

THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THEODORET

In addition to Eusebius had four important successors in the centuries immediately following, i.e. Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Evagrius, who left major histories extant. Their works display the further development of the Eusebian historic-graphical tradition in the fifth and sixth centuries¹.

At some time between 441 (or 442) and 449, Theodoret wrote his *Church History*. It was a work covering the historical period from 323 to 428 A.D., written as a deliberate continuation of Eusebius' *Church History*, as he says:

*Eusebius the Palestinian has described the things that happened to the churches, beginning his history with the holy apostles, and going up to the reign of Constantine, the friend of God. I shall make the end of that composition the starting point of my own history*².

ITS CHARACTERISTICS

1. The principal object of theological attack in his work was in fact the Arian movement. Theodoret's *Church History* might almost have been subtitled "**An Account of the Arian controversy.**" To him, the principal issue facing the Church during that century covered by his history had been the conflict between Arianism and Nicene Christianity. To help explain his feeling on this matter, one must remember that during that century, Arian bishops had sat on the Antiochene throne for a full thirty years, from the deposition of Eustathius in 330 till the inauguration of Melitius in 360. Furthermore, even though the Council of Constantinople in 381 had decided the hierarchy of the established church in favor of the Nicene faith, Arianism was still a force to be contended with half a century later in Theodoret's own pastoral work³.

2. Even though Theodoret was a principal spokesman for the Antiochene party in the Christological controversy, he did not regard the **Alexandrian one-nature Christology** as being itself Arian. Though he did not devote more than a passage or so to the matter, in his *Church History* he did indicate, at the appropriate place in the narrative, that he felt that the Alexandrian Christology was basically Apollinarian. The key passage was H.E. 5.3.8 (compare 5.9.19-20) where he described the formation of a separate theological party under the leadership of Apollinaris in the latter part of the fourth century, and then went on to say:

This was the origin of the growth in the Church of the doctrine of the one nature of the flesh and the Godhead, of the ascription to the Godhead of the passion of the Only Begotten, and of other points which have bred differences among the laity and their priests. But these belong to a later date.

Other than this remark, made in passing, Theodoret's *Church History* was not a direct attack on the Alexandrian Christology. The history comes to its conclusion in 428, mentioning the death of Theodore of Mopsuestia but not the accession of Nestorius to the patriarchate of Constantinople, which was the start of open hostilities between the Antiochians and the Alexandrians.

¹ Glenn F. Chesnut: *The First Christian Histories*, 1977, p. 191.

² Theodoret: *H.E. 1:1:4*.

³ Glenn F. Chesnut: *The First Christian Histories*, 1977, p. 202-203.

3. Theodoret, like Eusebius, Socrates, and Sozomen, tried to work out a compromise between the **Christian doctrine of Providence** and the doctrine of Fortune found in the pagan historians⁴.

Theodoret differed from the classical historians in the formula he gave for the way in which a human being should react to the ever-present threat of bad Fortune. The good man should learn piety (*eusebeia*) from trials and troubles⁵. The good man should hymn God during both good times and bad⁶. This sort of attitude on Theodoret's part was clearly a Christian, or at least Stoic, modification of the traditional position.

Theodoret also said that God rewarded those who showed kindness to the victims of Fortune, with heavenly gifts⁷, things that "*neither words can express nor intelligence understand*"⁸. This was purely Christian; neither the Stoics, nor Plato, nor Aristotle, nor the classical Graeco-Roman historians spoke that way. Also purely Christian was Theodoret's emphasis upon **the universal sinfulness of humankind**, something that was part of our human nature, and made all human beings worthy of destruction at God's hand, even if He was merciful and spared most⁹. Theodoret further raised the fear that God would justifiably bring similar punishment on us all if we did not propitiate Him and obtain forgiveness for our sins by showing kindness when confronted with the victims of Fortune¹⁰.

4. The attitudes of the fifth and sixth centuries church historians - Theodoret, Socrates, Sozomen, and Evagrius - are important in helping to show **why the progressive downfall of Roman central authority in Western Europe** during their period was allowed to occur so casually. These four histories show us that in the governing circles in the major cities of the East, there were too many people who believed that the empire could never fall. Its Christianity defended it against any ultimate disaster, to the end of time. The loss of battles, of cities, of entire provinces in the West was brushed aside as a disconnected series of only temporary setbacks. Or the losses were simply denied, as eastern horizons shrank, and the West became less and less important. As long as the emperor remained a pious, orthodox Christian, it was believed too devoutly that no permanent harm could ever come their way. Unfortunately, any nation or people which believes itself to be eternal and invulnerable can bring about its own doom by a refusal to take seriously the progressive signs of a declining position until the final, irreversible injury has already occurred. Only those who know they can be destroyed will act with timely vigor before the dangers they gave have grown too great to be overcome¹¹.

⁴ Glenn F. Chesnut: *The First Christian Histories*, 1977, p. 203-204.

⁵ Theodoret: *Epist. Sirm.* 31.

⁶ Theodoret: *Epist. Sirm.* 29,30.

⁷ Theodoret: *Epist. Sirm.* 33,52

⁸ Theodoret: *Epist. Sirm.* 30.

⁹ Theodoret: *Epist. Sirm.* 31,32.

¹⁰ Theodoret: *Epist. Sirm.* 31,34,35,52; cf. Glenn F. Chesnut: *The First Christian Histories*, 1977, p. 205-206.

¹¹ Glenn F. Chesnut: *The First Christian Histories*, 1977, p. 221.

THE CONTENTS OF THEODORET'S CHURCH HISTORY

Theodoret's *Church History* contains five books:

Book 1: It concentrates on the Arian heresy.

Book 2:

Book 3:

Book 4:

Book 5:

BOOK I

PROLOGUE

Design of the History:

For Theodoret writing history looks like painting on panels for reordering the events for many years. He urges his friends to write the church history.

When artists paint on panels and on walls the events of ancient history, they alike delight the eye, and keep bright for many a year the memory of the past. Historians substitute books for panels, bright description for pigments, and thus render the memory of past events both stronger and more permanent, for the painter's art is ruined by time. For this reason I too attempt to record in writing events in ecclesiastical history hitherto omitted deeming it indeed not right to look on without an effort while oblivion robs' noble deeds and useful stories of their due fame. For this cause too I have been frequently urged by friends to undertake this work. But when I compare my own powers with the magnitude of the undertaking, I shrink from attempting it. Trusting, however, in the bounty of the Giver of all good, I enter upon a task beyond my own strength. Eusebius of Palestine has written a history of the Church from the time of the holy apostles to the reign of Constantine, the prince beloved of God. I begin my history from the period at which his terminates.

CHAPTER I.

Origin of the Arian heresy:

- *After the overthrow of the wicked and impious tyrants, Maxentius, Maximinus, and Licinius, the surge which those destroyers, like hurricanes, had roused was hushed to sleep; the whirlwinds were checked, and the Church henceforward began to enjoy a settled calm.*

- *This was established for her by **Constantine**, a prince deserving of all praise, whose calling, like that of the divine apostle, was not of men, nor by man, but from heaven. He enacted laws prohibiting sacrifices to idols, and commanding churches to be erected. He appointed Christians to be governors of the provinces, ordering honor to be shown to the priests, and threatening with death those who dared to insult them. By some, the churches which had been destroyed were rebuilt; others erected new ones still more spacious and magnificent. Hence, for us, all was joy and gladness, while our enemies were overwhelmed with gloom and despair. The temples of the idols were closed; but frequent assemblies were held, and festivals celebrated, in the churches. But the devil, full of all envy and wickedness, the destroyer of mankind, unable to bear the sight of the Church sailing on with favorable winds, stirred up plans of evil counsel, eager to sink the vessel steered by the Creator and Lord*

of the Universe. When he began to perceive that the error of the Greeks had been made manifest, that the various tricks of the demons had been detected, and that the greater number of men worshipped the Creator, instead of adoring, as heretofore, the creature, he did not dare to declare open war against our God and Savior; but having found some who, though dignified with the name of Christians, were yet slaves to ambition and vainglory, he made them fit instruments for the execution of his designs, and by their means drew others back into their old error, not indeed by the former method of setting up the worship of the creature, but by bringing it about that the Creator and Maker of all should be reduced to a level with the creature. I shall now proceed to relate where and by what means he sowed these tares.

In his speech of the appearance of Arius in Alexandria, Theodoret attributed the Alexandrian Church to St. Peter, and not to St. Mark the Apostle as St. Jerome mentioned.

- ***Alexandria** is an immense and populous city, charged with the leadership not only of Egypt, but also of the adjacent countries, the Thebaid and Libya. After Peter, the victorious champion of the faith, had, during the sway of the aforesaid impious tyrants, obtained the crown of martyrdom, the Church in Alexandria was ruled for a short time by Achillas. He was succeeded by Alexander, who proved himself a noble defender of the doctrines of the gospel. At that time, **Arius**, who had been enrolled in the list of the presbytery, and entrusted with the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, fell a prey to the assaults of jealousy, when he saw that the helm of the high priesthood was committed to Alexander. Stung by this passion, he sought opportunities for dispute and contention; and, although he perceived that Alexander's irreproachable conduct forbade his bringing any charges against him, envy would not allow him to rest. In him the enemy of the truth found an instrument whereby to stir and agitate the angry waters of the Church, and persuaded him to oppose the apostolic doctrine of Alexander. While the Patriarch, in obedience to the Holy Scriptures, taught that the Son is of equal dignity with the Father, and of the same substance with God who beget Him, Arius, in direct opposition to the truth, affirmed that the Son of God is merely a creature or created being, adding the famous dictum, "There once was a time when He was not;" with other opinions which may be learned from his own writings. He taught these false doctrines perseveringly, not only in the church, but also in general meetings and assemblies; and he even went from house to house, endeavoring to make men the slaves of his error.*

- *Alexander, who was strongly attached to the doctrines of the Apostles, at first tried by exhortations and counsels to convince him of his error; but when he saw him playing the madman and making public declaration of his impiety, he deposed him from the order of the presbytery, for he heard the law of God loudly declaring, "If your right eye offend You, pluck it out, and cast it from You."*

CHAPTER 2

List of the principal Bishops

*For the church of **Rome** at this period Silvester held the reins. His predecessor in the see was Miltiades, the successor of that Marcellinus who had so nobly distinguished himself during the persecution.*

In Antioch, after the death of Tyrannus, when peace began to be restored to the churches, Vitalis received the chief authority, and restored the church in the " Palaea " which had been destroyed by the tyrants. He was succeeded by Philogonius, who completed all that was wanting in the work of restoration: he had, during the time of Licinius, signalized himself by his zeal for religion.

*After the administration of Hermon, the government of the church in **Jerusalem** was committed to Macarius, a man whose character was equal to his name, and whose mind was adorned by every kind of virtue.*

*At this same period also, Alexander, illustrious for his apostolic gifts, governed the church of **Constantinople**.*

*It was at this time that Alexander, bishop of **Alexandria**, perceiving that Arius, enslaved by the lust of power, was assembling those who had been taken captive by his blasphemous doctrines, and was holding private meetings, communicated an account of his heresy by letter to the rulers of the principal churches. That the authenticity of my history may not be suspected, I shall now insert in my narrative the letter which he wrote to his namesake, containing, as it does, a clear account of all the facts I have mentioned. I shall also subjoin the letter of Arius, together with the other letters which are necessary to the completeness of this narrative, that they may at once testify to the truth of my work, and make the course of events more clear. The following letter was written by Alexander of Alexandria, to the bishop of the same name as himself.*

CHAPTER 3

The Epistle of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria to Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople.

"To his most revered and like-minded brother Alexander, Alexander sends greeting in the Lord.

*Impelled by avarice and ambition, evil-minded persons have ever plotted against the well-being of the most important dioceses. Under various pretexts, they attack the religion of the Church; and, being maddened by the devil, who works in them, they start aside from all piety according to their own pleasure, and trample under foot the fear of the judgment of God. Suffering as I do from them myself, I deem it necessary to inform your piety, that you may be on your guard against them, lest they or any of their party should presume to enter your diocese (for these cheats are skillful in deception), or should circulate false and specious letters, calculated to delude one who has devoted himself to the simple and undefiled faith. Arius and Achillas have lately formed a conspiracy, and, emulating the ambition of Colluthus, have gone far beyond him. He indeed sought to find a pretext for his own pernicious line of action in the charges he brought against them. But they, beholding his making a trade of Christ for lucre, refused to remain any longer in subjection to the Church; but built for themselves caves, like robbers, and now constantly assemble in them, and day and night ply slanders there against Christ and against us. They revile every godly apostolic doctrine, and in Jewish fashion have organized a gang to fight against Christ, denying His divinity, and declaring Him to be on a level with other men. **They pick out every passage which refers to the dispensation of salvation, and to His humiliation for our sake; they endeavor to collect from them their own***

impious assertion, while they avoid all those which declare His eternal divinity, and the unceasing glory which He possesses with the Father. They maintain the ungodly doctrine entertained by the Greeks and the Jews concerning Jesus Christ; and thus, by every means in their power, hunt for their applause. Everything which outsiders ridicule in us they officiously practice. They daily excite persecutions and seditions against us. On the one hand they bring accusations against us before the courts, suborning as witnesses certain unprincipled women whom they have seduced into error. On the other they dishonor Christianity by permitting their young women to ramble about the streets. Nay, they have had the audacity to rend the seamless garment of Christ, which the soldiers dared not divide.

