.

Before the second half of this introduction, it is useful to summarize this survey. In retrospect it becomes patent that intense deliberation took place among Christians prior to the year 300 about their God. Some explanation of this can be found in the pressure of heretical movements, which aroused Irenaeus and Tertullian to write. The Apologists, Clement, and Origen desired to explain Christianity to their pagan neighbors to prove that it was intellectually respectable and not injurious to the Roman Empire. The curiosity of the early Christians must also be noted. They had an inclination, quite apart from heretical or secular pressures, to probe the implications of their own faith and to articulate it in as cogent a manner as possible. Thus, when the trinitarian controversy arose in the opening years of the fourth century, Christians had a heritage and an arsenal from which to draw. Indeed, in a real sense it is the previous developments outlined above, with their in-

ter tensions, that inevitably led to the outbreak of a dispute that threatened the very existence of the uniqueness of the Christian faith.

THE FOURTH CENTURY

Arius

The central figure of the controversy which so marks the fourth century was Arius, a presbyter from the parish of Baucalis in Alexandria. Basically a theological debate, eventually the dispute involved personal feuds between bishops and theologians, conflicts between traditionalism and unrestrained speculation, and the politics of Roman emperors who needed a united church to preserve a united empire. The outset of the controversy, probably in about the year 319, was caused by Arius's preaching. According to Arius's message, only God the Father is eternal and unoriginated. The Logos, the preexistent Christ, is a creature, created out of nothing, and had a beginning. Arius believed that there was when he was not—thus the Arian slogan. This means that the Logos is not eternal, he is strange to the divine nature. Indeed, Arius taught that the Logos neither sees nor knows the Father completely. The power of God then at work in Jesus is not the eternal divine power itself but a limited and lower hierarchy. The titles "God" and "Son of God" are courtesy titles. The Logos is capable of change, but God, foreknowing that he would remain good, gave him in anticipation the glory which as man, and in consequence of his virtue, he would afterward possess. For Arius, Jesus is a demigod, neither fully God nor fully man. He becomes God only in the way that every saint may be deified. Arius's teaching has antecedents in Origen's thought, but he eliminated Origen's view of eternal generation and pushed his subordination to extreme lengths. As a result, Arius blurred Christianity and paganism.

Although most Arian literature has perished, a letter of Arius to Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, written around 319 (see Chapter 2), and a letter or a confession of faith to Alexander of Alexandria, his bishop, dating from the year 320 (see Chapter 3), give his views

early in the controversy and show how he and his adherents claimed that they were teaching nothing new but following Lucian of Antioch, who died in the year 312, and the traditions of the bishop of Alexandria himself.

Alexander of Alexandria

Alexander's response to Arius can be outlined from letters written after Arius's views became known. Alexander's letter to Alexander of Thessalonica, or possibly Alexander of Byzantium, from the year 324, is an excellent source for Alexander of Alexandria's thought (see Chapter 4). Alexander was an Origenist. He held to the divinity of the Logos, eternally generated by the Father. Still he regarded the Logos as a distinct *hypostasis*. Alexander apparently thought of God as two *hypostases*, sharing the same nature. The Father alone is unoriginate, but the Son is co-eternal with the Father, since God cannot be without the Word. The Sonship of the Logos is real and natural.

Alexander of Alexandria probably wished to stay out of a theological debate, but this option was not granted to him. Thus he summoned a council, which condemned Arius and sent him into exile. As the controversy deepened between the years 321 and 324, Arius found supporters outside Egypt. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, an old friend and fellow pupil of Lucian, befriended him. Arius also secured the assistance of the influential historian Eusebius, who was bishop of Caesarea.

The Council of Antioch

By this time Constantine became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire by defeating Licinius. Constantine had been moving ever closer to Christianity, in part because he saw it as a means to unify the empire. Now he found that Christianity was in danger of splitting because of a theological question he could not understand. The emperor urged Alexander and Arius to stop their philosophical bickering and live in peace. Not surprisingly, such a plea did not settle the problem. Hosius, the theological adviser to Constantine, presided over a council held in Antioch in the early months of 325. This council was strongly anti-Arian. It censured

Eusebius of Caesarea as a follower of Arius, drew up a confessional formula which was in agreement with the position of Alexander of Alexandria, and sent out a letter announcing the resolutions of the council, and setting forth the council's faith in a creedal form. A Syriac text of this letter was discovered about 75 years ago, so it is possible to gain a trustworthy picture of what occurred in Antioch in 325 (see Chapter 5). Thus it is now known that Eusebius of Caesarea was under a condemnation from the early months of 325.

The Council of Nicaea

As a result of events in the east, Emperor Constantine decided to call a universal council of the church to settle the dispute. The synodal letter from Antioch makes mention of the synod to be held in Ancyra. But the site was transferred to Nicaea before the beginning of the council. The council was opened by Constantine in June of 325 with about three hundred bishops present, most of whom were from the east. Unfortunately, no full report of this first ecumenical council is extant. Still, it is possible to follow the main events. Probably the bishops were soon divided into three groups: Arius and his supporters; his opponents, including Athanasius the future bishop of Alexandria who came as Alexander's attendant; and a majority of Eastern bishops who wished to maintain the traditional Logos theology of the church without taking a strongly anti-Arian position. It seems that quite soon the council determined Arius's theology was unacceptable.

The creed of the council (see Chapter 6) declared that the Son is begotten and not made. The Son is true God, not "God" by way of a courtesy title. Those who believe that the Father preexisted before the Son or that the Son came into existence from nothing or is subject to change were anathematized. The Council of Nicaea clearly went on record against Arius and with the views of Alexander about the divinity and immutability of the Logos. It is not clear what the council intended to teach by the phrase "from the substance [ousia] of the Father" and homoousios with the Father. Both were unscriptural and employed with some reluctance. The latter phrase was placed in the creed by the emperor Constantine, probably with Hosius's guidance. Literally it means "of the same

ousia'' (substance). But did the council mean this in a generic sense? This is how Origen had used it, as has been indicated above, and there were parallels in other Christian authors. Or did Nicaea intend the term to describe a numerical identity of substance? The former interpretation is probably true. The word was selected at Nicaea to express that the Son was fully God. This agrees with what all the historical sources convey: The issue at Nicaea was the Son's co-eternity with the Father, not the unity of the Godhead. This would become clear in the work of Athanasius (see below). One of the assets of the word *homoousios*—and this led to its acceptance—was that different groups were able to interpret it in ways compatible with their own theology. As far as Constantine was concerned, this was agreeable. Constantine was amenable to tolerating a variety of groups, as long as they accepted his creed and each other.

In addition to the creed, the council turned to a number of problems that were divisive in the church: a settlement of a schism in the Egyptian church, the date of Easter, the status of sees, and church discipline. These canons, while not dealing with the doctrine of God, are included in this volume to show the complete work of the council (see Chapter 7).

Eusebius of Caesarea

Eusebius, with the emperor's support, cleared himself at Nicaea of the censure placed upon him at Antioch some months earlier. Eusebius was more of a historian than a theologian. His theological views reflected the subordinationist strand in Origen. For Eusebius of Caesarea, the Father was an indivisible monad beyond reality, the cause of all things, self-existent and without beginning (*The Demonstration of the Gospel* 4.1.145). The Logos, a distinct hypostasis, begotten before all ages, is the Father's intermediary for creating. The Logos has no direct contact with the Father's being. Although the Logos differs from all creatures and has the image of God, he is entitled to be called God (*Dem. Gos.* 4.2.1). But the Logos is not eternal with the Father. The unity of the Son with the Father consists of sharing his identical glory (*Ecclesiastical Theology* 3.19). Eusebius was not an Arian, but his indiscreet statements and general approach disclosed a great distance between him and

Alexander of Alexandria, and later between him and Athanasius. Therefore, to prove his orthodoxy, Eusebius at Nicaea brought forth the baptismal creed of his own church. This creed was accepted as orthodox. There is available a letter which Eusebius of Caesarea sent to his diocese soon after the council, to explain his role at Nicaea and how he was able to sign the final text of the creed (see Chapter 8 of this volume). Eusebius shares with his diocese how he, on the basis of the emperor's interpretation, could accept *homoousios* and finally the creed itself after long scrutiny. It is unlikely that all at Nicaea accepted the term in the way Eusebius did. Eusebius's implication that the creed of Nicaea was the baptismal creed of Caesarea with additions is now rejected by scholars.