When these actions, in keeping with their course of life, and the impious enterprise which had been long concealed, became tardily known to us, we unanimously ejected them from the Church which worships the divinity of Christ. They then ran hither and thither to form cabals against us, even addressing themselves to our fellow-ministers who were of one mind with us, under the pretense of seeking peace and unity with them, but in truth endeavoring by means of fair words, to sweep some among them away into their own disease. They ask them to write a wordy letter, and then read the contents to those whom they have deceived, in order that they may not retract, but be confirmed in their impiety, by finding that bishops agree with and support their views. They make no acknowledgment of the evil doctrines and practices for which they have been expelled by us, but they either impart them without comment, or carry on the deception by fallacies and forgeries. Thus concealing their destructive doctrine by persuasive and meanly truckling language, they catch the unwary, and lose no opportunity of calumniating our religion. Hence it arises that several have been led to sign their letter, and to receive them into communion, a proceeding on the part of our fellow-ministers which I consider highly reprehensible; for they thus not only disobey the apostolic rule, but even help to inflame their diabolical action against Christ.

*It is on this account, beloved brethren, that without delay I have stirred myself up to inform you of **the unbelief of certain persons who say that "There was a time when the Son of God was not;" and "He who previously had no existence subsequently came into existence; and when at some time He came into existence He became such as every other man is."** God, they say, created all things out of that which was non-existent, and they include in the number of creatures, both rational and irrational, even the Son of God. Consistently with this doctrine they, as a necessary consequence, affirm that **He is by nature liable to change, and capable both of virtue and of vice, and thus, by their hypothesis of his having been created out of that which was non-existent, they overthrow the testimony of the Divine Scriptures, which declare the immutability of the Word and the Divinity of the Wisdom of the Word, which Word and Wisdom is Christ.** 'We are also able,' say these accursed wretches, 'to become like Him, the sons of God; for it is written, - I have nourished and brought up children.' When the continuation of this text is brought before them, which is, and they have rebelled against Me, and it is objected that these words are inconsistent with the Savior's nature, which is immutable, they throw aside **oil** reverence, and affirm that God foreknew and foresaw that His Son would not rebel against Him, and that He therefore chose Him in preference to all others. They likewise assert that He was not*

chosen because, He had by nature any thing superior to the other sons of God; for no man, say they, is son of God by nature, nor has any peculiar relation to Him. He was chosen, they allege, because, though mutable by nature, His painstaking character suffered no deterioration. As though, forsooth, even if a Paul and a Peter made like endeavors, their sonship would in no respects differ from His.

To establish this insane doctrine they in-suit the Scriptures, and bring forward what is said in the Psalms of Christ, 'You has loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.' Now that the Son of God was not created out of the non-existent, and that there never was a time in which He was not, is expressly taught by John the Evangelist, who speaks of Him as **'the Only Begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.** This divine teacher desired to show that the Father and the Son are inseparable; and, therefore, he said, 'that the Son is in the bosom of the Father.'

Moreover, the same John affirms that **the Word of God is not classed among things created out of the non-existent,** for, he says that 'all things were made by Him,' and he also declares His individual personality in the following words: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.' If, then, all things were made by Him, how is it that He who thus bestowed existence on all, could at any period have had no existence himself? The Word, the creating power, can in no way be defined as of the same nature as the things created, if indeed He was in the beginning, and all things were made by Him, and were called by Him out of the non-existent into being. 'That which is' must be of an opposite nature to, and essentially different from, things created out of the non-existent. This shows, likewise, that there is no separation between the Father and the Son, and that the idea of separation cannot even be conceived by the mind; while the fact that the world was created out of the nonexistent involves a later and fresh genesis of its essential nature, all things having been endowed with such an origin of existence by the Father through the Son.

John, the most pious apostle, perceiving that the word 'was' applied to the Word of God was far beyond and above the intelligence of created beings, did not presume to speak of His generation or creation, nor yet dared to name the Maker and the creature in equivalent syllables. Not that the Son of God is unbegotten, for the Father alone is unbegotten; but that **the ineffable personality of the Only-Begotten God is beyond the keenest conception of the evangelists, and perhaps even of angels.** Therefore, I do not think men ought to be considered pious who presume to investigate this subject, in disobedience to the injunction, 'Seek not what is too difficult for you, neither inquire into what is too high for you.' For if the knowledge of many other things incomparably inferior is beyond the capacity of the human mind, and cannot therefore be attained, as has been said by Paul, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him,' and as God also said to Abraham, that the stars could not be numbered by him; and it is likewise said, 'Who shall number the grains of sand by the sea -shore, or the drops of rain?' how then can any one but a madman presume to inquire into the nature of the Word of God? It is said by the Spirit of prophecy, 'Who shall declare His generation?'

And, therefore, our Savior in His kindness to those men who were the pillars of the whole world, desiring to relieve them of the burden of striving after this knowledge, told them that it was beyond their natural comprehension, and that **the Father alone could discern this most divine mystery; 'No man,' said He, 'knows the Son but the Father, and no man knows the Father save the Son.'** It was, I think, concerning this same subject that the Father said, 'My secret is for Me and far Mine.'

But the insane folly of imagining that the Son of God came into being out of that which had no being, and that His sending forth took place in time, is plain from the words which I had no being, although the foolish are incapable of perceiving the folly of their own utterances. For the phrase 'He was not' must either have reference to time, or to some interval in the ages. **If then it be true that all things were made by Him, it is evident that every age, time, all intervals of time, and that 'when' in which 'was not' has its place, were made by Him.** And is it not absurd to say that there was a time when He who created all time, and ages, and seasons, with which the 'was not' is confused, was not? For it would be the height of ignorance, and contrary indeed to all reason, to affirm that the cause of any created thing can be posterior to that caused by it. The interval during which they say the Son was still unbegotten of the Father was, according to their opinion, prior to the wisdom of God, by whom all things were created.

They thus contradict the Scripture which declares Him to be 'the Firstborn of every creature.' In consonance with this doctrine, Paul with his usual mighty voice cries concerning Him; 'whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.' 'For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and far Him: and He is before all things.' Since the hypothesis implied in the phrase 'out of the non-existent' is manifestly impious, it follows that **the Father is always Father. And He is Father from the continual presence of the Son, on account of whom He is called Father. And the Son being ever present with Him, the Father is ever perfect, wanting in no good thing, for He did not beget His only Son in time, or in any interval of time, nor out of that which had no previous existence.**

"Is it not then impious to say that there was a time when the wisdom of God was not? Who says, 'I was by Him as one brought up with Him: I was daily His delight?' Or that once the power of God was not, or His Word, or anything else by which the Son is known, or the Father designated, defective? To assert that the brightness of the Father's glory' once did not exist,' destroys also the original light of which it is the brightness; and if there ever was a time in which the image of God was not, it is plain that He Whose image He is, is not always: nay, by the non-existence of the express image of God's Person, He also is taken away of whom this is ever the express image. Hence it may be seen, that the Sonship of our Savior has not even anything in common with the sonship of men. For just as it has been shown that the nature of His existence cannot be expressed by language, and infinitely surpasses in excellence all things to which He has given being, so His Sonship, naturally partaking in His paternal Divinity, is unspeakably different from the sonship of those who, by His appointment, have been adopted as sons. He is by nature immutable, perfect, and all-sufficient, whereas men are liable to change, and

need His help. What further advance can be made by the wisdom of God? What can the Very Truth, or God the Word, add to itself? How can the Life or the True Light in any way be bettered? And is it not still more contrary to nature to suppose that wisdom can be susceptible of folly? that the power of God can be united with weakness? that reason itself can be dimmed by unreasonableness, or that darkness can be mixed with the true light? Does not the Apostle say, 'What communion has light with darkness? and what concord has Christ with Belial?' and Solomon, that 'the way of a serpent upon a rack' was 'too wonderful' for the human mind to comprehend, which 'rock,' according to St. Paul, is Christ.

*Men and angels, however, who are His creatures, have received His blessing, enabling them to exercise themselves in virtue and in obedience to His commands, that thus they may avoid sin. And it is on this account that our Lord being by nature the Son of the Father, is worshipped by all; and they who have put off the spirit of bondage, and by brave deeds and advance in virtue **have received the spirit of adoption through the kindness of Him Who is the Son of God by nature, by adoption also become sons.***

*His true, peculiar, natural, and special Sonship was declared by Paul, who, speaking of God, says, that 'He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us, who are not by nature His sons. It was to distinguish Him from those who are not 'His own,' that he called Him 'His own son.' It is also written in the Gospel, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;' and in the Psalms the Savior says, 'The Lord said unto Me, You are My Son. **By proclaiming natural sonship, He shows that there are no other natural sons besides Himself.** "And do not these words, I begot You 'from the womb before the morning,' plainly show the natural sonship of the paternal birth of One whose lot it is, not from diligence of conduct, or exercise in moral progress, but by individuality of nature? Hence it ensues that the filiation of the Only-Begotten Son of the Father is incapable of fall; while the adoption of reasonable beings who are not His sons by nature, but merely on account of fitness of character, and by the bounty of God, may fall away, as it is written in the word, 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men, and took them as wives,' and so forth.*

*And God, speaking by Isaiah, said, 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me' "I have many things to say, beloved, but because I fear that I shall cause weariness by further admonishing teachers who are of one mind with myself, I pass them by. You, having been taught of God, are not ignorant that the teaching at variance with the religion of the Church which has just arisen, is the same as that propagated by Ebion and Artemas, and rivals that of Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, who was excommunicated by a council of all the bishops. Lucianus, his successor, withdrew himself from communion with these bishops during a period of many years. "And now amongst us there have sprung up, 'out of the non-existent' men who have greedily sucked down the dregs of this impiety, offsets of the same stock: I mean **Arius and Achillas, and all their gang of rogues.** Three bishops of Syria, appointed no one knows how, by consenting to them, fire them to more fatal heat. I refer their sentence to your decision. Retaining in their memory all that they can collect concerning the suffering, humiliation, emptying of Himself, and so-called poverty, and everything of which the Savior for our sake accepted the acquired name, they*

bring forward those passages to disprove His eternal. existence and divinity, while they forget all those which declare His glory and nobility and abiding with the Father; as for instance, 'I and My father are one.' In these words the Lord does not proclaim Himself to be the Father, neither does He represent two natures as one; but that the essence of the Son of the Father preserves accurately the likeness of the Father, His nature taking off the impress of likeness to Him in all things, being the exact image of the Father and the express stamp of the prototype. When,. therefore, Philip, desirous of seeing the Father, said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father,' the Lord with abundant plainness said to him, 'He that has seen Me has seen the Father,' as though the Father were beheld in the spotless and living mirror of His image. The same idea is conveyed in the Psalms, where the saints say, 'In Your light we shall see light.' It is on this account that 'he who honors the Son, honors the Father' And rightly, for every impious word which men dare to utter against the Son is spoken also against the Father.

After this no one can wonder at the false calumnies which I am about to detail, my beloved brethren, propagated by them against me, and against our most religious people. They not only set their battle in array against the divinity of Christ, but ungratefully insult us. They think it beneath them to be compared with any of those of old time, nor do they endure to be put on a par with the teachers we have been conversant with from childhood. They will not admit that any of our fellow-ministers anywhere possess even inferiority of intelligence. They say that they themselves alone are the wise and the poor, and discoverers of doctrines, and to them alone have been revealed those truths which, say they, have never entered the mind of any other individuals under the sun. O what wicked arrogance! O what excessive folly! What false boasting, joined with madness and Satanic pride, has hardened their impious hearts They are not ashamed to oppose the godly clearness of the ancient scriptures, nor yet does the unanimous piety of all our fellow-ministers concerning Christ blunt their audacity. Even devils will not suffer impiety like this; for even they refrain from speaking blasphemy against the Son of God. "These then are the questions I have to raise, according to the ability I possess, with those who from their rude resources throw dust on the Christ, and try to slander our reverence for Him.

These inventors of silly tales assert that we, who reject their impious and unscriptural blasphemy concerning the creation of Christ from the non-existent, teach that there are two unbegotten Beings. For these ill-instructed men contend that one of these alternatives must hold; either He must be believed to have come out of the non-existent, or there are two unbegotten Beings.