Constantine and Constantius

At the council the emperor himself had spoken, and no one in the emperor's lifetime moved against his creed. In a real sense the council was a product of the emperor. The Council of Nicaea was invited by the emperor. Meetings and doctrinal discussions were in his hands. A new chapter in church and state relations had opened. The differing interpretations of what the council was teaching may have been an advantage initially, for with imperial pressure all but two bishops finally subscribed to the creed. But with the passing of time and the removal of Constantine from the scene, Nicaea's lack of clarity became a weakness.

After the council, Constantine's policy of unification appeared to be successful. Even Arians found ways to win back favor (see Chapter 9). Constantine's creed was sacrosanct, but a coalition opposed to the teaching of Nicaea moved to dispose a number of the council's supporters, including Athanasius, Alexander of Alexandria's successor who became bishop of Alexandria in 328. A number of councils were held that tried to move away from the Nicene Creed by producing moderate formulas, critical of Arianism but omitting the phrase *homoousios*. When Constantine's son Constantius, who leaned toward Arianism, ruled as sole emperor between the years 350 and 361, obvious efforts were made to undo the decisions of Nicaea. It was not until the year 381, at the Council of Constantinople, that the Nicene faith finally tri-

umphed. The tumultuous period between Nicaea and Constantinople saw the theological work of Athanasius of Alexandria and the three Cappadocian fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, who were responsible for the victory of the Nicene faith.

Athanasius

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria from 328 until his death in 373, was the great defender of the decision at Nicaea. His commitment to the faith of Nicaea was unalterable. He was able to use a variety of means to advance his cause, including theological pressure. Consistent, even cautious, he was able to distinguish the major issue from secondary concerns. Thus he could be compromising in terminology when required. One of his major accomplishments was a Council in Alexandria in 362, which recognized that what was critical was not the language but the meaning it expressed. Because of the work of this council, the confusion over the possible meaning of *hypostasis* and *ousia* was cleared up. The formula of one *hypostasis* was endorsed as a means of stating the unity of nature between Father and Son. This work enabled a great number of the moderates to come together with Athanasius and his followers and secured the final success of what Nicaea sought to preserve. Athanasius saved Nicaea. In the process, he was expelled from Alexandria five times over several decades. He was persecuted, but finally he prevailed over heretics and emperors.

For Athanasius, the major issue in the quarrel with Arius was the nature of salvation. Salvation he believed was possible only on one condition, namely, the Son of God was made man in Jesus so that we might become God. This means the Logos must be eternal, really God, who appeared in Jesus. God is Father only because he is the Father of the Son. Therefore the Son is without beginning. Eternally the Father has the Son. The Son is the eternal Son of the Father. The Father is the eternal Father of the Son. Only if they are co-eternal can Jesus, in whom the Logos is present, give us eternal life. This likeness and unity are in respect to the Son's substance. Athanasius spoke of the oneness of being between Father and Son.

Jesus can make us like God, which means, for Athanasius, make us immortal and give us eternal knowledge. Not the highest of all created beings can give us real salvation. Thus God himself must save human beings. Only Christ as true man suffering the curse of sin and as true God can overcome death. No half-God, no hero, no relative power could accomplish man's salvation. Consequently, Athanasius taught that the Holy Spirit must be as divine as Christ if he is to unite individuals with Christ. Here Athanasius moved beyond Nicaea, drawing out the implications of the Nicene statement in stating the equal status of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Athanasius's teaching and his estimate of Arius can be observed in the first book of his *Orations against the Arians*. This work also gives the text of Arius's *Thalia* (see Chapter 10). There has been some difference of scholarly opinion about the date of the composition of Athanasius's *against the Arians*. Probably a date around the years 356 to 358 is accurate for the first three books. The prevailing opinion is that book 4 is not by Athanasius.

Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa

Among the groupings of Eastern bishops formed after the Council of Nicaea was a large party of moderates. Unhappy with the term *homoousios*, they preferred such phrases as "like the Father in all things," or they spoke of the deity of the Word and the likeness of substance between the Word and Father. As time passed, this group moved closer to the teaching of Athanasius. A decisive event in this movement was the Council of Alexandria in 362. This coalition became known as the Homoiousians, from the Greek word *homoiousios* (literally "of like substance"), or more unfortunately as semi-Arians—a misleading term. Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, two of the Cappadocian fathers, whose writings are represented in this volume, came out of this homoiousian tradition. They made possible the agreements which led to the Council of Constantinople in 381. The theology—some would prefer philosophy—of the Cappadocians is complex and abstract, but it provided a formula which reunited the church. Their debt to Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought is undeniable.

They teach that the Godhead exists simultaneously in three modes of being or *hypostases*. All three have one nature, God. Subordination is carefully eliminated, but they teach that the Father is the source or principle of the Godhead. In a sense the Father causes the other two beings. To describe how the one substance can be present at the same time in three, the analogy of a universal and its particulars is used. The difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is the difference between universal and particular. Each *hypostasis* of the Godhead is set by its appropriate characteristics, just as each man represents the universal man. It should be noted that the weakness of this analogy was recognized by the Cappadocians.

Gregory of Nazianzus especially made sharp distinctions between these concepts. The idea of *hypostasis* was more completely analyzed than it had been by Athanasius. The stress is on the three *hypostases* which share the one same nature. Both Gregories speak of the divine action that begins with the Father, proceeds through the Son, and is completed in the Spirit. One identical energy passes through all three. Nevertheless, the number three is real for both these fathers. Each of the three has its special characteristic. So much emphasis was placed on the threeness that critics claimed that the Cappadocians used the term *homoousios* in only a generic sense. Such a charge does not take seriously the entire work of the Cappadocians whose contribution was great. Their view of the Trinity represented a high point with its clear teaching of the *homoousion* of the Spirit. They showed the entire Eastern church how it was possible to interpret *homoousios* in the light of *homoiousios*, and made reunion a reality in the year 381 with the Council of Constantinople. This council removed the condemnations added to the Nicene Creed, since they did not apply to the new terminology of the Cappadocians, and said more about the Holy Spirit in light of the writings of Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. At Constantinople a coherent doctrine of God with the formulation of three *hypostases* and one *ousia* was achieved. Refinements and nuances of thought were yet to occur, but the trinitarian controversy had ended. Arius and his followers were excluded. What the Christian community had rejected was clear.

In this collection two writings of the Cappadocian theologians

are included. Gregory, bishop of Nazianzus, for a short time was bishop of Constantinople. He was a leading figure at the Council of Constantinople in 381. During the previous year he delivered at Constantinople five theological orations to protect his congregation against Arianism. These sermons represent a refined discussion of the trinitarian doctrine. The third oration shows the unity of nature in the three divine persons and especially the divinity of the Logos. (This sermon is Chapter 11).

Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, the younger brother of Basil of Caesarea was a speculative theologian of the highest order. He took part in the second ecumenical council at Constantinople. Among his dogmatic works is a tract entitled "That There Are Not Three Gods," addressed to a certain Ablabius, on the question of why it is not proper to speak of three Gods when the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is recognized. (This treatise, probably written about the year 390, is Chapter 12.)

THE FIFTH CENTURY—AUGUSTINE

Even a casual glance at the authors examined here discloses a preoccupation with Eastern theologians and churchmen. This is not surprising, for the trinitarian controversy was a doctrinal contention within the Eastern church, although its implications were patent for the entire Christian community. No collection of significant patristic writings dealing with the Trinity would be complete without the work of the greatest theologian of the Western patristic church, Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa, who molded Western theology from his day to the present. Augustine was influenced by Neoplatonism. He built on the earlier suggestions of Ambrose, bishop of Milan from 374 to 397, and C. Marius Victorinus, the Christian Neoplatonist who lived in Rome in the latter fourth century. In his treatise, *On the Trinity*, composed between 399 and 419, Augustine employing these resources brought Western trinitarian thought to new heights of theological reflection. Without exaggeration Augustine must be considered one of the greatest intellectuals, not only of the Western church but of Western civilization as well. He ranks with an elite group of very few other theologians.