In their ignorance and want of practice in theology they do not realize how vast must be the distance between the Father who is uncreate, and the creatures, whether rational or irrational, which He created out of the non-existent; and that the Only-Begotten nature of Him Who is the Word of God, by Whom the Father created the universe out of the non-existent, standing, as it were, in the middle between the two, was begotten of the self-existent Father, as the Lord Himself testified when He said, 'Every one that loves the Father, loves also the Son that is begotten of Him.' "We believe, as is taught by the apostolic Church, in an only unbegotten Father, Who of His being has no cause, immutable and invariable, and Who subsists always in one state of

being, admitting neither of progression nor of diminution; Who gave the law, and the prophets, and the gospel; of patriarchs and apostles, and of all saints, Lord: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten not out of that which is not, but of the Father, Who is; yet not after the manner of material bodies, by severance or emanation, as Sabellius and Valentinus taught; but in an inexpressible and inexplicable manner, according to the saying which we quoted above, 'Who shall declare His generations?' since no mortal intellect can comprehend the nature of His Person, as the Father Himself cannot be comprehended, because the nature of reasonable beings is unable to grasp the manner in which He was begotten of the Father... "But those who are led by the Spirit of truth have no need to learn these things of me, for the words long since spoken by the Savior yet sound in our ears, 'No one knows who the Father is but the Son, and no one knows who the Son is but the Father.' We have learnt that the Son is immutable and unchangeable, all-sufficient and perfect, like the Father, lacking only His "unbegotten." He is the exact and precisely similar image of His Father. For it is clear that the image fully contains everything by which the greater likeness exists, as the Lord taught us when He said, ' My Father is greater than I.' And in accordance with this we believe that the Son always existed of the Father; for he is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Father's Person.' But let no one be led by the word 'always' to imagine that the Son is unbegotten, as is thought by some who have their intellects blinded: for to say that He was, that He has always been, and that before all ages, is not to say that He is unbegotten. "The mind of man could not possibly invent a term expressive of what is meant by being unbegotten. I believe that you are of this opinion; and, indeed, I feel confident in your orthodox view that none of these terms in any way signify the unbegotten. For all the terms appear to signify merely the extension of time, and are not adequate to express the divinity and, as it were, the primeval being of the only- begotten Son. They were used by the holy men who earnestly endeavored to clear up the mystery, and who asked pardon from those who heard them, with a reasonable excuse for their failure, by saying 'as far as our comprehension has reached.' But if those who allege that what was 'known in part' has been done away, for them, expect from human lips anything beyond human powers, it is plain that the terms ' was,' and 'ever,' and 'before all ages,' fall far short of this expectation. But whatever they may mean, it is not the same as 'the unbegotten.' Therefore His own individual dignity must be reserved to the Father as the Unbegotten One, no one being called the cause of His existence: to the Son likewise must be given the honor which befits Him, there being to Him a generation from the Father which has no beginning; we must render Him worship, as we have already said, only piously and religiously ascribing to Him the 'was' and the 'ever,' and the 'before all ages;' not however rejecting His divinity, but ascribing to Him a perfect likeness in all things to His Father. while at the same time we ascribe to the Father alone His own proper glory of 'the unbegotten,' even as the Savior Himself says, 'My Father is greater than I. ' "And in addition to this pious belief respecting the Father and the Son, we confess as the Sacred Scriptures teach us, one Holy Ghost, who moved the saints of the Old Testament, and the divine teachers of that which is called the New. We believe in one only Catholic Church, the apostolic, which cannot be destroyed even though all the world were to take counsel to fight against it, and which gains

the victory over all the impious attacks of the heterodox; for we are emboldened by the words of its Master, 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' After this, we receive the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, of which Jesus Christ our Lord became the first-fruits; Who bore a Body, in truth, not in semblance, derived from Mary the mother of God in the fullness of time sojourning among the race, for the remission of sins: who was crucified and died, yet for all this suffered no diminution of His Godhead. He rose from the dead, was taken into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. "In this epistle I have only mentioned these things in part, deeming it, as I have said, wearisome to dwell minutely on each article, since they are well known to your pious diligence. These things we teach, these things we preach; these are the dogmas of the apostolic Church, for which we are ready to die, caring little for those who would force us to forswear them; for we will never relinquish our hope in them, though they should try to compel us by tortures. "Arius and Achillas, together with their fellow foes, have been expelled from the Church, because they have become aliens from our pious doctrine: according to the blessed Paul, who said, 'If any of you preach any, other gospel than that which you have received, let him be accursed, even though he should pretend to be an angel from heaven, and 'But if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing' and so forth.

Since, then, they have been condemned by the brotherhood, let none of you receive them, nor attend to what they say or write. They are deceivers, and propagate lies, and they never adhere to the truth. They go about to different cities with no other intent than to deliver letters under the pretext of friendship and in the name of peace, and by hypocrisy and flattery to obtain other letters in return, in order to deceive a few 'silly women who are laden with sins.' I beseech you, beloved brethren, to avoid those who have thus dared to act against Christ, who have publicly held up the Christian religion to ridicule, and have eagerly sought to make a display before judicial tribunals, who have endeavored to excite a persecution against us at a period of the most entire peace, and who have enervated the unspeakable mystery of the generation of Christ. Unite unanimously in opposition to them, as some of our fellow-ministers have already done, who, being filled with indignation, wrote to me against them, and signed our formulary. "I have sent you these letters by my son Apion, the deacon; being those of (the ministers in) all Egypt and the Thebaid, also of those of Libya, and the Pentapolis, of Syria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Asia, Cappadocia, and in the other adjoining countries. Whose example you likewise, I trust, will follow.

Many kindly attempts have been made by me to gain back those who have been led astray, but no remedy has proved more efficacious in restoring the laity who have been deceived by them and leading them to repentance, than 41 the manifestation of the union of our fellow-ministers. Salute one another, with the brotherhood that is with you. I pray that you may be strong in the Lord, my beloved, and that I may receive the fruit of your love to Christ. "The following are the name of those who have been anathematized as heretics: among the presbyters, Arius; among the deacons, Achillas, Euzoius, Aithales, Lucius, Sarmates, Julius, Menas, another Arius, and Helladius." Alexander wrote in the same strain to Philogonius (64), bishop of Antioch, to

Eustathius, who then ruled the church of the Beroeans, and to all those who defended the doctrines of the Apostles. But Arius could not endure to keep quiet, but wrote to all those whom he believed to agree with him in opinion. His letter to Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, is a clear proof that the divine Alexander wrote nothing that was false concerning him. I shall here insert his letter, in order that the names of those who were implicated in his impiety may become generally known.

CHAPTER 4

The Letter of Arius to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia.

To his very dear lord, the man of God, the faithful and orthodox Eusebius, Arius, unjustly persecuted by Alexander the Pope, on account of that all-conquering truth of which you also are a champion, sends greeting in the Lord.

Ammonius, my father, being about to depart for Nicomedia, I considered myself bound to salute you by him, and withal to inform that natural affection which you bear towards the brethren for the sake of God and His Christ, that the bishop greatly wastes and persecutes us, and leaves no stone unturned against us. He has driven us out of the city as atheists, because we do not concur in what he publicly preaches, namely, God always, the Son always; as the Father so the Son; the Son Co-exists unbegotten with God; He is everlasting; neither by thought nor by any interval does God precede the Son; always God, always Son; he is begotten of the unbegotten; the Son is of God Himself.

Eusebius your brother bishop of Caesarea, Theodotus, Paulinus, Athanasius, Gregorius, Aetius, and all the bishops of the East, have been condemned because they say that God had an existence prior to that of His Son; except Philogonius, Hellanicus, and Macarius, who are unlearned men, and who have embraced heretical opinions.

Some of them say that the Son is an eructation, others that He is a production, others that He is also unbegotten. These are impieties to which we cannot listen, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths. But we say and believe, and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten; and that He does not derive His subsistence from any matter; but that by His own will and counsel He has subsisted before time, and before ages, as perfect God, only begotten and unchangeable, and that before He was begotten, or created, or purposed, or established, He was not. For He was not unbegotten.

We are persecuted, because we say that the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning. This is the cause of our persecution, and likewise, because we say that He is of the non-existent. And this we say, because He is neither part of God, nor of any essential being. For this are we persecuted; the rest you know. I bid You farewell in the Lord, remembering our afflictions, my fellow-Lucianist, and true Eusebius." Of those whose names are mentioned in this letter, Eusebius was bishop of Caesarea, Theodotus of Laodicea, Paulinus of Tyre, Athanasius of Anazarbus, Gregorius of Berytus, and Aetius of Lydda. Lydda is now called Diospolis. Arius prided himself on having these men of one mind with himself. He names as his adversaries, Philogonius, bishop of Antioch, Hellanicus, of Tripolis, and Macarius, of Jerusalem. He spread calumnies against them because they said

that the Son is eternal, existing before all ages, of equal honor and of the same substance with the Father. When Eusebius received the epistle, he too vomited forth his own impiety, and wrote to Paulinus, chief of the Tyrians, in the following words.

CHAPTER 5

The Letter of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre.

"To my lord Paulinus, Eusebius sends greeting in the Lord.

The zeal of my lord Eusebius in the cause of the truth, and likewise your silence concerning it, have not failed to reach our ears. Accordingly, if, on the one hand, we rejoiced on account of the zeal of my lord Eusebius; on the other we are grieved at you, because even the silence of such a man appears like a defeat of our cause. Hence, as it behooves not a wise man to be of a different opinion from others, and to be silent concerning the truth, stir up, I exhort you, within yourself the spirit of wisdom to write, and at length begin what may be profitable to yourself and to others, specially if you consent to write in accordance with Scripture, and tread in the tracks of its words and will.

We have never heard that there are two unbegotten beings, nor that one has been divided into two, nor have we learned or believed that it has ever undergone any change of a corporeal nature; but we affirm that the unbegotten is one and one also that which exists in truth by Him, yet was not made out of His substance, and does not at all participate in the nature or substance of the unbegotten, entirely distinct in nature and in power, and made after perfect likeness both of character and power to the maker.

We believe that the mode of His beginning, not only cannot be expressed by words, but even in thought, and is incomprehensible not only to man, but also to all beings superior to man. These opinions we advance not as having derived them from our own imagination, but as having deduced them from Scripture, whence we learn that the Son was created, established, and begotten in the same substance and in the same immutable and inexpressible nature as the Maker; and so the Lord says, 'God created me in the beginning of His way; I was set up from everlasting; before the hills was I brought forth.' 'If He had been from Him or of Him, as a portion of Him, or by an emanation of His substance, it could not be said that He was created or established; and of this you, my lord, are certainly not ignorant. For that which is of the unbegotten could not be said to have been created or founded, either by Him or by another, since it is unbegotten from the beginning. But if the fact of His being called the begotten gives any ground for the belief that, having come into being of the Father's substance, He also has from the Father likeness of nature, we reply that it is not of Him alone that the Scriptures have spoken as begotten, but that they also thus speak of those who are entirely dissimilar to Him by nature. For of men it is said, 'I have begotten and brought up sons, and they have rebelled against me;' and in another place, 'You has forsaken God who begot You;' and again it is said, 'Who beget him drops of dew?' This expression does not imply that the dew partakes of the nature of God, but simply that all things were formed according to His will.

There is, indeed, nothing which is of His substance, yet every thing which exists has been called into being by His will. He is God; and all things were made in His likeness. and in the future likeness of His Word, being

created of His tree will. All things were made by His means by God. All things are of God.

When you have received my letter, and have revised it according to the knowledge and grace given you by God, I beg you will write as soon as possible to my lord Alexander. I feel confident that if you would write to him, you would succeed in bringing him over to your opinion.

Salute all the brethren in the Lord. May you, my lord, be preserved by the grace of God, and be led to pray for us. It is thus that they wrote to each other, in order to furnish one another with weapons against the truths. And so when the blasphemous doctrine had been disseminated in the churches of Egypt and of the East, disputes and contentions arose in every city, and in every village, concerning theological dogmas. The common people looked on, and became judges of what was said on either side, and some applauded one party, and some the other. These were, indeed, scenes fit for the tragic stage, over which tears might have been shed. For it was not, as in bygone days, when the church was attacked by strangers and by enemies, but now natives of the same country, who dwelt under one roof, and sat down at one table, fought against each other not with spears, but with their tongues. And what was still more sad, they who thus took up arms against one another were members of one another, and belonged to one body.

CHAPTER 6

General Council of Nicaea.

The emperor, who possessed the most profound wisdom, having heard of these things, endeavored, as a first step, to stop up their fountain-head. He therefore dispatched a messenger renowned for his ready wit to Alexandria with letters, in the endeavor to extinguish the dispute, and expecting to reconcile the disputants. But his hopes having been frustrated, he proceeded to summon the celebrated council of Nicaea; and pledged his word that the bishops and their officials should be furnished with asses, mules, and horses for their journey at the public expense. When all those who were capable of enduring the fatigue of the journey had arrived at Nicaea, he went thither himself, with both the wish of seeing the multitude of bishops, and the yearning desire of maintaining unanimity: amongst them.

He at once arranged that all their wants should be liberally supplied. Three hundred and eighteen bishops were assembled.

The bishop of Rome, on account of his very advanced age, was absent, but he sent two presbyters to the council, with authority to agree to what was done. At this period many individuals were richly endowed with apostolic gifts; and many, like the holy apostle, bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James, bishop of Antioch, a city of Mygdonia, which is called Nisibis by the Syrians and Assyrians, raised the dead and restored them to life, and performed many other wonders which it would be superfluous to mention again in detail in this history, as I have already given an account of them in my work, entitled 'Philotheus.'

Paul, bishop of Neo-Caesarea, a fortress situated on the banks of the Euphrates, had suffered from the frantic rage of Licinius. He had been deprived of the use of both hands by the application of a red-hot iron, by

which the nerves which give motion to the muscles had been contracted and rendered dead.

Some had had the right eye dug out, others had lost the right arm. Among these was Paphnutius of Egypt.

In short, the Council looked like an assembled army of martyrs.

Yet this holy and celebrated gathering was not entirely free from the element of opposition; for there were some, though so few as easily to be reckoned, of fair surface, like dangerous shallows, who really, though not openly, supported the blasphemy of Arius. When they were all assembled, the emperor ordered a great hall to be prepared for their accommodation in the palace, in which a sufficient number of benches and seats were placed; and having thus arranged that they should be treated with becoming dignity, he desired the bishops to enter in, and discuss the subjects proposed.

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

The excellent emperor next exhorted the Bishops to unanimity and concord; he recalled to their remembrance the cruelty of the late tyrants, and reminded them of the honorable peace which God had, in his reign and by his means, accorded them. He pointed out how dreadful it was, yea, very dreadful, that at the very time when their enemies were destroyed, and when no one dared to oppose them, they should fall upon one another, and make their amused adversaries laugh, especially as they were debating about holy things, concerning which they had the written teaching of the Holy Spirit. "For the gospels" (continued he), "the apostolic writings, and the oracles of the ancient prophets, clearly teach us what we ought to believe concerning the divine nature. Let, then, all contentious disputation be discarded; and let us seek in the divinely-inspired word the solution of the questions at issue.

These and similar exhortations he, like an affectionate son, addressed to the bishops as to fathers, laboring to bring about their unanimity in the apostolic doctrines. Most members of the synod, won over by his arguments, established concord among themselves, and embraced sound doctrine. There were, however, a few, of whom mention has been already made, who opposed these doctrines, and sided with Arius; and amongst them were Menophantus, bishop of Ephesus, Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, and Narcissus, bishop of Neronias, which is a town of the second Cilicia, and is now called Irenopolis; also Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt. They drew up a formulary of their faith, and presented it to the council.

As soon as it was read it was torn to pieces, and was declared to be spurious and false. So great was the uproar raised against them, and so many

were the reproaches cast on them for having betrayed religion, that they all, with the exception of Secundus and Theonas, stood up and took the lead in publicly renouncing Arius. This impious man, having thus been expelled from the Church, a confession of faith which is received to this day was drawn up by unanimous consent; and, as soon as it was signed, the council was dissolved.

CHAPTER 7

Confutation of Arianism deduced from the writings of Eustathius and Athanasius.

The above-named bishops, however, did not consent to it in sincerity, but only in appearance. This was afterwards shown by their plotting against those who were foremost in zeal for religion, as well as by what these latter have written about them. For instance, Eustathius, the famous bishop of Antioch, who has been already mentioned, when explaining the text in the Proverbs, 'The Lord created Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old,' wrote against them, and refuted their blasphemy. "I will now proceed to relate how these different events occurred.

A general council was summoned at Nicaea, and about two hundred and seventy bishops were convened. There were, however, so many assembled that I cannot state their exact number, neither, indeed, have I taken any great trouble to ascertain this point. When they began to inquire into the nature of the faith, the formulary of Eusebius was brought forward, which contained undisguised evidence of his blasphemy. The reading of it before all occasioned great grief to the audience, on account of its departure from the faith, while it inflicted irremediable shame on the writer.

After the Eusebian gang had been clearly convicted, and the impious writing had been torn up in the sight of all, some amongst them by concert, under the pretense of preserving peace, imposed silence on all the ablest speakers.

The Ariomaniacs, fearing lest they should be ejected from the Church by so numerous a council of bishops, sprang forward to anathematize and condemn the doctrines condemned, and unanimously signed the confession of faith. Thus having retained possession of their Episcopal seats through the most shameful deception, although they ought rather to have been degraded, they continue, sometimes secretly, and sometimes openly, to patronize the condemned doctrines, plotting against the truth by various arguments. Wholly bent upon establishing these plantations of tares, they shrink from the inspection of the intelligent, avoid the observant, and attack the preachers of godliness. But we do not believe that these atheists can ever thus overcome the Deity. For though they 'gird themselves' they 'shall be broken in pieces,' according to the solemn prophecy of Isaiah. These are the words of the great Eustathius. Athanasius, his fellow combatant, the champion of the truth, who succeeded the celebrated Alexander in the episcopate, added the following, in a letter addressed to the Africans.

"The bishops convened in council being desirous of refuting the impious assertions invented by the Arians, that the Son was created out of that which was non-existent, that He is a creature and created being, that there was a period in which He was not, and that He is mutable by nature, and being all agreed in propounding the following declarations, which are in accordance with the holy Scriptures; namely, that the Son is by nature only-

begotten of God, Word, Power, and sole Wisdom of the Father; that He is, as John said, 'the true God,' and, as Paul has written, 'the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the person of the Father,' the followers of Eusebius, drawn aside by their own vile doctrine, then began to say one to another, Let us agree, for we are also of God; 'There is but one God, by whom are all things;' 'Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God.' They also dwelt particularly upon what is contained in 'The Shepherd:' 'Believe above all that there is one God, who created and fashioned all things, and making them to be out of that which is not.' "But the bishops saw through their evil design and impious artifice, and gave a clearer elucidation of the words 'of God,' and wrote, that the Son is of the substance of God; in order that while the creatures, which do not in any way derive their existence of or from themselves are said to be of God, the Son alone is said to be of the substance of the Father; this being peculiar to the Only-Begotten Son, the true Word of the Father. This is the reason why the bishops wrote, that He is of the substance of the Father. "But when the Arians, who seemed few in number, were again interrogated by the Bishops as to whether they admitted 'that the Son is not a creature, but Power, and sole Wisdom, and eternal unchangeable Image of the Father; and that He is very God,' the Eusebians were noticed making signs to one another to show that these declarations were equally applicable to us. For it is said, that we are 'the image and glory Of God;' and 'for always we who live: ' there are, also, they said, many powers; for it is written--'All the power of God went out of the land of Egypt.' The canker-worm and the locust are said to be 'a great power And elsewhere it is written, 'The God of powers is with us, the God of Jacob helper.' To which may be added that we are God's own not simply, but because the Son called us ' brethren.' The declaration that Christ is 'the true God' does not distress us, for, having come into being, He is true. "Such was the corrupt opinion of the Arians; but on this the bishops, having detected their deceitfulness in this matter, collected from Scripture those passages which say of Christ that He is the glory, the fountain, the stream, and the express image of the person; and they quoted the following words: 'In your light we shall see light;' and likewise, 'I and the Father are one.' They then, with still greater clearness, briefly declared that the Son is of one substance with the Father; for this, indeed, is the signification of the passages which have been quoted.

The complaint of the Arians, that these precise words are not to be found in Scripture, is proved groundless by their own practice, for their own impious assertions are not taken from Scripture; for it is not written that the Son is of the non-existent, and that there was a time when He was not: and yet they complain of having been condemned by expressions which, though not actually in Scripture, are in accordance with true religion. They themselves, on the other hand, as though they had found their words on a dunghill, uttered things verily of earth.

The bishops, on the contrary, did not find their expressions for themselves; but, received their testimony from the fathers, and wrote accordingly. Indeed, there were bishops of old time, nearly one hundred and thirty years ago, both of the great city of Rome and of our own city, who condemned those who asserted that the Son is a creature, and that He is not of one substance with the Father.

Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, was acquainted with these facts; he, at one time, favored the Arian heresy, but he afterwards signed the confession of faith of the Council of Nicaea. He wrote to the people of his diocese, maintaining that the word 'consubstantial' was 'used by illustrious bishops and learned writers as a term for expressing the divinity of the Father and of the Son.

So these men concealed their unsoundness through fear of the majority, and gave their assent to the decisions of the council, thus drawing upon themselves the condemnation of the prophet, for the God of all cries unto them," "This people honor Me with their lips, but in their hearts they are far from Me." Theonas and Secundus, however, did not like to take this course, and were excommunicated by common consent as men who esteemed the Arian blasphemy above evangelical doctrine. The bishops then returned to the council, and drew up twenty laws to regulate the discipline of the Church.

CHAPTER VIII

Facts relating to Mellitus the Egyptian, from whom originated the Melitian schism, which remains to this day. Synodical Epistle respecting him.

After Mellitus had been ordained bishop, which was not long before the Arian controversy, he was convicted of certain crimes by the most holy Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who also received the crown of martyrdom. After being deposed by Peter he did not acquiesce in his deposition, but filled the Thebaid and the adjacent part of Egypt with tumult and disturbance, and rebelled against the primacy of Alexandria. A letter was written by the council to the Church of Alexandria stating what had been decreed against his revolutionary practices.

It was as follows:

Synodical Epistle.

To the Church of Alexandria which, by the grace of God, is great and holy, and to the beloved brethren in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, the bishops who have been convened to the great and holy council of Nicaea, send greeting in the Lord. "The great and holy council of Nicaea having been convened by the grace of God, and by the most religious emperor, Constantine, who summoned us from different provinces and cities, we judge it requisite that a letter be sent from the whole Holy Synod to inform you also what questions have been mooted and debated, and what has been decreed and established.

In the first place, the impious doctrines of Arius were investigated before our most religious emperor Constantine; and his impiety was unanimously anathematized, as well as the blasphemous language and views which he had propounded, alleging that the Son of God was out of what was not, that before He was begotten He was not, that there was a period in which He was not, and that He can, according to His own free-will, be capable either of virtue or of vice.

The holy council anathematized all these assertions, and even refused so much as to listen to such impious and foolish opinions, and such blasphemous expressions. The final decision concerning him you already know, or will soon hear; but we will not mention it now, lest we should appear to trample upon a man who has already received the recompense due to his sins. Such influence has his impiety obtained as to involve Theonas, bishop of

Marmarica, and Secundus, bishop of Ptolemais, in his ruin, and they have shared his punishment.

But after Egypt had, by the grace of God, been delivered from these false and blasphemous opinions, and from persons who dared to raise discord and division among a hitherto peaceable people, there yet remained the question of the temerity of Mellitus, and of those ordained by him. We now inform you, beloved brethren, of the decrees of the council on this subject. It was decided by the holy council, that Mellitus should be treated with clemency, though, strictly speaking, he was not worthy of even the least concession. He was permitted to remain in his own city, but was divested of all power, whether of nomination or of ordination, neither was he to show himself in any province or city for these purposes: but only to retain the bare name of his office.

Those who had received ordination at his hands were to submit to a more religious re-ordination; and were to be admitted to communion on the terms of retaining their ministry, but of ranking in every diocese and church below those who had been ordained before them by Alexander, our much-honored fellow-minister. Thus they would have no power of choosing or nominating others to the ministry, according to their pleasure, or indeed of doing anything with out the consent of the bishops of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, who are under Alexander. But they who, by the grace of God, and in answer to your prayers, have been detected in no schism, and have continued spotless in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, are to have the power of electing, and of nominating men worthy of the clerical office, and are permitted to do whatsoever is in accordance with law and the authority of the Church.

If it should happen, that any of those now holding an office in the Church should die, then let these recently admitted be advanced to the honors of the deceased, provided only that they appear worthy, and that the people choose them, and that the election be confirmed and ratified by the catholic bishop of Alexandria.

The same privilege has been conceded to all the others. With respect to Melitius, however, an exception has been made, both on account of his former insubordination, and of the rashness and impetuosity of his disposition; for if the least authority were accorded to him, he might abuse it by again exciting confusion. These are the chief points which relate to Egypt, and to the holy Church of Alexandria. Whatever other canons were made, or dogmas decreed, you will hear of them from Alexander, our most-honored fellow-minister and brother, who will give you still more accurate information, because he himself directed, as well as participated in, every thing that took place.