Like other Western theologians, Augustine was more interested in the unity of God than in the three *hypostases*. He repeatedly stated there is one God, the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are at once distinct, numerically one in substance. Augustine accepts this as a given of revelation. His starting point is the divine substance. He emphasizes the unity of the Trinity; all subordinationism is ruled out. Each of the three persons from the vantage point of substance is identical with the others or with the divine substance itself. There is one action and will of the Trinity. All persons are inseparable and so operate. The weak point in Augustine's trinitarian theology was the apparent obliteration of the several roles of the three persons. He was aware of the problem. His answer was that each of the persons possesses the divine nature in a particular way. Thus it is proper to attribute to each the role appropriate by virtue of his origin. Augustine sees the distinction in the mutual relations within the Godhead. Identical in divine substance, the Father is distinguished as Father because he begets the Son. The Son is distinguished as Son because he is begotten. The Spirit is distinguished from the Father because he is their common gift, a kind of communion of the Father and the Son. Augustine never found an adequate explanation of the procession of the Spirit. He was not able to illustrate how this procession differs from the generation of the Son. He was convinced that the Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son, the bond which unites them. For Augustine, the Spirit is the Spirit of both Father and Son. He clearly taught that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (*filioque*), the doctrine of double procession, which later would cause such heated theological struggles between the Eastern church and the Western church. One of Augustine's most original suggestions in trinitarian theology was the use of analogy, especially his analogy based on the structure of the human soul. In the work *On the Trinity*, Augustine makes clear his view that these analogies have limits. They do not prove the Trinity; the mystery is not removed. Yet they are useful. For example, Augustine speaks of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as analogous to he who loves, that which is loved, and the power of love. He also refers to the Trinity as analogous to memory, intelligence, and

will. Thus he uses the Trinity to give analogically a description of God as a person. Since God is a person, that is, a unity, all his acts toward the outside are always acts of the whole Trinity. Since the substance of all things is love—in its threefold appearance of he who loves, that which is loved, and the power of love—everything created by God has traces of the Trinity. Book 9, one of the most original parts of *On the Trinity*, is a discussion of the human mind as a created image of the Trinity. (It is included in this volume as Chapter 13.)

SUMMARY

With the Cappadocians in the east and Augustine in the west, patristic thought on the doctrine of God obtains its finished form. In one sense there has been much movement from the unrefined witness of the Apostolic Fathers to the polished, philosophically sophisticated writings of these later fathers. From another perspective the movement is not all that extreme. The threefold pattern evidenced within the New Testament itself has been preserved. Judgments on the development and final formation of the doctrine of the Trinity vary. For some it is a high point of theological and intellectual achievement that preserved the uniqueness of Christianity and allowed it to enter, and finally win, the Greco-Roman world. Others have seen the developments traced in this volume as a capitulation of the biblical revelation to a foreign system from which Christianity has still not yet escaped. Whatever position is taken in this regard, it is obvious that historical Christianity cannot be understood without a knowledge of how its doctrine of God acquired its final form in the patristic church. It is the intention of this volume to allow those writers of the early church to speak and tell their own story.

In the translations that follow, the Greek word *hypostasis* has been transliterated into English. *Ousia*, or *substantia* in Latin, has been rendered "substance." Whenever possible, biblical quotations have been identified and translated from the patristic text. Thus they should not be expected to agree with any particular translation of the Bible.

II.

Arius's Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia

(1) To a most longed-for lord, a faithful man of God, orthodox Eusebius; Arius, who is unjustly persecuted by Pope Alexander on account of the all-prevailing truth which you also protect, sends greetings in the Lord.

(2) Since my father Ammonius was coming into Nicomedia, it appeared to me reasonable and fitting to address you through him and in like manner to remind your innate love and disposition, which you have toward the brothers because of God and his Christ, that the bishop greatly pillages us and persecutes us, and invoking all things moves against us, so that he might drive us as godless men from the city. All this is because we do not agree with him when he states in public, "Always God always Son," "At the same time Father, at the same time Son," "The Son ingenerably co-exists with God," "Ever-begotten, ungenerated-created, neither in thought nor in some moment of time does God proceed the Son," "Always God always Son," "The Son is from God himself."

(3) And since Eusebius, your brother in Caesarea, and Theodotus, Paulinus, Athanasius, Gregory, Aetius, and all the bishops throughout the East, say that God without beginning exists before the Son, an anathema was pronounced against them—except Philogonius, Hellanicus, and Macareius—heretical and ignorant men, who speak about the Son. Some of them say that he is a belching, others an emanation, and still others alike-ingenerate.

(4) If the heretics should threaten us with myriads of deaths, we are not able even to hear these impieties.

But what do we say and think? What have we taught and what

do we teach? That the Son is not unbegotten or a portion of the unbegotten in any manner or from any substratum, but that by the will and counsel of the Father he subsisted before times and ages, full of grace and truth, God, only-begotten, unchangeable.

(5) And before he was begotten or created or defined or established, he was not. For he was not unbegotten. But we are persecuted because we say, "The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning." Because of this we are persecuted because we say, "The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning." We are persecuted because we say, "He is from nothing." But we speak thus inasmuch as he is neither part of God nor from any substratum. On account of this we are persecuted. You know the rest. I pray that you are strong in the Lord, recalling our afflictions, fellow pupil of Lucian, truly "Eusebius."

III.

Arius's Letter to Alexander of Alexandria

(1) The presbyters and deacons send greetings in the Lord to our blessed pope and bishop, Alexander.

(2) Our faith, from our ancestors, which we have learned also from you, is this. We know one God—alone unbegotten, alone everlasting, alone without beginning, alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone master, judge of all, manager, director, immutable and unchangeable, just and good, God of Law, Prophets, and New Testament—who begot an only-begotten Son before eternal times, through whom he made the ages and everything. But he begot him not in appearance but in truth, having submitted him to his own will, an immutable and unchangeable perfect creature of God, (3) but not as one of the creatures—an offspring, but not as one of those born—nor as Valentinus decreed that the offspring of the Father is an emanation, nor as Manes propounded that the offspring of the Father is part of the same substance, nor as Sabellius, who divides the monad, says "Father-and-Son," nor as Hieracas believes a light from a light as a lamp divided into two; nor is he the one who was before, later begotten or created into a Son as you yourself also, Blessed Pope, very often have forbidden throughout the midst of the church and in council those who teach these things. But, as we say, he was created by the will of God before times and ages, and he received life, being, and glories from the Father as the Father has shared them with him. (4) For the Father, having given to him the inheritance of all, did not deprive himself of those things which he has in himself without generation, for he is the source of all. Thus there are three *hypostases*. God being the cause of all is

without beginning, most alone; but the Son, begotten by the Father, created and founded before the ages, was not before he was begotten. Rather, the Son begotten timelessly before everything, alone was caused to subsist by the Father. For he is not everlasting or co-everlasting or unbegotten with the Father. Nor does he have being with the Father, as certain individuals mention things relatively and bring into the discussion two unbegotten causes. But God is thus before all as a monad and cause. Therefore he is also before the Son, as we have learned from you when you preached throughout the midst of the church.

(5) Therefore, insofar as he has from God being, glories, and life, and all things have been handed over to him, thus God is his cause. For he, as his God and being before him, rules him. But if "from him" [Rom. 11:36] and "from the womb" [Ps. 110:3] and "I came from the Father and I come" [John 16:28] are thought by some to signify that he is a part of him and an emanation, the Father will be according to them compounded, divided, mutable and a body, and, as far as they are concerned, the incorporeal God suffers things suitable to the body.

I pray that you are well in the Lord, Blessed Pope.

Arius, Aeithales, Achillas, Carpones, Sarmates, and Arius—presbyters.

Euzoius, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius, Gaius—deacons.

Bishops Secundus of Pentapolis, Theonas of Libya, and Pistus.

IV.

Alexander of Alexandria's Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica

*To Alexander, a most honored brother
united in the soul, Alexander sends
greetings in the Lord.*

(1) The ambitious and covetous calculation of rascally men has produced plots against the apparently greater dioceses. Through intricate pretenses such individuals are attacking the orthodox faith of the church. Driven wild by the devil at work in them for pleasures at hand, they skipped away from every piety and trampled on the fear of God's judgment. (2) It was necessary for me who am suffering to make clear to Your Reverence these matters so that you might be on guard against such persons, lest some of them dare to come even into your dioceses, either through themselves (for cheats are equal to dissemble for deceit) or through basely refined rescripts, which are able to snatch away a person intent on a simple and pure faith.

(3) At any rate, Arius and Achillas have just now entered into a conspiracy, and they have revealed the covetousness of Colluthus, to a much worse degree than even he himself. For Colluthus in bringing charges against them found an excuse for his own ambitious course of action. But they, when they saw him making Christ a source of gain, were not patient to remain as subjects of the church; after constructing for themselves robbers' caves, they held in them incessant assemblies, slandering Christ and us by night and day. (4) They denounced every pious apostolic doctrine; they organized in a Jewish manner a work group contending against Christ. They deny the divinity of our Savior, and proclaim him equal to all. Singling out every expression of his economy for

salvation and of his humiliation for our sake, they attempt from them to bring together the proclamation of their own impiety, and from the beginning they turn away from expressions of his divinity and from words of his indescribable glory with the Father. (5) Confirming the impious doctrine of the Greeks and Jews about Christ, as much as possible they pursue praise for themselves. They undertake all those things for which others laugh at us, arousing daily strife and persecutions. They organize this court action through an accusation of disorderly women, whom they have led into error. They are tearing Christianity into pieces by the indecent running around of their young women on every street. The seamless robe of Christ which the executioners resolved not to divide, they dared to split. (6) Therefore, after we understood what was befitting their life and unholy attempt—and we did this slowly because it was concealed—we expelled them altogether from the church that worships Christ's divinity.