*We also give you the good news that, according to your prayers, the **celebration of the most holy paschal feast** was unanimously rectified, so that our brethren of the East, who did not previously keep the festival at the same time as those of Rome, and as yourselves, and, indeed, all have done from the beginning, will henceforth celebrate it with you.*

Rejoice, then, in the success of our undertakings, and in the general peace and concord, and in the extirpation of every heresy, and receive with still greater honor and more fervent love, Alexander, our fellow-minister and your bishop, who imparted joy to us by his presence, and who, at a very advanced age, has undergone so much fatigue for the purpose of restoring

peace among you. Pray for us all, that what has been rightly decreed may remain steadfast, through our Lord Jesus Christ, being done, as we trust, according to the good pleasure of God and the Father in the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Notwithstanding the endeavors of that divine assembly of bishops to apply this medicine to the Melitian disease, vestiges of his infatuation remain even to this day; for there are in some districts bodies of monks who refuse to follow sound doctrine, and observe certain vain points of discipline, agreeing with the infatuated views of the Jews and the Samaritans.

CHAPTER 9

The Epistle of the Emperor Constantine, concerning the matters transacted at the Council, addressed to those Bishops who were not present.

The great emperor also wrote an account of the transactions of the council to those bishops who were unable to attend. And I consider it worth while to insert this epistle in my work, as it clearly evidences the piety of the writer.

Constantinus Augustus to the Churches.

Viewing the common public prosperity enjoyed at this moment, as the result of the great power of divine grace, I am desirous above all things that the blessed members of the Catholic Church should be preserved in one faith, in sincere love, and in one form of religion, towards Almighty God. But, since no firmer or more effective measure could be adopted to secure this end, than that of submitting everything relating to our most holy religion to the examination of all, or most of all, the bishops, I convened as many of them as possible, and took my seat among them as one of yourselves; for I would not deny that truth which is the source of my greatest joy, namely, that I am your fellow-servant.

Every point obtained its due investigation, until the doctrine pleasing to the all-seeing God, and conducive to unity, was made clear, so that no room should remain for division or controversy concerning the faith.

The commemoration of the most sacred paschal feast being then debated, it was unanimously decided, that it would be well that it should be everywhere celebrated upon the same day. What can be more fair, or more seemly, than that that festival by which we have received the hope of immortality should be carefully celebrated by all, on plain grounds, with the same order and exactitude?

It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because, their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these wretched men are necessarily blinded. By rejecting their custom, we establish and hand down to succeeding ages one which is more reasonable, and which has been observed ever since the day of our Lord's sufferings. Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. For we have received from our Savior another way. A better and more lawful line of conduct is inculcated by our holy religion, Let us with one accord walk therein, my much-honored brethren, studiously avoiding all contact with that evil way. They boast that without their instructions we should be unable to commemorate the festival properly. This is the highest pitch of absurdity. For how can they entertain right views on any point who, after having compassed the death of the Lord, being out of their

minds, are guided not by sound reason, but by an unrestrained passion, wherever their innate madness carries them.

Hence it follows that they have so far lost sight of truth, wandering as far as possible from the correct revisal, that they celebrate a second Passover in the same year. What motive can we have for following those who are thus confessedly unsound and in dire error? For we could never tolerate celebrating the Passover twice in one year. But even if all these facts did not exist, your own sagacity would prompt you to watch with diligence and with prayer, lest your pure minds should appear to share in the customs of a people so utterly depraved.

It must also be borne in mind, that upon so important a point as the celebration of a feast of such sanctity, discord is wrong. One day has our Savior set apart for a commemoration of our deliverance, namely, of His most holy Passion. One has He wished His Catholic Church to be, whereof the members, though dispersed throughout the most various parts of the world, are yet nourished by one spirit, that is, by the divine will.

Let your pious sagacity reflect how evil and improper it is, that days devoted by some to fasting, should be spent by others in convivial feasting; and that after the paschal feast, some are rejoicing in festivals and relaxations, while others give themselves up to the appointed fasts. That this impropriety should be rectified, and that all these diversities of commemoration should be resolved into one form, is the will of divine Providence, as I am convinced you will all perceive. Therefore, this irregularity must be corrected, in order that we may no more have any thing in common with those parricides and the murderers of our Lord. An orderly and excellent form of commemoration is observed in all the churches of the western, of the southern, and of the northern parts of the world, and by some of the eastern; this form being universally commended, I engaged that you would be ready to adopt it likewise, and thus gladly accept the rule unanimously adopted in the city of Rome, throughout Italy, in all Africa, in Egypt, the Spains, the Gauls, the Britains, Libya, Greece, in the dioceses of Asia, and of Pontus, and in Cilicia, taking into your consideration not only that the churches of the places above-mentioned are greater in point of number, but also that it is most pious that all should unanimously agree in that course which accurate reasoning seems to demand, and which has no single point in common with the perjury of the Jews

Briefly to summarize the whole of the preceding, the judgment of all is, that the holy Paschal feast should be held on one and the same day; for, in so holy a matter, it is not becoming that any difference of custom should exist, and it is better to follow the opinion which has not the least association with error and sin. This being the case, receive with gladness the heavenly gift and the plainly divine command; for all that is transacted in the holy councils of the bishops is to be referred to the Divine will. Therefore, when you have made known to all our beloved brethren the subject of this epistle, regard yourselves bound to accept what has gone before, and to arrange for the regular observance of this holy day, so that when, according to my long-cherished desire, I shall see you face to face, I may be able to celebrate with you this holy festival upon one and the same day; and may rejoice with you all in witnessing the cruelty of the devil destroyed by our efforts, through Divine

grace, while our faith and peace and concord flourish throughout the world. May God preserve you, beloved brethren.

CHAPTER 10

The daily wants of the Church supplied by the Emperor, and an account of his other virtues.

Thus did the emperor write to the absent. To those who attended the council, three hundred and eighteen in number he manifested great kindness, addressing them with much gentleness, and presenting them with gifts. He ordered numerous couches to be prepared for their accommodation and entertained them all at one banquet. Those who were most worthy he received at his own table, distributing the rest at the others. Observing that some among them had had the right even to torn out, and learning that this mutilation had been undergone for the sake of religion, he placed his lips upon the wounds, believing that he would extract a blessing from the kiss.

After the conclusion of the feast, he again presented other gifts to them. He then wrote to the governors of the provinces, directing that provision-money should be given in every city to virgins and widows, and to those who were consecrated to the divine service; and he measured the amount of their annual allowance more by the impulse of his own generosity than by their need. The third part of the sum is distributed to this day.

Julian impiously withheld the whole. His successor conferred the sum which is now dispensed, the famine which then prevailed having lessened the resources of the state. If the pensions were formerly triple in amount to what they are at present, the generosity of the emperor can by this fact be easily seen. I do not account it right to pass over the following circumstance in silence. Some quarrelsome individuals wrote accusations against certain bishops, and presented their indictments to the emperor. This occurring before the establishment of concord, he received the lists, formed them into a packet which he sealed with his ring, and ordered them to be kept safely. After the reconciliation had been effected, he brought out these writings, and burnt them in their presence, at the same time declaring upon oath that he had not read a word of them. He said that the crimes of priests ought not to be made known to the multitude, lest they should become an occasion of offense, and lead them to sin without fear. It is reported also that he added that if he were to detect a bishop in the very act of committing adultery, he would throw his imperial robe over the unlawful deed, lest any should witness the scene, and be thereby injured. Thus did he admonish all the priests, as well as confer honors upon them, and then exhorted them to return each to his own flock.

CHAPTER 11

I shall here insert the letter respecting the faith, written by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, as it describes the effrontery of the Arians, who not only despise our fathers, but reject their own: it contains a convincing proof of their madness.

They certainly honor Eusebius, because he adopted their sentiments, but yet they openly contradict his writings. He wrote this epistle to some of the Arians, who were accusing him, it seems, of treachery. The letter itself explains the writer's object. Epistle of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, which he wrote from Nicaea when the great Council was assembled.

"You will have probably learnt from other sources what was decided respecting the faith of the church at the general council of Nicaea, for the fame of great transactions generally outruns the accurate account of them: but lest rumors not in strict accordance with the truth should reach you, I think it necessary to send to you, first, the formulary of faith originally proposed by us, and, next, the second, published with additions made to our terms.

The following is our formulary, which was read in the presence of our most pious emperor, and declared to be couched in right and proper language.

The Faith put forth by us. As in our first catechetical instruction, and at the time of our baptism, we received from the bishops who were before us and as we have learnt from the Holy Scriptures, and, alike as presbyters, and as bishops, were wont to believe and teach; so we now believe and thus declare our faith. It is as follows:

We believe in one God, Father Almighty, the Maker of all things, visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, Only-begotten Son, First-born of every creature, begotten of the Father before all worlds; by Whom all things were made; Who for our salvation was incarnate, and lived among men. He suffered and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father; and He will come again in glory to judge the quick and the dead. We also believe in one Holy Ghost.

We believe in the being and continual existence of each of these; that the Father is in truth the Father; the Son in truth the Son; the Holy Ghost in truth the Holy Ghost; as our Lord, when sending out His disciples to preach the Gospel, said, 'Go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

We positively affirm that we hold this faith, that we have always held it, and that we adhere to it even unto death, condemning all ungodly heresy. We testify, as before God the Almighty and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we have thought thus from the heart, and from the soul, ever since we have known ourselves; and we have the means of showing, and, indeed, of convincing you, that we have always during the past thus believed and preached.

*When this formulary had been set forth by us, there was no room to gainsay it; but our beloved emperor himself was the first to testify that it was most orthodox, and that he coincided in opinion with it; and he exhorted the others to sign it, and to receive all the doctrine it contained, with the single addition of the one word -'**consubstantial**.' He explained that this term implied no bodily condition or change, for that the Son did not derive His existence from the Father either by means of division or of abscission, since an immaterial, intellectual, and incorporeal nature could not be subject to any bodily condition or change.*

*These things must be understood as bearing a divine and mysterious signification. Thus reasoned our wisest and most religious emperor. The addition of the word "**consubstantial**" has given occasion for the composition of the following formulary.*

The Creed published by the Council. *'We believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father; Only-Begotten, that is, of the*

substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father: by Whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth: Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate, and was made man; He suffered, and rose again the third day; He ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge both quick and dead. And we believe in the Holy Ghost.

The holy Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes all who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not; that before He was begotten He was not; that He was made out of the nonexistent; or that He is of a different essence and of a different substance from the Father and that He is susceptible of variation or change

When they had set forth this formulary, we did not leave without examination that passage in which it is said that the Son is of the substance of the Father, and consubstantial with the Father.

Questions and arguments thence arose, and the meaning of the terms was exactly tested. Accordingly they were led to confess that the word consubstantial signifies that the Son is of the Father, but not as being a part of the Father. We deemed it right to receive this opinion; for that is sound doctrine which teaches that the Son is of the Father, but not part of His substance. From the love of peace, and lest we should fall from the true belief, we also accept this view, neither do we reject the term 'consubstantial.' For the same reason we admitted the expression, 'begotten, but not made;' for they alleged that the word 'made' applies generally to all things which were created by the Son, to which the Son is in no respect similar; and that consequently He is not a created thing, like the things made by Him, but is of a substance superior to all created objects. The Holy Scriptures teach Him to be begotten of the Father, by a mode of generation which is 'incomprehensible and inexplicable to all created beings. So also the term 'of one substance with the Father,' when investigated, was accepted not in accordance with bodily relations or similarity to mortal beings. For it was also shown that it does not either imply division of substance, nor abscission, nor any modification or change or diminution in the power of the Father, all of which are alien from the nature of the unbegotten Father.

It was concluded that the expression 'being of one substance with the Father,' implies that the Son of God does not resemble, in any one respect, the creatures which He has made; but that to the Father alone, who begot Him, He is in all points perfectly like: for He is of the essence and of the substance of none save of the Father. This interpretation having been given of the doctrine, it appeared right to us to assent to it, especially as we were aware that of the ancients some learned and celebrated bishops and writers have used the term 'consubstantial' with respect to the divinity of the Father and of the Son.

These are the circumstances which I had to communicate respecting the published formulary of the faith. To it we all agreed, not without investigation, but, after having subjected the views submitted to us to thorough examination in the presence of our most beloved emperor, for the above reasons we all acquiesced in it.

We also allowed that the anathema appended by them to their formulary of faith should be accepted, because it prohibits the use of words which are not scriptural; through which almost all the disorder and troubles

of the Church have arisen. And since no passage of the inspired Scripture uses the terms 'out of the non-existent,' or that 'there was a time when He was not,' nor indeed any of the other phrases of the same class, it did not appear reasonable to assert or to teach such things. In this opinion, therefore, we judged it right to agree; since, indeed, we had never, at any former period, been accustomed to use such terms.

Moreover, the condemnation of the assertion that before He was begotten He was not, did not appear to involve any incongruity, because all assent to the fact that He was the Son of God before He was begotten according to the flesh. And here our emperor, most beloved by God, began to reason concerning His divine origin, and His existence before all ages. He was virtually in the Father without generation, even before He was actually begotten, the Father having always been the Father, just as He has always been a King and a Savior, and, virtually, all things, and has never known any change of being or action. "We have thought it requisite, beloved brethren, to transmit you an account of these circumstances, in order to show you what examination and investigation we bestowed on all the questions which we had to decide; and also to prove how at one time we resisted firmly, even to the last hour, when doctrines improperly expressed offended us, and, at another time, we, without contention, accepted the articles which contained nothing objectionable, when after a thorough and candid investigation of their signification, they appeared perfectly comfortable with what had been confessed by us in the formulary of faith which we had published."

CHAPTER 12

Confutation of the blasphemies of the Arians of our time, from the writings of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea.

Eusebius clearly testifies that the aforesaid term "consubstantial" is not a new one, nor the invention of the fathers assembled at the council; but that, from the very first it has been handed down from father to son. He states that all those then assembled unanimously received the creed then published; and he again bears testimony to the same fact in another work, in which he highly extols the conduct of the great Constantine. He writes as follows:

"The emperor having delivered this discourse in Latin, it was translated into Greek by an interpreter, and then he gave liberty of speech to the leaders of the council. Some at once began to bring forward complaints against their neighbors, while others had recourse to recriminations and reproaches. Each party had much to urge, and at the beginning the debate waxed very violent. The emperor patiently and attentively listened to all that was advanced, and gave full attention to what was urged by each party in turn.

He calmly endeavored to reconcile the conflicting parties; addressing them mildly in Greek, of which language he was not ignorant, in a sweet and gentle manner. Some he convinced by argument, others he put to the blush; he commended those who had spoken well, and excited all to unanimity; until, at length, he reduced them all to oneness of mind and opinion on all the disputed points, so that they all agreed to hold the same faith, and to celebrate the festival of Salvation upon the same day. What had been decided was committed to writing, and was signed by all the bishops."

Soon after the author thus continues the narrative:

"When matters had been thus arranged, the emperor gave them permission to return to their own dioceses. They returned with great joy, and have ever since continued to be of the one opinion, agreed upon in the presence of the emperor, and, though once widely separated, now united together, as it were, in one body.

Constantine, rejoicing in the success of his efforts, made known these happy results by letter to those who were at a distance. He ordered large sums of money to be liberally distributed both among the inhabitants of the country and of the cities, in order that the twentieth anniversary of his reign might be celebrated with public festivities."

Although the Arians impiously gainsay the statements of the other fathers, yet they ought to believe what has been written by this father, whom they have been accustomed to admire. They ought, therefore, to receive his testimony to the unanimity with which the confession of faith was signed by all. But, since they impugn the opinions of their own leaders, they ought to become acquainted with the most foul and terrible manner of the death of Arius and with all their powers to flee from the impious doctrine of which he was the parent. As it is likely that the mode of his death is not known by all, I shall here relate it.

CHAPTER 13

Extract from the Letter of Athanasius on the Death of Arius.

After Arius had remained a long time in Alexandria, he endeavored riotously to obtrude himself again into the assemblies of the Church, professing to renounce his impiety, and promising to receive the confession of faith drawn up by the fathers. But not succeeding in obtaining the confidence of the divine Alexander, nor of Athanasius, who followed Alexander alike in the patriarchate and in piety, he, helped and encouraged by Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, betook himself to Constantinople. The intrigues upon which he then entered, and their punishment by the righteous Judge are all best narrated by the excellent Athanasius, in his letter to Apion. I shall therefore now insert this passage in my work. He writes:

"I was not at Constantinople when he died: but Macarius, the presbyter, was there, and from him I learnt all the circumstances. The emperor Constantine was induced by Eusebius and his party to send for Arius. Upon his arrival, the emperor asked him whether he held the faith of the Catholic church. Arius then swore that his faith was orthodox, and presented a written summary of his belief; concealing, however, the reasons of his ejection from the Church by the bishop Alexander, and making a dishonest use of the language of Holy Scripture.

When, therefore, he had declared upon oath that he did not hold the errors for which he had been expelled from the Church by Alexander, Constantine dismissed him, saying, 'If your faith is orthodox, you have well sworn; but if your faith is impious and yet you have sworn, let God from heaven judge You.'

When he quitted the emperor, the partisans of Eusebius, with their usual violence, desired to conduct him into the church; but Alexander, of blessed memory, bishop of Constantinople, refused his permission, alleging that the inventor of the heresy ought not to be admitted into communion. Then at last the partisans of Eusebius pronounced the threat 'As, against your will,

we succeeded in prevail ins on the emperor to send for Arius, so now, even if you forbid it, shall Arius join in communion with us in this church to-morrow.'

It was on Saturday that they said this. The bishop Alexander, deeply grieved at what he had heard, went into the church and poured forth his lamentations, raising his hands in supplication to God, and throwing himself on his face on the pavement in the sanctuary, prayed. Macarius went in with him, prayed with him, and heard his prayers. He asked one of two things. 'If Arius,' said he, 'is to be joined to the Church to-morrow, let me Your servant departs and do not destroy the pious with the impious. if You willt spare Your Church, and I know that You do spare her, look upon the words of the followers of Eusebius, and give not over Your heritage to destruction and to shame. Remove Arius, lest if he come into the Church, heresy seem to come in with him, and impiety be hereafter deemed piety.' Having thus prayed, the bishop left the church deeply anxious, and then a horrible and extraordinary catastrophe ensued. The followers of Eusebius had launched out into threats, while the bishop had recourse to prayer.

Arius, emboldened by the protection of his party, delivered many trifling and foolish speeches, when he was suddenly compelled by a call of nature to retire, and immediately, as it is written, 'falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst,' and gave up the ghost, being deprived at once both of communion and of life. This, then, was the end of Arius.

The followers of Eusebius were covered with shame, and buried him whose belief they shared. The blessed Alexander completed the celebration, rejoicing with the Church in piety and orthodoxy, praying with all the brethren and greatly glorifying God. This was not because he rejoiced at the death of Arius - God forbid; for 'it is appointed unto all men once to die,' but because the event plainly transcended any human condemnation. For the Lord Himself passing judgment upon the menaces of the followers of Eusebius, and the prayer of Alexander, condemned the Arian heresy, and showed that it was unworthy of being received into the communion of the Church; thus manifesting to all that, even if it received the countenance and support of the emperor, and of all men, yet by truth itself it stood condemned."

These were the first fruits, reaped by Arius, of those pernicious seeds which he had himself sown, and formed the prelude to the punishments that awaited him hereafter. His impiety was condemned by his punishment.

I shall now turn my narrative to the piety of the emperor. He addressed a letter to all the subjects of the Roman empire, exhorting them to renounce their former errors, and to embrace the doctrines of our Savior, and trying to guide them to this truth. He stirred up the bishops in every city to build churches, and encouraged them not only by his letter, but also by presenting them with large sums of money, and defraying all the expenses of building. This his own letter sets forth, which was after this manner:

CHAPTER 14

Letter written by the Emperor Constantine respecting the building of Churches.

"Constantinus Augustus, the great and the victorious, to Eusebius. "I am well aware, and am thoroughly convinced, my beloved brother, that as the servants of our Savior Christ have been suffering up to the present time from nefarious machinations and tyrannical persecutions, the fabrics of all the churches must have either fallen into utter ruin from neglect, or, through

apprehension of the impending iniquity, have been reduced below their proper dignity. But now that freedom is restored, and that dragon, through the providence of God, and by our instrumentality, thrust out from the government of the Empire, I think that the divine power has become known to all, and that those who hitherto, from fear or from incredulity or from depravity, have lived in error, will now, upon becoming acquainted with Him who truly is, be led into the true and correct manner of life.

Exert yourself, therefore, diligently in the reparation of the churches under your own jurisdiction, and admonish the principal bishops, priests, and deacons of other places to engage zealously in the same work; in order that all the churches which still exist may be repaired or enlarged, and that new ones may be built wherever they are required. You, and others through your intervention, can apply to magistrates and to provincial governments, for all that may be necessary for this purpose; for they have received written injunctions to render zealous obedience to whatever your holiness may command. May God preserve you, beloved brother."

Thus the emperor wrote to the bishops in each province respecting the building of churches. From his letter to Eusebius of Palestine, it is easily learnt what measures he adopted to obtain copies of the Holy Bible.

CHAPTER 15

The Epistle of Constantine concerning the preparation of copies of the Holy Scriptures.

"Constantinus Augustus, the great and the victorious, to Eusebius. In the city which bears our name, a great number of persons have, through the providential care of God the Savior, united themselves to the holy Church. As all things there are in a state of rapid improvement, we deemed it most important that an additional number of churches should be built. Adopt joyfully the mode of procedure determined upon by us, which we have thought expedient to make known to your prudence, namely, that you should get written, on fine parchment, fifty volumes, easily legible and handy for use; these you must have transcribed by skilled calligraphers, accurately acquainted with their art. I mean, of course, copies of the Holy Scriptures, which, as you know, it is most necessary that the congregation of the Church should both have and use. A letter has been sent from our clemency to the Catholics of the diocese, in order that he may be careful that everything necessary for the undertaking is supplied.

The duty devolving upon you is to take measures to ensure the completion of these manuscripts within a short space of time. When they are finished, you are authorized by this letter to order two public carriages for the purpose of transmitting them to us; and thus the fair manuscripts will be easily submitted to our inspection. Appoint one of the deacons of your church to take charge of this part of the business; when he comes to us, he shall receive proofs of our benevolence. May God preserve you, beloved brother." What has been already said is enough to show, nay to clearly prove, how great zeal the emperor manifested on the matters of religion. I will, however, add his noble acts with regard to the Sepulcher of our Savior.

For having learnt that the idolaters, in their frantic rage, had heaped earth over the Lord's tomb, eager thus to destroy all remembrance of His Salvation, and had built over it a temple to the goddess of unbridled lust, in

mockery of the Virgin's birth, the emperor ordered the foul shrine to be demolished, and the soil polluted with abominable sacrifices to be carried away and thrown out far from the city, and a new temple of great size and beauty to be erected on the site. All this is clearly set forth in the letter which he wrote to the president of the church of Jerusalem, Macarius, whom we have already mentioned as a member of the great Nicene Council, and united with his brethren in withstanding the blasphemies of Arius. The following is the letter.

CHAPTER 16

Letter from the Emperor to Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, concerning the building of the Holy Church.

"Constantinus, the victorious and the great, to Macarius

The grace of our Savior is so wonderful, that no words are adequate to express the present marvel. The fact that the monument of His most holy sufferings should have remained concealed beneath the earth, during so long a course of years, until the time when, on the death of the common enemy of all, it was destined to shine forth on His liberated servants, surpasses every other subject of admiration.

If all the wise men throughout the world were collected into one place, and were to endeavor to express themselves worthily of it, they could not approach within an infinite distance of it; for this miracle is as much beyond all human power of belief, as heavenly things by their nature are mightier than human. Hence it is my first and only object that, as by new miracles the faith in the truth is daily confirmed, so the minds of us all may be more earnestly devoted to the holy law, wisely, zealously, and with one accord. As my design is, I think, now generally known, I desire that you, above all, should be assured that my most intense anxiety is to decorate with beautiful edifices that consecrated spot, which by God's command I have relieved from the burden of the foul idol which encumbered it. For from the beginning He declared it holy, and has rendered it still more holy from the time that He brought to light the proof and memorial of the sufferings of our Lord. I trust, then, to your sagacity to take every necessary care, not only that the basilica itself surpass all others; but that all its arrangements be such that this braiding may be incomparably superior to the most beautiful structures in every city throughout the world.

We have entrusted our friend Dracilianus, who discharges the functions of the most illustrious praefect of the province, with the superintendence of the work of the erection and decoration of the walls. He has received our orders to engage workmen and artisans, and to provide all that you may deem requisite for the building.

Let us know, by letter, when you have inspected the work, what columns or marbles you consider would be most ornamental, in order that whatever you may inform us is necessary for the work may be conveyed thither from all quarters of the world. For that which is of all places the most wonderful, ought to be decorated in accordance with its dignity. I wish to learn from you whether you think that the vaulted roof of the basilica ought to be paneled, or to be adorned in some other way; for if it is to be paneled it may also be gilt.

Your holiness must signify to the aforesaid officers, as soon as possible, what workmen and artificers, and what sums of money, are requisite; and let me know promptly not only about the marbles and columns, but also about the panelled ceiling, if you decide that this will be the most beautiful mode of construction. May God preserve you, beloved brother."

CHAPTER 17

Helena, Mother of the Emperor Constantine. Her zeal in the Erection of the Holy Church.

The bearer of these letters was no less illustrious a personage than the mother of the emperor, even she who was glorious in her offspring, whose piety was celebrated by all; she who brought forth that great luminary and nurtured him in piety. She did not shrink from the fatigue of the journey on account of her extreme old age, but undertook it a little before her death, which occurred in her eightieth year. When the empress beheld the place where the Savior suffered, she immediately ordered the idolatrous temple, which had been there erected, to be destroyed, and the very earth on which it stood to be removed.