(7) And by running to fellow ministers of one mind with us, they attempted to turn them against us. They dissembled a reputation under the show of peace and unity, but in truth they were eager to carry certain of the ministers away into their disease by fair words, and they requested from them rescripts that were too wordy, so that by reading them, in addition to those deceived by them, they would make them both unrepentant in those things in which they were mistaken and destroyed in impiety. This they did on the grounds that they have bishops who agree and are of one mind with them. (8) They do not confess to them those things which they wickedly taught and effected, on account of which they were expelled by us, but they either hand them on in silence or deceive, obscuring them with fabricated words and writings.

(9) Concealing their ruinous teaching with sermons that are too persuasive and of low quality, they seize the person involved in deceit. They do not even desist from slanderous our orthodox faith in the presence of everyone. So it happens that certain persons subscribing to their writings admit them into the church. I think that the great slander belongs to our fellow ministers who allow this—for the apostolic rule does not assent to this—who thereby inflame slanderous action against Christ by those who oppose us.

(10) For this reason, with no delay, I aroused myself, beloved, to make clear to you the unbelief of those who say, "There was once when the Son of God was not" and "He who before was not, later came into existence; and when he came into existence, he became as every human being is by nature." They say, "For God made all things from nothing," including even the Son of God with the creation of all rational and irrational creatures. In accord with this, they even say that he is of a mutable nature, capable of both virtue and evil, and with their supposition "from nothing" they destroy the divine Scriptures' witness that he always is, which Scriptures indicate the immutability of the Word and the divinity of the Wisdom of the Word, which is Christ. The wretches state, "Then we too are able to become sons of God, just as he." For it was written, "I have begotten and raised up sons" [Isa. 1:2]. (12) And when they add the statement from the text "But they rejected me," which does not belong to the nature of the Savior, who is of an immutable nature, they abandon every reverence. They say that God, knowing about him by foreknowledge and prevision, would not reject him and chose him from all. (13) For he does not have by nature something special from other sons (for they say that no one is by nature Son of God), nor does he have some distinctive property in relation to God, but he, being of a mutable nature, because of the diligence of his manners and not rejecting his training for the inferior status—he was chosen. (14) As if both a Paul and a Peter would persist at improvement, then their sonship would differ in no way from his. To explain this crazy teaching, they act insultingly toward Scripture and propose the passage in the Psalms about Christ which reads, "You have loved righteousness and hated injustice; on account of this, God, your God, anointed you with the oil of great joy beyond your partners" [Ps. 45:7].

(15) Therefore, concerning the fact that the Son of God came into existence from nothing and that not was there once when he was not, John the evangelist instructed sufficiently, writing about him, "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" [John 1:18]. For the divine teacher in foresight shows that the two things, the Father and the Son, are inseparable from one another. There he specified that he is in the bosom of the Father. (16) And

in regard to the fact that the Word of God is not numbered with those who come into existence from nothing, the same John declares that all things came into existence through him [John 1:3]. For John makes clear the Word's distinctive *hypostasis*, saying, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things came into existence through him, and without him nothing came into existence" [John 1:1,3]. (17) If all things came into existence through him, how is it that he who gave being to the ones who came into existence once was not? For the Word, that which makes, is not defined so as to be of the same nature as those who came into existence, if he was in the beginning and all things came into existence through him and he made them from nothing. (18) For that which is and is exceedingly aloof seems opposite to those who came into existence from nothing. (19) This shows that no distance exists between the Father and Son, and that the soul is not able, as far as any thought is concerned, to form an image of this relationship of Father and Son. But the fact that the universe was fashioned from nothing has a newer *hypostasis* and a fresh origin, since all things received such origination by the Father through the Son. Since the most orthodox John saw that "was" is far from the Word of God and raised high beyond the thought of originated things, he would not speak of the Word's origin and creation, and he did not dare to specify in equivalent syllables the maker with those who came into existence—and not because the Son is unbegotten, for the Father is the one unbegotten, but because the indescribable *hypostasis* of the only-begotten God is beyond the sharpened apprehension of the evangelists, and perhaps of the angels. I do not think that those persons who dare to inquire about this, as far as these matters, give thought for the orthodox faith, because they are not willing to hear "Seek not that which is too difficult for you, and do not inquire about that which is too high for you" [Ecclus. 3:21]. (20) For if the knowledge of many things incomparably more imperfect than this is hidden with regard to human apprehension—such thoughts are in Paul "which things God has prepared for those who love him, eye knew not and ear heard not, and have not entered into the heart of man" [1 Cor. 2:9], and God said to Abraham that the stars are not able to be

counted [Gen. 15:5], and still he says, "The sands of the sea and drops of rains, who will count them?" [Ecclus. 1:2]—how does anyone meddle with the *hypostasis* of the Word of God unless he happens to be seized with a melancholic disposition? (21) Concerning this, the prophetic Spirit says, "Who will describe his generation?" [Isa. 53:8]. Thus even our Savior himself, in showing kindness to those who were the pillars of the whole world, was eager to rid them of the knowledge of this knowledge. Therefore he said to all of them that it was beyond nature for them to apprehend this, and that the knowledge of this most divine mystery is the Father's alone. He said, "No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" [Matt. 11:27]. I think that concerning this the Father said, "My mystery is for me" [Isa. 24:16]. (22) But the phrase "from nothing" shows at once that it is crazy to think that the Son came into existence from nothing with the temporal purpose. This is true even if silly individuals are ignorant of the madness of their own voice. The expression "he was not" is necessarily in reference either to time or to some interval of the age. (23) Therefore it is true that all things came into existence through him; it is clear that every age, time, interval, and "when," in which the expression "he was not" is found, came into existence through him. How is it not incredible to say that once he was not, he who made times, ages, and seasons, with which "he was not" is united? It is incomprehensible and totally ignorant to state that the cause of anything having come into existence is itself later than its generation.

(24) For according to them, that interval preceded the Wisdom of God which fashioned all things—an interval in which they say that the Son was not begotten by the Father. Thus, according to them, Scripture played false in proclaiming that he is the firstborn of every creature [Col. 1:15]. (25) Then in harmony with this teaching Paul shouts in his loudest voice, saying about him, "Whom he placed as heir of all through whom he also made the ages" [Heb. 1:2] but also, "In him all things were created, those in heaven and those on earth, and seen and unseen, whether principalities or powers or dominions or thrones, all things were created through him and for him, and he himself is before all things" [Col.

1:16-17]. (26) Therefore, since the argument "from nothing" seems most impious, it is necessary that the Father is always the Father. But he is Father of the always present Son, on account of whom he is called Father; and with the Son always present with him, the Father is always perfect, unfailing in goodness, who begot the only-begotten Son not temporally or in an interval or from nothing. (27) Why is it not unjust to say that once the Wisdom of God was not—the Wisdom who says, "I was with him as one united to him, I was the one in whom he rejoiced" [Prov. 8:30]—or that once the power of God was not, or once his Word was mutilated, or any other things from which the Son is known and the Father is designated? To say that the brightness of the glory is not, destroys completely the archetypal light of which it is the brightness. And if the image of God was not always, it is clear that he whose image it is, is not always. (28) But also with the nonexistence of the express image of the *hypostasis* of God, he who is imaged by him is destroyed. Thus it is possible to see that the Sonship of the Savior has nothing in common with the sonship of the others. (29) Just as his inexpressible *hypostasis* has been shown in incomparable excess to excel all with whom he himself has been granted being, so that his sonship, possessing by nature his paternal divinity, differs by an unmentionable excess from those who have been adopted as sons through him by adoption. He possesses an immutable nature, being perfect and in want of nothing, but they who are subject to change in either of two ways need assistance from him. (30) Why might the Wisdom of God be able to advance, or what might absolute truth be able to add? Or how might God the Word be able to be improved, or life or the true light? But if this is so, by how much does a great occurrence beyond nature happen, namely, that wisdom at some time becomes capable of folly, or that the power of God is connected with weakness, or that reason is dimmed by the absence of reason, or that darkness is mingled with true light? The apostle states of his own accord, "What is there in common between light and darkness, or what is there between Christ and Belial?" [2 Cor. 6:14-15]. Solomon declares that as far as any thought, it would be impossible that the ways of a snake be found on a rock [Prov.

30:19], which according to Paul is Christ [1 Cor. 10:4]. But they, men and angels, being his creatures, also received blessings to advance in virtues, disciplined by his customary commands so as not to sin. (31) Therefore our Lord, being Son of the Father by nature, is worshiped. And those who have put off the spirit of slavery, from acts of virtue and progress, and who received the spirit of adoption as sons, become sons by adoption being shown a kindness by the Son, who is Son by nature.

(32) Therefore Paul made known his legitimate, distinctive, essential, and special sonship, saying about God, "... Who did not spare his own son but delivered him for us" (who are clearly not sons by nature) [Rom. 8:32]. (33) For to make a distinction between those who are not his own, Paul said that he was his own Son. And in the Gospel, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" [Matt. 3:17]. In the Psalms the Savior says, "The Lord said to me, 'You are my son'" [Ps. 2:7]. Explaining the true Sonship, he indicates that there are not some other legitimate sons besides himself. (34) What does the phrase "from the womb before morning I begot you" [Ps. 110:10, LXX] indicate? Is it not plainly the essential sonship of the paternal birth, which obtains this not by attention to manners and practice of progress but by the characteristic property of nature? But that the adoption of the rational ones as sons is not according to nature but by aptitude of manners and God's gift, and liable to change, the Word knows, "for the sons of God having seen the daughters of men took them to themselves as wives" etc. [Gen. 6:2], and we were taught that God spoke through Isaiah, "I have begotten sons and exalted them, but they rejected me" [Isa. 1:2].

(35) Although I am able to say many things, beloved, I pass them by, thinking that it is burdensome to remind teachers of one mind of more items. For you yourselves, taught by God, are not ignorant that the teaching, which has just now risen up against the church's piety, is of Ebion and Artemas and is an emulation of Paul of Samosata's teaching at Antioch. He was excommunicated from the church by a synod and judgment of all the bishops. (36) Lucian, who succeeded him, remained excommunicated from three bishops during many years. Now among us have grown up

those "from nothing" who drained the dregs of the impiety of Ebion, Artemas, and Paul: their hidden offsets, I mean Arius, Achillas, and the assembly of rogues with them. (37) The three bishops in Syria—I do not know how they were appointed—through agreement with them inflamed matters even more. Concerning their judgment, let it be referred to your examination. They keep in their memory statements about the Savior's sufferings, humblings, emptying, and so-called poverty, which by addition the Savior accepted on our account. They quote these as evidence for impugning his highest and essential divinity; they forget the words indicating his essential glory, nobility, and dwelling with the Father. "I and the Father are one" [John 10:30]. (38) The Lord says this, not proclaiming himself the Father or explaining that the two natures in the *hypostasis* are one, but saying that the Son of the Father is disposed by nature accurately to save the paternal likeness. Thus he took from his nature an impression of his likeness in all regards and is an unchangeable image of the Father and can express the image of the archetype. (39) The Lord made this plain to Philip, who was desiring then to see—the Lord to whom Philip said, "Show us the Father"—by saying, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father" [John 14:9], just as if the Father is seen through a spotless and living mirror of his divine image. (40) The most holy ones say the same thing in the Psalms: "In your light we shall see light" [Ps. 36:9]. Therefore, "He who honors the Son, honors the Father" [John 5:23], and fairly. For every impious statement dared to be said against the Son has a reference against the Father.

(41) And what, in the things I am about to write, hereafter is wondrous, beloved, if I shall declare the false accusations against me and our most pious people? For drawn up against the divinity of the Son of God, they do not refrain from speaking unpleasant insults against us. Nor do they think certain of the ancients are worthy to be compared with themselves, nor do they suffer to be equal to teachers with whom we have been associated from childhood. But they suppose that not even one of all the present fellow ministers has a part of wisdom. They say that they only are wise, prudent, and discoverers of doctrines, and that to them alone have

been disclosed those very things which are disposed by nature to come into consideration of no one else under the sun.

(42) O unholy, blind, and excessive madness, melancholic, excited, empty boasting and Satanic arrogance that has leaped into their unholy souls. (43) The devout lucidity of the ancient Scripture has not stopped them, nor has the piety about Christ agreed to by their fellow ministers impaired their audaciousness against him. Not even the evil spirits suffer their profaneness, for they shun saying a slanderous word against the Son of God. (44) Therefore, according to the ability present in us, let these things be supplied to those who have thrown dust on Christ with boorish boasting and have attempted to slander our piety for him. The discoverers of silly stories say that we, turning away from the impious and unscriptural slander against Christ that he is "from nothing," teach two unbegotten beings. These uneducated persons say that it is necessary that there be one of these two alternatives: either to think that he is "from nothing" or to say that certainly there are two unbegotten beings. These unpracticed persons do not know that great is the distance between an unbegotten Father and those created by him from nothing as both rational and irrational. (45) The only-begotten nature is in the middle of these, the nature by which the Father of the Word of God made all things from nothing, the Word being of the Father, of whom it was written as the Lord himself bore witness saying, "He who loves the Father loves also the Son begotten from him" [1 John 5:1].

(46) Thus concerning this, we believe—as it seems best to the apostolic church—in one unbegotten Father, who of his being has no cause, who is immutable and unchangeable, always according to the same things in the same state, neither receiving progress nor diminution, who is giver of the Law, Prophets, and Gospels, who is head of patriarchs, apostles, and all the saints; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten not from nothing but from the Father who is, not according to the likenesses of bodies by dissections or emanations from divisions, as it appears to Sabellius and Valentinus, but inexplicably and indescribably, according to him who said, as we set forth above, "Who will describe his generation?" [Isa. 53:8], since his *hypostasis* happens

to be beyond investigation by every originated nature, just as the Father himself is beyond investigation because the nature of rational ones does not allow the knowledge of the divine generation by the Father. (47) Men moved by the Spirit of truth need not learn these things from me, since the voice of Christ echoes in us and anticipates us, teaching, "No one knows who the Father is except the Son, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father" [Matt. 11:27]. We have learned that the Son is immutable and unchangeable, as the Father, and self-sufficient and perfect like the Father, wanting only his unbegotten character. He is an exact and identical image of the Father. It is clear that the image contains all things by which the greater likeness exists, as the Lord himself teaches, saying, (48) "My Father is greater than I" [John 14:28]. According to this, we also believe that the Son always is from the Father. "For he is the brightness of his glory and image of the Father's *hypostasis*" [Heb. 1:3]. But no one should take the "always" as a reference to the supposition that he is unbegotten—as those who are blinded in the faculties of their minds think—for "he was" or "always" or "before the ages" are not the same thing as unbegotten (49) But whatever the thought men will be eager to form as a word, it does not explain unbegotten (as I believe that you understand thus, and I have confidence in your orthodox statement concerning all these things)—these things in no way explain the unbegotten. (50) It seems as if these names are an extension of times, because they are not able to signify worthily the divinity of the only-begotten and, as it were, his being from the beginning. Holy men, according to the ability of each, struggle to manifest the mystery and request forgiveness from their hearers by the reasonable defense of saying, "... As far as those things which we have attained." (51) But if these men, who say that the things known in part are destroyed, expect something beyond human ability, some greater words through lips, it is clear that "he was," "always," and "before ages"—whatever they might be, they are not the same as the unbegotten—fall far short of the desired intent. (52) Therefore the characteristic high status must be preserved for the unbegotten Father by saying that no one is the cause of his being. But the befitting honor must be assigned to the Son by

assigning to him generation without beginning from the Father. ^{generation with beginning} Just as we anticipated, we assign to him worship, only piously and religiously stating in regard to him "he was," "always," and "before ages," not removing his divinity but ascribing his perfect likeness in all things to the image and impress of the Father, and thinking to allow to the Father alone as a characteristic property the unbegotten, which even the Savior himself said, "My Father is greater than I" [John 14:28].

(53) But in addition to this pious faith about the Father and the Son, we confess one Spirit, as the divine Scriptures teach us, the Spirit who moved the holy men of the Old Testament and the divine teachers of the Testament called new; and we also confess one only catholic and apostolic church, indestructible always, even if the whole world would wish to combat it, and victorious over every most impious revolt of the heterodox. So we are of good courage when the Master of the church establishes it, shouting, "Be confident, I have conquered the world" [John 16:33]. (54) After this, we know the resurrection of the dead of which our Lord Jesus Christ became the firstfruit, truly having borne a body, and not in appearance, from Mary the God-bearing, "at the end of the ages for the removal of sin" [Heb. 9:26], having resided in the race of men, crucified, and died. But a lessening of his divinity did not occur on account of these things; he was taken up into heaven, and he "sat at the right hand of the Majesty" [Heb. 1:3].