When the tomb, which had been so long concealed, was discovered, three crosses were seen buried near the Lord's sepulcher. All held it as certain that one of these crosses was that of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the other two were those of the thieves who were crucified with Him. Yet they could not discern to which of the three the Body of the Lord had been brought nigh, and which had received the outpouring of His precious Blood.

But the wise and holy Macarius, the president of the city, resolved this question in the following manner. He caused a lady of rank, who had been long suffering from disease, to be touched by each of the crosses, with earnest prayer, and thus discerned the virtue residing in that of the Savior. For the instant this cross was brought near the lady, it expelled the sore disease, and made her whole.

The mother of the emperor, on learning the accomplishment of her desire, gave orders that a portion of the nails should be inserted in the royal helmet, in order that the head of her son might be preserved from the darts of his enemies. The other portion of the nails she ordered to be formed into the bridle of his horse, not only to ensure the safety of the emperor, but also to fulfill an ancient prophecy; for long before Zechariah, the prophet, had predicted that "There shall be upon the bridles of the horses Holiness unto the Lord Almighty." She had part of the cross of our Savior conveyed to the palace. The rest was enclosed in a covering of silver, and committed to the care of the bishop of the city, whom she exhorted to preserve it carefully, in order that it might be transmitted uninjured to posterity.

She then sent everywhere for workmen and for materials, and caused the most spacious and most magnificent churches to be erected. It is unnecessary to describe their beauty and grandeur; for all the pious, if I may so speak, hasten thither and behold the magnificence of the buildings. This celebrated and admirable empress performed another action worthy of being remembered. She assembled all the women who had vowed perpetual virginity, and placing them on couches, she herself fulfilled the duties of a handmaid, serving them with food and handing them cups and pouring out

wine, and bringing a basin and pitcher, and pouring out water to wash their hands.

After performing these and other laudable actions, the empress returned to her son, and not long after, she joyfully entered upon the other and a better life, after having given her son much pious advice and her fervent parting blessing. After her death, those honors were rendered to her memory which her steadfast and zealous service to God deserved.

CHAPTER 18

The unlawful Translation of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia.

The Arian party did not desist from their evil machinations. They had only signed the confession of faith for the purpose of disguising themselves in sheep's skins, while they were acting the part of wolves.

The holy Alexander, of Byzantium, for the city was not yet called Constantinople, who by his prayer had pierced Arius to the heart, had, at the period to which we are referring, been translated to a better life.

Eusebius, the propagator of impiety, little regarding the definition which, only a short time previously, he with the other bishops had agreed upon, without delay quitted Nicomedia, and seized upon the see of Constantinople, in direct violation of that canon which prohibits bishops and presbyters from being translated from one city to another.

But that those who carry their infatuation so far as to deny the divinity of the Only-Begotten Son of God, should likewise violate the other laws, cannot excite surprise. Nor was this the first occasion that he made this innovation; for, having been originally entrusted with the see of Berytus, he leapt from thence to Nicomedia. Whence he was expelled by the synod, on account of his manifest impiety, as was likewise Theognis, bishop of Nicaea. This is related a second time in the letters of the emperor Constantine; and I shall here insert the close of the letter which he wrote to the Nicomedians.

CHAPTER 19

Epistle of the Emperor Constantine against Eusebius and Theognis, addressed to the Nicomedians.

"Who has taught these doctrines to the innocent multitude? It is manifestly Eusebius, the co-operator in the cruelty of the tyrants. For that he was the creature of the tyrant has been clearly shown; and, indeed, is proved by the slaughter of the bishops, and by the fact that these victims were true bishops. The relentless persecution of the Christians proclaims this fact aloud. "I shall not here say anything of the insults directed against me, by which the conspiracies of the opposite faction were mainly carried out. But he went so far as to send spies to watch me, and scarcely refrained from raising troops in aid of the tyrant. Let not any one imagine that I allege what I am not prepared to prove. I am in possession of clear evidence; for I have caused the bishops and presbyters belonging to his following to be seized. But I pass over all these facts.

I only mention them for the purpose of making these persons ashamed of their conduct, and not from any feeling of resentment. There is one thing I fear, one thing which causes me anxiety, and that is to see you charged as accomplices; for you are influenced by the doctrines of Eusebius, and have thus been led away from the truth. But your cure will be speedy, if, after obtaining a bishop who holds pure and faithful doctrines, you will but look

unto God. This depends upon you alone; and you would, no doubt, have thus acted long ago, had not the aforesaid Eusebius come here, strongly supported by those then in power, and overturned all discipline.

As it is necessary to say something more about Eusebius, your patience will remember that a council was held in the city of Nicaea, at which, in obedience to my conscience, I was present, being actuated by no other motive than the desire of producing unanimity among all, and before all else of proving and dispelling the mischief which originated from the infatuation of Arius of Alexandria, and was straightway strengthened by the absurd and pernicious machinations of Eusebius.

But, beloved and much-honored brethren, you know not how earnestly and how disgracefully Eusebius, although convicted by the testimony of his own conscience, persevered in the support of the false doctrines which had been universally condemned. He secretly sent persons to me to petition on his behalf, and personally intreated my assistance in preventing his being ejected from his bishopric, although his crimes had been fully detected. God, who, I trust, will continue His goodness towards you and towards me, is witness to the truth of what I say.

I was then myself deluded and deceived by Eusebius, as you shall well know. In everything he acted according to his own desire, his mind being full of every kind of secret evil.

Omitting the relation of the rest of his misdeeds, it is well that you should be informed of the crime which he lately perpetrated in concert with Theognis, the ally of his folly. I had sent orders for the apprehension of certain individuals in Alexandria who had deserted our faith, and by whose means the firebrand of dissension was kindled. But these good gentlemen, forsooth, bishops, whom, by the clemency of the council, I had reserved for penitence, not only received them under their protection, but also participated in their evil deeds. Hence I came to the determination to punish these ungrateful men, by apprehending and banishing them to some far-distant region.

It is now your duty to look unto God with that same faith which it is clear that you have ever held, and in which it is fitting you should abide. So let us have cause of rejoicing in the appointment of pure, orthodox, and beneficent bishops. If any one should make mention of those destroyers, or presume to speak in their praise, let him know that his audacity will be repressed by the authority which has been committed to me as the servant of God. May God preserve you, beloved brethren! The above-mentioned bishops were then deposed and banished. Amphion was entrusted with the church of Nicomedia, and Chrestus with that of Nicaea. But the exiled bishops, employing their customary artifices, abused the benevolence of the emperor, renewed the previous contests, and regained their former power.

CHAPTER 20

The artful Machinations of Eusebius and his followers against the Holy Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch.

Eusebius, as I have already stated, seized the diocese of Constantinople by force. And thus having acquired great power in that city, frequently visiting and holding familiar intercourse with the emperor, he gained confidence and formed plots against those who were foremost in the

support of the truth. He at first reigned a desire of going to Jerusalem, to see the celebrated edifices there erected: and the emperor, who was deceived by his flattery, allowed him to set out with the utmost honor, providing him with carriages, and the rest of his equipage and retinue.

Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, who, as we have before said, was his accomplice in his evil designs, traveled with him. When they arrived at Antioch, they put on the mask of friendship, and were received with the utmost deference. Eustathius, the great champion of the faith treated them with fraternal kindness. When they arrived at the holy places, they had an interview with those who were of the same opinions as themselves, namely, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, Aetius, bishop of Lydda, Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea, and others who had imbibed the Arian sentiments; they made known the plot they had hatched to them, and went with them to Antioch.

The pretext for their journey was, that due honor might be rendered to Eusebius; but their real motive was their war against religion. They bribed a low woman, who made a traffic of her beauty, to sell them her tongue, and then repaired to the council, and when all the spectators had been ordered to retire, they introduced the wretched woman. She held a babe in her arms, of which she loudly and impudently affirmed that Eustathius was the father. Eustathius, conscious of his innocence, asked her whether she could bring forward any witness to prove what she had advanced. She replied that she could not: yet these equitable judges admitted her to oath, although it is said in the law, that "at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the matter be established;" and the apostle says, "against an elder receive not any accusation but before two or three witnesses."

But they despised these divine laws, and admitted the accusation against this great man without any witnesses. When the woman had again declared upon oath that Eustathius was the father of the babe, these truth-loving judges condemned him as an adulterer. When the other bishops, who upheld the apostolic doctrines, being ignorant of all these intrigues, openly opposed the sentence, and advised Eustathius not to submit to it, the originators of the plot promptly repaired to the emperor, and endeavored to persuade him that the accusation was true, and the sentence of deposition just; and they succeeded in obtaining the banishment of this champion of piety and chastity, as an adulterer and a tyrant. He was conducted across Thrace to a city of Illyricum.

CHAPTER 21

Bishops of Heretical opinions ordained in Antioch after the Banishment of St. Eustathius.

Eulalius was first consecrated in place of Eustathius. But Eulalius surviving his elevation only a short period, it was intended that Eusebius of Palestine should be translated to this bishopric. Eusebius, however, refused the appointment, and the emperor forbade its being conferred on him. Next Euphronius was put forward, who also dying, after a lapse of only one year and a few months, the see was conferred on Flaccillus. All these bishops secretly clung to the Arian heresy.

Hence it was that most of those individuals, whether of the clergy or of the laity, who valued the true religion, left the churches and formed assemblies among themselves. They were called Eustathians, since it was after the banishment of

Eustathius that they began to hold their meetings. The wretched woman above-mentioned was soon after attacked by a severe and protracted illness, and then avowed the imposture in which she had been engaged, and made known the whole plot, not only to two or three, but to a very large number of priests. She confessed that she had been bribed to bring this false and impudent charge, but yet that her oath was not altogether false, as a certain Eustathius, a coppersmith, was the father of the babe. Such were some of the crimes perpetrated in Antioch by this most excellent faction.

CHAPTER 22

Conversion of the Indians.

At this period, the light of the knowledge of God was for the first time shed upon India. The courage and the piety of the emperor had become celebrated throughout the world; and the barbarians, having learnt by experience to choose peace rather than war, were able to enjoy intercourse with one another without fear.

Many persons, therefore, set out on long journeys some for the desire of making discoveries, others from a spirit of commercial enterprise. About this period a native of Tyre, acquainted with Greek philosophy, desiring to penetrate into the interior of India, set off for this purpose with his two young nephews. When he had accomplished the object of his wishes, he embarked for his own country. The ship being compelled to put in to land in order to obtain a fresh supply of water, the barbarians fell upon her, drowned some of the crew, and took the others prisoners. The uncle was among the number of those who were killed, and the lads were conducted to the king. The name of the one was Aedesius, and of the other Frumentius. The king of the country, in course of time, perceiving their intelligence, promoted them to the superintendence of his household. If any one should doubt the truth of this account, let him recall to mind the history of Joseph in the kingdom of Egypt, and also the history of Daniel, and of the three champions of the truth, who, from being captives, became princes of Babylon.

The king died; but these young men remained with his son, and were advanced to still greater power. As they had been brought up in the true religion, they exhorted the merchants who visited the country to assemble, according to the custom of Romans, to take part in the divine liturgy. After a considerable time they solicited the king to reward their services by permitting them to return to their own country. They obtained his permission, and safely reached Roman territory.

AEdesius directed his course towards Tyre, but Frumentius, whose religious zeal was greater than the natural feeling of affection for his relatives, proceeded to Alexandria, and informed the bishop of that city that the Indians were deeply anxious to obtain spiritual light. Athanasius then held the rudder of that church; he heard the story, and then "Who," said he, "better than you yourself can scatter the mists of ignorance, and introduce among this people the light of Divine preaching?" After having said this, he conferred upon him the episcopal dignity, and sent him to the spiritual culture of that nation. The newly-ordained bishop left this country, caring nothing for the mighty ocean, and returned to the untilled ground of his work. There, having the grace of God to labour with him, he cheerfully and successfully played the husbandman, catching those who sought to gainsay his words by works of

apostolic wonder, and thus, by these marvels, confirming his teaching, he continued each day to take many souls alive.

CHAPTER 23

Conversion of the Iberians.

Frumentius thus led the Indians to the knowledge of God. Iberia, about the same time, was guided into the way of truth by a captive woman. She continued instant in prayer, allowing herself no softer bed than a sack spread upon the ground, and accounted fasting her highest luxury. This solemnity was rewarded by gifts similar to those of the Apostles. The barbarians, who were ignorant of medicine, were accustomed, when attacked by disease, to go to one another's houses, in order to ask those who had suffered in a similar way, and had got well, by what means they had been cured. In accordance with this custom, a mother who had a sick child, repaired to this admirable woman, to inquire if she knew of any cure for the disease. The latter took the child, placed it upon her bed, and prayed to the Creator of the world to be propitious to it, and cure the disease. He heard her prayer, and made it whole.