(55) I have noted these things in part in the letter, having thought, and said, that it is burdensome to write down each thing in detail, because these things do not escape your holy attention. These things we teach, these things we proclaim, these are the apostolic doctrines of the church, for which we will even die. We think less of those who would force us to deny them, and even if they force us by tortures we would not be dissuaded from our hope in them. (56) Those around Arius and Achillas, who became hostile to these doctrines, and those with them who are enemies of the truth, have been expelled from the church. They became aliens to our pious teachings. As the blessed Paul said, "If anyone preaches to you contrary to that which you received, let them be accursed even if he should pretend to be an angel from heaven" [Gal.

1:9] and "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not apply himself to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and his teaching which is in accord with piety, he is arrogant, knowing nothing. . . ." [1 Tim. 6:3-4]. (57) Therefore let no one of you receive them condemned and separated from the brotherhood or support their statements or writings. The cheats falsify everything; they never speak with truth. (58) They go about the cities, eager to do nothing without the pretext of friendship and in the name of peace to give and receive letters through hypocrisy and flattery, so that they may lead astray the few women deceived by them and laden with sins etc. [cf. 2 Tim. 3:6].

(59) Therefore, beloved and brothers united in soul, avoid those who dared such things against Christ, who tear Christianity to pieces in public, who strive to parade it before courts of justice, who as much as possible aroused persecution on us in peace, and who cut the very sinews of the ineffable mystery of Christ's generation. Become confederates against their crazy daring, as our fellow ministers who now annoyed have written to me against them, and have subscribed to the document. I have sent these things through my son Apion, the deacon, to you, that is, you of all Egypt and Thebais, and of Libya, Pentapolis, Syria, and even Lycia, Pamphylia, Asia, Cappadocia, and the other neighboring countries, of which in like manner I trust that by you they are received. (60) I have provided many remedies for those who have been deceived. This remedy against their spells has been found by the laity led astray by them, when they are eager to come through this to repentance, to trust in the approvals of our fellow ministers. Greet one another with the brotherhood which is with you. I pray that you are strong in the Lord, beloved, that I may profit from your devout soul.

These are the heretics condemned and separated from the church, from the presbyters Arius, Achillas, Aeithales, Sarmates, Carpones, another Arius, and from the deacons Gaius, Euzoius, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius.

V.

The Synodal Letter of the Council of Antioch, A.D. 325

*A rescript of those items written by the Synod,
which gathered at Antioch, to Alexander
the bishop of Thessalonica*

(1) To Alexander, holy and united in soul with us, a beloved brother and fellow minister; Hosius, Eustathius, Amphion, Bassianus, Zenobius, Piperius, Salamanes, Gregory, Magnus, Peter, Longinus, Manicius, Mocimus, Apapius, Macedonius, Paul, Bassianus, Seleucus, Sopatros, Antiochus, Macarius, Jacob, Hellanicus, Nicetas, Archelaus, Macrinus, Germanus, Anatolius, Zoilus, Cyril, Paulinus, Aetius, Moses, Eustathius, Alexander, Eirenaius, Rabbulas, Paul, Lupus, Nicomachus, Philoxenus, Maximus, Marinus, Euphantion, Tarcondimantus, Eirenicus, Peter, Pegasius, Eupsychius, Asclepius, Alpheius, Bassus, Gerontius, Hesychius, Avidius, and Terentius send greetings in the Lord.

(2) Since the catholic church in every place is one body, even if in different places there might be dwellings of congregations, just as members of the whole body, it is suitable to your love to know the things moved and done by me and our holy brothers, fellow ministers united in soul with us. Thus you also, just as if present in the common spirit with us, could speak and act in common about those things determined and done by us soundly and according to the law of the church. (3) For after I came into the church of the Antiochenes and saw the church in much disorder with weeds because of the teaching of some and in discord, it seemed to me to be good that such conditions be thrown off and repelled not by me alone; rather, it seemed necessary to urge the involvement of those united in soul with us and fellow ministers, those especially near

the matter, which is pressing and urgent to our brothers—those from Palestine and Arabia, and from Phoenicia and Coelesyria, from Cilicia and some from Cappadocia—so that after we examined and reviewed matters with common reasoning we could finally determine the matters of the church, for the city is peopled by many and just individuals. (4) Therefore, when God's grace brought us together in the diocese in Antioch, we examined and took trouble over matters common, helpful, and useful to the church of God. We discovered especially much disorder, because in many cases the law of the church had been little esteemed and scorned, and in the interval the canons were entirely put to an end by individuals of the world. (5) Since a synod of bishops was hindered from being assembled in places of these regions, it seemed good and just that that which is of the highest priority of all, exceeding all others, be examined, rather than the entire mystery of faith in us. I mean the thing which concerns the Savior of us all, the "Son of the living God" [Matt. 16:16]. (6) Since our brother and fellow minister, the honored and beloved Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, had excommunicated from the church some of his presbyters, those around Arius, because of the blasphemy they incited against our Savior, although those presbyters were able to lead into error some individuals by their impious teaching—because of this it seemed good to the holy synod that this matter be examined just so when the major item of the mysteries was resolved, as far as it was in our power, and then all the remaining matters could be examined individually in turn. (7) And then, assembled in one place, with some erudite brothers present, we spoke at length about the faith of the church, which we had been taught by the Scriptures and apostles and which had been received from the fathers. We brought into the discussion the actions of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, against those with Arius, so that if some individuals appeared ruined by the teaching opposite to these actions they might become estranged from the church. Thus they would not be able, by remaining within the church, to seduce some of the simpler persons.

(8) Therefore the faith put forth by spiritual men, who do not think it is just to live or reflect according to the flesh but who were

trained in the Spirit by the holy writings of divinely inspired books, is as follows: to believe in one God, Father all-sovereign, incomprehensible, immutable, and unchangeable, provider and guide of all, just, good, maker of heaven and earth and all that is in them, Lord of the Law and Prophets and of the New Covenant; and (9) in one Lord Jesus, only-begotten Son, not begotten from nothing but from the Father, not as made but as properly an offspring, begotten ineffably and indescribably, wherefore only the Father who begot and the Son who was begotten know; for no one knows the Father except the Son, or the Son except the Father [cf. Matt. 11:27], who always is and not at a prior time was not. (10) We learned from the holy Scriptures that he alone is the image, not clearly as if he was unbegotten from the Father, nor by adoption, for it is impious and blasphemous to say this. The Scriptures say that he was begotten properly and truly as Son, so that we believe that he is immutable and unchangeable; he was begotten, or came into existence, neither by wish nor by adoption so that he appears to be from nothing. As far as it is probable, he was begotten not—which very thing it is not right to think—according to likeness or nature or mixture of none of the things that came into existence through him. (11) For this reason it surpasses every thought or intention or reason that we confess him begotten from the unbegotten Father, God the Word, truth, light, righteousness, Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior of all. He is the image not of the will or of any other thing but of the *hypostasis* of the Father himself. This Son, God the Word, both brought forth in flesh from Mary the God-bearing and made flesh, suffered, died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Majesty of the highest, coming to judge living and dead. (12) And still the Holy Scriptures teach us to believe as our Savior one Spirit, one catholic church, the resurrection of the dead, and a judgment of repayment as an individual did good or bad in the flesh, anathematizing those who say or think or proclaim that the Son of God is a creature or originated or made and not truly an offspring, or that there was once when he was not. For we believe that he was and is, and that he is light. (13) And besides we anathematize those who suppose that he is immutable by the self-act of his will,

just as those who derive his generation from nothing and state that he is not immutable by nature as the Father. In all respects he is the image of the Father; thus, and especially in this regard, our Savior has been proclaimed the Father's image.

(14) Therefore this faith was set forth, and all the holy synod agreed and confessed that this is apostolic and saving teaching. All our fellow ministers thought the same thing concerning these matters. Only Theodotus of the church of the Laodiceans, and Narcissus from Neronias and Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine, as individuals forgetting the Holy Scriptures and apostolic teachings, by various turns attempted to escape notice and conceal their errors by untrue, probable arguments, so that they appeared as persons introducing teachings opposite to these. From the works they were asked about, and that they asked about in turn, they were proved to be of the same opinion as those with Arius and to think opposite to the things mentioned previously. Thus, since they were hardened on such a matter, did not respect the holy synod which rejected their views, and acted shamefully, we all, the fellow ministers in the synod, judge not to commune with them and that they are not worthy of communion because of their faith, which is alien to the catholic church. And so that you should know, we write to you that you also guard from communion with them, from writing to them, or from receiving from them letters of communion. (15) Also know that because of the considerable brotherly love of the synod, we have given them a place for repentance and knowledge of the truth, the great and holy synod in Ancyra. Therefore, be eager to send these items around to all the brothers united in soul, so that they would be able to know the situation about these individuals and that there are certain individuals who have revolted from the church and are not in agreement with it. Greet all the brothers with you also from us. These brothers who are with us greet you in the Lord.

VI.

The Creed of the Synod of Nicaea (June 19, 325)

The bishops who came together in Nicaea were nearly three hundred. They condemned the Arian heresy and defeated those around Arius. Moreover, they published in writing the ecclesiastical faith as proof against every heresy.

The items published in Nicaea were submitted as follows:

We believe in one God, Father, all-sovereign, maker of all things seen and unseen; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father as only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, homoousios with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, the things in heaven and the things on the earth, who because of us men and our salvation came down and was incarnated, made man, suffered, and arose on the third day, ascended into heaven, comes to judge the living and the dead; and in one Holy Spirit. And those who say "there was once when he was not" or "he was not before he was begotten" or "he came into existence from nothing" or who affirm that the Son of God is of another *hypostasis* or substance, or a creature, or mutable or subject to change, such ones the catholic and apostolic church pronounces accursed and separated from the church.

VII.

The Canons of Nicaea, A.D. 325

(1) If anyone with a disease has been operated on by physicians or castrated by barbarians, let this individual remain in the clergy. But if anyone in good health has castrated himself, and he is numbered in the clergy, it is fitting that he cease functioning as clergy, and it is proper from this time that no such person be advanced.

And as it is clear that this was said concerning those who practice such a thing and dare to castrate themselves, thus if any have been castrated by barbarians or by their masters, but otherwise would be found worthy, the canon admits such ones into the clergy.

(2) Since many things were done by men either by necessity or by otherwise pressing matters contrary to ecclesiastical canon, so that men from a pagan life, who just now came to the faith and were catechized in a brief time, are led immediately to the spiritual bath and simultaneously with their baptism are advanced to the episcopate or presbyterate, it seemed good that in the future no such thing occur. Time is needed for the catechumen, and after baptism more examination. The apostolic document is plain, stating, "Not a new convert, lest puffed up he fall into judgment and the devil's snare" (1 Tim. 3:6).

But if with the passing of time some natural fault would be found about the person, and he would be convicted by two or three witnesses, let such a one cease to be of the clergy. And he who does contrary to these things, being insolent in a manner contrary to the great synod, will run a risk concerning his clerical status.

(3) The great synod altogether forbade any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or anyone in the clergy, to have a housekeeper unless a

mother, sister, or aunt, or only a person who escaped all suspicion.

(4) It is especially fitting that a bishop be consecrated by all the bishops in the province. But if such a thing would be difficult because of an urgent necessity or the length of the way, then after the voting occurred, both of those absent and of those who agreed, through writing, three bishops brought together in the same place should ordain. But the confirmation of the events which occurred is given to the metropolitan in each province.

(5) Concerning those who have been excommunicated, either clergy or laity, by the bishops in each province, let the judgment prevail according to the canon, declaring that those cast out by some bishops are not to be admitted by others.

But let it be examined, lest they were cast out of the church by faintheartedness or rivalry or some such dislike of the bishop. Therefore, that this matter would receive a fitting examination, it seemed good that each year in each province synods meet twice, so that, when all the bishops of the province are brought together in the same place, such questions might be examined in common, and that those who had avowedly given offense to the bishop might seem to be excommunicated according to reason by all the bishops, until it would appear good that in the common assembly of bishops a more benevolent vote would be declared by them.

And let the synods meet, one before the forty days of Lent, so that when all faintheartedness is taken away a pure gift may be offered to God, the second synod around the season of autumn.

(6) Let the ancient customs prevail, those in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, as the bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places. This is also customary for the bishop in Rome. Likewise in Antioch and in the other provinces, the rights are to be saved for the churches.

But this is altogether clear that if someone would become a bishop without the wishes of the metropolitan, the great synod determines that such a person ought not to be a bishop. If two or three bishops on account of private rivalry speak against a common vote of all—it being reasonable and in accord with ecclesiastical canon—let the vote of the majority prevail.

(7) Since the customary and ancient tradition has prevailed, so

that the bishop in Aelia (Jerusalem) be honored, let him have the consequence of his peculiar worth, apart from the honor of the metropolis (Caesarea).

(8) Concerning those who once named themselves Cathari but came to the catholic church, it seemed good to the holy and great synod that those appointed to ministerial office should remain in the clergy.

But before all it is fitting that they confess in writing that they will agree and follow the doctrines of the catholic and apostolic church, that is, have communion with those who are twice married and with those who have lapsed in persecution, for whom a time has been arranged and a season for reconciliation determined, so that they will follow the doctrines of the catholic church in all things. Therefore, where they alone would be found, either in villages or in cities, all who have been appointed to ministerial office will be in the clergy in the same rank in which they were found.

But if some come to the faith where there is a bishop or presbyter of the catholic church, it is clear that the bishop of the church will have the dignity of bishop, and that he who is named a bishop among those called Cathari will have the honor of presbyter, except if it would seem good to the bishop to share with him the honor of the name. But if this does not please him, he will think of a place for a country bishop or presbyter, so that he would seem altogether to be in the clergy but there would not be two bishops in the city.

(9) If any not examined have been advanced as presbyters, or examined have confessed their sins, and, although they confessed, men moved against the canon and placed hands on such persons, the canon does not admit such individuals to be clergy. For the catholic church justifies the blameless.

(10) As many as those who lapsed who were appointed to ministerial office in ignorance, or even if those who made the appointments knew, this does not prejudice the ecclesiastical canon. For when they are discovered, they are deposed.

(11) Concerning those who have transgressed without necessity or without the plundering of their property or without danger, or some such thing, which happened in the time of Licinius's tyranny,

it seemed good to the synod, although they were unworthy of kindness, that there was kindness for them.

Therefore, as many as truly repent—as members of the faithful—will spend three years among the hearers, and for seven they will be prostrators. And during two years they will have communion with the people in prayers without the offering.

(12) And those who were called by grace, displayed the first stirring, and put aside military service—after these things they ran to their own vomit as dogs, since some threw away their cash, and achieved again by gifts military service—let these be prostrators for ten years after a time of three years with the hearers.

With respect to all these matters, it is fitting to examine the purpose and nature of their repentance. For as many as in fear, tears, endurance, and good works display their conversion in fact and not in outward show, these having finished the time determined as hearers suitably may commune with prayers. The bishop is allowed to resolve something even more generous concerning them. But as many as have received this indifferently and supposed that the outward show of entrance into the church is sufficient for their conversion, by all means let them complete the time.

Concerning those who depart this life, let the ancient and canonical law be preserved even now, so that if anyone might depart this life he should not be deprived of the perfect and most necessary provision.

And if he was mistaken and again obtained communion, and again he would belong with those who are alive, let him be with those who commune with prayer only. But on the whole, concerning anyone departing this life who requests to share in the eucharist, let the bishop give it after examination.

(14) Concerning those who are catechumens and have lapsed, it seemed good to the holy and great synod that they be hearers only for three years and afterward that they pray with the catechumens.

(15) Because of the considerable trouble and discords, it seemed good that the custom, devised in some regions, contrary to the canon by all means be removed, so that no bishop, presbyter, or deacon should be passed from city to city.

But if anyone after the definition of the holy and great synod should attempt any such thing, or should give himself to such a thing, he will be restored to the church to which he was appointed bishop or presbyter.

(16) As many bishops or deacons or those who belong in general in the rank of clergy who will withdraw from the church without the fear of God before their eyes and without knowledge of the ecclesiastical canon, these by no means ought to be accepted in another church. It is proper by every constraint to bring them to turn back into their own dioceses, or it is fitting that those continuing be excommunicated. But if any bishop would dare to snatch away a person who belongs to another and to appoint him to a ministerial office in his own church, when that person's bishop does not assent, from whom he, who belongs in the rank of clergy, has withdrawn, let the appointment be of no force.

(17) Since many who belong in the rank of clergy who chase greediness and have a sordid love of gain have forgotten the divine Scripture which says "He gave not his money to usury" [Ps. 15:5], and lending request a yearly interest of 12 percent, the holy and great synod thought it fit that if after this definition anyone would be found to have received 12 percent from the management of funds, or otherwise pursuing business, or requesting half as much again, or in short devising some other thing on account of shameful gain, he will be deposed from the clergy and will be estranged from the rank of clergy.

(18) It has come to the notice of the holy and great synod that in some places and cities the deacons give the eucharist to the presbyters, which is something neither canon nor custom granted, namely, that those who have no authority to offer should give the body of Christ to those who do offer.

And it has been revealed that now some of the deacons receive the eucharist even before the bishops.

Therefore, let all these things cease, and let the deacons remain within their own limits, knowing that they are attendants of the bishop and that they are less than the presbyters. According to their order, let them receive the eucharist after the presbyters, with

either the bishop or the presbyter giving it to them. And let the deacons not be allowed to sit in the midst of the presbyters, for this happens against the canon and good order.

And if anyone would not wish to be obedient, even after these definitions, let him leave the diaconate.

(19) Concerning the Paulianists, who then flee for refuge to the catholic church, a definition has been declared that they are by all means to be baptized again. And if some in the previous time belonged in the clergy—if they would seem to be without reproach and blameless, having been baptized again—let them be appointed to ministerial office by the bishop of the catholic church.

But if the examination would find them unfit, it is fitting that they are deposed.

But in the same manner the same ordinance will be guarded about deaconesses and, in short, those who belong in the rank of clergy. And we reminded ourselves of the deaconesses who belong in outward appearance; because they do not have any laying-on of hands, they belong by all means among the laity.

(20) And since there are some who kneel on the Lord's Day and in the days of Pentecost, so that there be a common observance in every diocese, it seemed good to the holy synod that prayers should be rendered to God with everyone standing.

VIII.

Eusebius of Caesarea's Letter to His Church concerning the Synod at Nicaea

(1) From another source, beloved, you have probably learned what was worked out about the faith of the church at the great synod brought together in Nicaea. And this occurred because rumor is accustomed to outrun the accurate report of what things were done. But we have sent to you of necessity first the document dealing with the faith we presented, and then the second document, which they issued after they added to our words, so that the truth might not be otherwise related to you by hearsay. (2) Therefore our treatise, read in the presence of our emperor, the most beloved of God and declared to be good and worthy, is as follows:

(3) "As we have received from the bishops before us and in the first catechization, and when we received baptism, and as we have learned from the divine Scripture, and as we believed and taught in the office of presbyter and bishop itself, and thus now believing, we report to you our faith. It is this:

(4) "We believe in one God, Father, all-sovereign, the maker of all seen and unseen, and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, only-begotten Son, firstborn of all creation, before all ages begotten from the Father through whom all things came into existence; who was made flesh on account of our salvation, and lived among mankind, and suffered and rose on the third day and went up to the Father and will come again in glory to judge living and dead. And also we believe in one Holy Spirit. (5) Believing each of these to be and to exist, the Father truly Father, and the Son truly Son, and the Holy Spirit truly Holy Spirit, as also our Lord sending his disciples for proclamation said, 'Go and teach all nations baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' [Matt. 28:19]. Concerning this, we affirm that this we maintain, and thus we think and so we have maintained previously, and we stand until death on this faith, anathematizing every godless heresy. (6) We have thought this from the heart and soul always, from which time we knew ourselves, and now we think it and say it from truth; this we bear witness to in the presence of God all-sovereign, being able to show through proofs and to persuade you that during preceding times we believed and proclaimed thus."

(7) When we presented this faith, there was no opportunity for resistance by anyone. But our emperor, most beloved of God, himself first of all witnessed that this was most orthodox. He agreed that even he himself thought thus, and he ordered all to assent to subscribe to the teachings and to be in harmony with them, although only one word, *homoousios*, was added, which he himself interpreted, saying that the Son might not be said to be *homoousios* according to the affections of bodies, and is from the Father neither according to division nor according to a cutting off, for the immaterial, intellectual, and incorporeal nature is unable to subsist in some corporeal affection, but it is befitting to think of such things in a divine and ineffable manner. And our emperor, most wise and pious, thought philosophically in this manner. But they, with the pretense of the addition of *homoousios*, produced this document:

(8) The faith composed in the synod:

"We believe in one God, Father, all-sovereign, maker of all things seen and unseen, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, that is only-begotten from the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, *homoousios* with the Father, through whom all things, those in heaven and those on earth, came into existence, who on account of us men and on account of our salvation came down and was made flesh, was made man, suffered, arose on the third day, went up into heaven, is coming to judge living and dead. And in the Holy Spirit. And those who say, "There was once when he was not" and "Before he

was begotten, he was not" and that "he came into existence from nothing," or those who allege that the Son of God is "from another *hypotasis* or substance" or is created or mutable or different, the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes." (9) When this document was composed by them, so that the phrases "from the substance of the Father" and "*homoousios* with the Father" were stated by them, we did not grant this to them without examination. Therefore, interrogations and responses occurred, and the discourse tested the sense of these phrases. Then, "from the substance" was confessed by them to be indicative of the Son's being from the Father, not as if he is part of the Father. (10) In this way it seemed good also to us to agree with the sense of the pious teaching suggesting that the Son is from the Father, not part of his substance. We also agreed with the sense, not even refraining from the expression *homoousios*, since the object of peace and the aim of not deviating from the true sense was before our eyes.

(11) In the same manner we accepted "having been begotten and not made," because they declared that "made" was a common designation of the other creatures who came into existence through the Son and to whom the Son has no resemblance. Thus he is not something made similar to things which came into existence through him, but rather he happens to be of a better substance in comparison to anything made, which the divine oracles teach to have been begotten from the Father, because the method of begetting happens to be unutterable and beyond the understanding of every originated nature.

(12) Likewise, the argument "the Son is *homoousios* with the Father," when examined, is sound; not in the manner of bodies or of mortal beings—for the Son is so not according to division of substance or by a cutting or according to any affection, mutation, or change of the Father's substance and power. The unbegotten nature of the Father is foreign to all these. (13) "*Homoousios* with the Father" indicates that the Son of God bears no resemblance to originated creatures but that he is alike in every way only to the Father who has begotten and that he is not from any other *hypotasis* and substance but from the Father. To this term, thus interpreted, it seemed well to assent, since we knew that there were

certain learned ones of the ancients, famous bishops and writers, who employed the term *homoousios* in reference to their teaching about the Father and Son.

(14) Therefore let these things be said about the published faith to which we all agreed, not without investigation but according to the attributed senses examined in the presence of the most beloved of God, the emperor himself, and in agreement with the above-mentioned reflections. (15) We considered the anathema, published by them after the faith, to be harmless because of its prohibition against using words not in Scripture, from which nearly every confusion and anarchy of the church occurred. Since at any rate no divinely inspired Scripture has employed "from nothing" and "once he was not" and those things added afterward, it did not appear reasonable to say and teach these things. We agreed to this as something apparently good, because prior to this we were not accustomed to employing these words.

(16) Still it did not appear outrageous to anathematize "before he was begotten, he was not," for the confession of all is that the Son of God was before the generation according to the flesh. Already our emperor, the most beloved of God, affirmed in a discourse that even according to his divine generation he was before all the ages, since even before he was begotten in actuality, he was in the Father ingenerately in potentiality, since the Father is always the Father, both as King always and as Savior always, in potentiality being all things and being always in the same respect and in like manner.

(17) Beloved, these things we have transmitted to you of necessity, making clear to you the decision of our investigation and approval, and how reasonably we resisted then, even until the final hour, when accounts written differently offended us. But we accepted without strife those things not harmful, when it appeared to us, frankly scrutinizing the intention of the words, that they agreed with the things confessed by us in the faith previously published.

IX.

Arius's Letter to the Emperor Constantine

A LETTER OF THE PRESBYTER ARIUS AND EUZOIUS TO THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

*To the most pious and beloved of God, lord,
Emperor Constantine, from
Arius and Euzoius.*

(1) As Your Piety, beloved of God, ordered, Lord Emperor, we set forth our own faith, and we confess in writing before God that we and all those with us believe as it has been submitted. (2) We believe in one God, the Father, all-sovereign; and in Lord Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son who came into existence from him before all the ages, God the Word, through whom all things in the heavens and on earth came into existence, who came down and assumed flesh and suffered, rose and went up into the heavens and comes again to judge the living and dead. (3) And in the Holy Spirit and in the resurrection of the flesh and in the life of the future age and in the kingdom of heaven and in one catholic church of God reaching from one end of the earth to the other. (4) And we comprehend this faith from the holy Gospels, when the Lord says to his disciples, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" [Matt. 28:19]. But if we do not thus believe these things and receive truly the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the entire catholic church and the Scriptures teach, in which we put our belief in every regard, God is our judge both now and in the future day. (5) Therefore we exhort Your Piety, emperor most be-