This extraordinary woman hence obtained great celebrity; and the queen, who was suffering from a severe disease, hearing of her by report, sent for her. The captive held herself in very low estimation, and would not accept the invitation of the queen. But the queen, forced by her sore need, and careless of her royal dignity, herself ran to the captive. The latter made the queen lie down upon her mean bed, and once again applied to her disease the efficacious remedy of prayer. The queen was healed, and offered as rewards for her cure, gold, silver, tunics, and mantles, and such gifts as she thought worthy of possession, and such as royal munificence should bestow. The holy woman told her that she did not want any of these, but that she would deem her greatest reward to be the queen's knowledge of true religion. She then, as far as in her lay, explained the Divine doctrines, and exhorted her to erect a church in honor of Christ who had made her whole.

The queen then returned to the palace, and excited the admiration of her consort, by the suddenness of her cure; she then made known to him the power of that God whom the captive adored, and besought him to acknowledge the one only God, and to erect a church to Him, and to lead all the nation to worship Him. The king was greatly delighted with the miracle which had been performed upon the queen, but he would not consent to erect a church. A short time after he went out hunting, and the loving Lord made a prey of him as He did of Paul; for a sudden darkness enveloped him and forbade him to move from the spot; while those who were hunting with him enjoyed the customary sunlight, and he alone was bound with the fetters of blindness. In his perplexity he found a way of escape, for calling to mind his former unbelief, he implored the help of the God of the captive woman, and immediately the darkness was dispelled. He then went to the marvelous captive, and asked her to show him how a church ought to be built. He who once filled Bezaleel with architectural skill, graciously enabled this woman to devise the plan of a church.

The woman set about the plan, and men began to dig and build. When the edifice was completed, the roof put on, and every thing supplied except the priests, this admirable woman found means to obtain these also. For she persuaded the king to send an embassy to the Roman emperor asking for

teachers of religion. The king accordingly dispatched an embassy for the purpose. The emperor Constantine, who was warmly attached to the cause of religion, when informed of the purport of the embassy, gladly welcomed the ambassadors, and selected a bishop endowed with great faith, wisdom, and virtue, and presenting him with many gifts, sent him to the Iberians, that he might make known to them the true God. Not content with having granted the requests of the Iberians, he of his own accord undertook the protection of the Christians in Persia; for, learning that they were persecuted by the heathens, and that their king himself, a slave to error, was contriving various cunning plots for their destruction, he wrote to him, entreating him to embrace the Christian religion himself, as well as to honor its professors. His own letter will render his earnestness in the cause the plainer.

CHAPTER 24

Letter written by the Emperor Constantine to Sapor, the King of Persia, respecting the Christians.

"In protecting the holy faith I enjoy the light of truth, and by following the light of truth I attain to fuller knowledge of the faith. Therefore, as facts prove, I recognize that most holy worship as teaching the knowledge of the most holy God. This service I profess. With the power of this God for my ally, beginning at the furthest boundaries of the ocean, I have, one after another, quickened every part of the world with hope.

Now all the peoples once enslaved by many tyrants, worn by their daily miseries, and almost extinct, have been kindled to fresh life by receiving the protection of the State.

The God I reverence is He whose emblem my dedicated troops bear on their shoulders, marching whither so ever the cause of justice leads them, and rewarding me by their splendid victories. I confess that I reverence this God with eternal remembrance. Him, who dwells in the highest heavens, I contemplate with pure and unpolluted mind. On Him I call on bended knees, shunning all abominable blood, all unseemly and ill-omened odorous, all fire of incantation, and all pollution by which unlawful and shameful error has destroyed whole nations and hurled them down to hell.

God does not permit those gifts which, in His beneficent Providence, He has bestowed upon men for the supply of their wants to be perverted according to every man's desire. He only requires of men a pure mind and a spotless soul, and by these He weighs their deeds of virtue and piety. He is pleased with gentleness and modesty; He loves the meek, and hates those who excite contentions; He loves faith, chastises unbelief; He breaks all power of boasting, and punishes the insolence of the proud. Men exalted with pride He utterly overthrows, and rewards the humble and the patient according to their deserts. Of a just sovereignty He makes much, strengthens it by His aid, and guards the counsels of Princes with the blessing of peace.

I know that I am not in error, my brother, when I confess that this God is the Ruler and the Father of all men, a truth which many who preceded me upon the imperial throne were so deluded by error as to attempt to deny. But their end was so dreadful that they have become a fearful warning to all mankind, to deter others from similar iniquity. Of these I count that man one whom the wrath of God, like a thunderbolt, drove hence into your country, and who made notorious the memorial of his shame which exists in your own

land. Indeed it appears to have been well ordered that the age in which we live should be distinguished by the open and manifest punishments inflicted on such persons. I myself have witnessed the end of those who have persecuted the people of God by unlawful edicts. Hence it is that I more especially thank God for having now, by His special Providence, restored peace to those who observe His law, in which they exalt and rejoice.

I am led to expect future happiness and security whenever God in His goodness unites all men in the exercise of the one pure and true religion. You may therefore well understand how exceedingly I rejoice to hear that the finest provinces of Persia are adorned abundantly with men of this class; I mean Christians; for it is of them I am speaking. All then is well with you and with them, for you will have the Lord of all merciful and beneficent to you. Since then you are so mighty and so pious, I commend the Christians to your care, and leave them in your protection. Treat them, I beseech you, with the affection that befits your goodness. Your fidelity in this respect will confer on yourself and on us inexpressible benefits.

This excellent emperor felt so much solicitude for all who had embraced the true religion, that he not only watched over those who were his own subjects, but also over the subjects of other sovereigns. For this reason he was blessed with the special protection of God, so that although he held the reins of the whole of Europe and of Africa, and the greater part of Asia, his subjects were all well disposed to his rule, and obedient to his government. Foreign nations submitted to his sway, some by voluntary submission, others overcome in war. Trophies were everywhere erected, and the emperor was styled Victorious. The praises of Constantine have, however, been proclaimed by many other writers. We must resume the thread of our history. This emperor, who deserves the highest fame, devoted his whole mind to matters worthy of the apostles, while men who had been admitted to the sacerdotal dignity not only neglected to edify the church, but endeavored to uproot it from the very foundations. They invented all manner of false accusations against those who governed the church in accordance with the doctrines taught by the apostles, and did their best to depose and banish them. Their envy was not satisfied by the infamous falsehood which they had invented against Eustathius, but they had recourse to every artifice to effect the overthrow of another great bulwark of religion. These tragic occurrences I shall now relate as concisely as possible.

CHAPTER 25

An account of the plot formed against St. Athanasius.

Alexander, that admirable bishop, who had successfully withstood the blasphemies of Arius, died five months after the council of Nicaea, and was succeeded in the episcopate of the church of Alexandria by Athanasius. Trained from his youth in sacred studies, Athanasius had attracted general admiration in each ecclesiastical office that he filled.

He had, at the general council, so defended the doctrines of the apostles, that while he won the approbation of all the champions of the truth, its opponents learned to look on their antagonist as a personal foe and public enemy. He had attended the council as one of the retinue of Alexander, then a very young man, although he was the principal deacon. When those who had denied the only-begotten Son of God heard that the helm of the Church of

Alexandria had been entrusted to his hands knowing as they did by experience his zeal for the truth, they thought that his rule would prove the destruction of their authority. They, therefore, resorted to the following machinations against him. In order to avert suspicion, they bribed some of the adherents of Melitius, who, although deposed by the council of Nicaea, had persevered in exciting commotions in the Thebaid and in the adjacent part of Egypt, and persuaded them to go to the emperor, and to accuse Athanasius of levying a tax upon Egypt, and giving the gold collected to a certain man who was preparing to usurp the imperial power. The emperor being deceived by this story, Athanasius was brought to Constantinople. Upon his arrival he proved that the accusation was false, and had the charge given him by God restored to him. This is shown by a letter from the emperor to the Church of Alexandria of which I shall transcribe only the concluding paragraph. A Portion of the Letter from the Emperor Constantine to the Alexandrians.

"Believe me, my brethren, the wicked men were unable to effect anything against your bishop. They surely could have had no other design than to waste our time, and to leave themselves no place for repentance in this life. Do you, therefore, help yourselves, and love, that which wins your love; and exert all your power in the expulsion of those who wish to destroy your concord. Look unto God, and love one another. I joyfully welcomed Athanasius your bishop; and I have conversed with him as with one whom I know to be a man of God."

CHAPTER 26

Another plot against Athanasius.

The calumniators of Athanasius, however, did not desist from their attempts. On the contrary, they devised so bold a fiction against him, that it surpassed every invention of the ancient writers of the tragic or comic stage. They again bribed individuals of the same party, and brought them before the emperor, vociferously accusing that champion of virtue of many abominable crimes. The leaders of the party were Eusebius, Theognis, and Theodorus, bishop of Perinthus, a city now called Heraclea. After having accused Athanasius of crimes which they described as too shocking to be tolerated, or even listened to, they persuaded the emperor to convene a council at Caesarea in Palestine, where Athanasius had many enemies, and to command that his cause should be there tried. The emperor, utterly ignorant of the plot that had been devised, was persuaded by them to give the required order. But the holy Athanasius, well aware of the malevolence of those who were to try him, refused to appear at the council. This served as a pretext to those who opposed the truth to criminate him still further; and they accused him before the emperor of contumacy and arrogance. Nor were their hopes altogether frustrated; for the emperor, although exceedingly forbearing, became exasperated by their representations, and wrote to him in an angry manner, commanding him to repair to Tyre. Here the council was ordered to assemble, from the suspicion, as I think, that Athanasius had an apprehension of Caesarea on account of its bishop. The emperor wrote also to the council in a style consistent with his devoted piety. His letter is as follows.

CHAPTER 27

Epistle of the Emperor Constantine to the Council of Tyre.

"Constantinus Augustus to the holy council assembled in Tyre.

In the general prosperity which distinguishes the present time, it seems right that the Catholic Church should likewise be exempt from trouble, and that the servants of Christ should be freed from every reproach. "But certain individuals instigated by the mad desire of contention, not to say leading a life unworthy of their profession, are endeavoring to throw all into disorder. This appears to me to be the greatest of all possible calamities. I beseech you, therefore, in post haste, as the phrase goes, to assemble together, without any delay, in formal synod; so that you may support those who require your assistance. heal the brethren who are in danger, restore unanimity to the divided members, and rectify the disorders of the Church while time permits; and thus restore to those great provinces the harmony which, alas! the arrogance of a few men has destroyed. I believe every one would admit that you could not perform anything so pleasing in the sight of God, so surpassing all my prayers as well as your own, or so conducive to your own reputation, as to restore peace. "Do not you therefore delay, but when you have come together with all that sincerity and fidelity which our Savior demands of all His servants, almost in words that we can hear, endeavor with redoubled eagerness to put a fitting end to these dissensions. "Nothing shall be omitted on my part to further the interests of our religion. I have done all that you recommended in your letters. I have sent to those bishops whom you specified, directing them to repair to the council for the purpose of deliberating with you upon ecclesiastical matters. I have also sent Dionysius, a man of consular rank, to counsel those who are to sit in synod with you, and to be himself an eye witness of your proceedings, and particularly of the order and regularity that is maintained. If any one should dare on the present occasion also to disobey our command, and refuse to come to the council, which, however, I do not anticipate, an officer will be dispatched immediately to send him into banishment by imperial order, that he may learn not to oppose the decrees enacted by the emperor for the support of truth. "All that now devolves upon your holinesses is to decide with unanimous judgment, without partiality or prejudice, in accordance with the ecclesiastical and apostolic rule, and to devise suitable remedies for the offenses which may have resulted from error; in order that the Church may be freed from all reproach, that my anxiety may be diminished, that peace may be restored to those now at variance, and that your renown may be increased. May God preserve you, beloved brethren." The bishops accordingly repaired to the council of Tyre. Amongst them were those who were accused of holding heterodox doctrines; of whom Asclepas, bishop of Gaza, was one. The admirable Athanasius also attended. I shall first dwell on the tragedy of the accusation, and shall then relate the proceedings of this celebrated tribunal.

CHAPTER 28

The Council of Tyre.

Arsenius was a bishop of the Meletian faction. The men of his party put him in a place of concealment, and charged him to remain there as long as possible. They then cut off the right hand of a corpse, embalmed it, placed it in a wooden case, and carried it about everywhere, declaring that it was the hand of Arsenius, who had been murdered by Athanasius. But the all-seeing eye did not permit Arsenius to remain long in concealment. He was first seen alive in Egypt; then in the Thebaid; afterwards he was led by Divine

providence to Tyre, where the hand of tragic fame was brought before the council. The friends of Athanasius hunted him up, and brought him to an inn, where they compelled him to lie hid for a time. Early in the morning the great Athanasius came to the council. First of all a woman of lewd life was brought in, who deposed in a loud and impudent manner that she had vowed perpetual virginity, but that Athanasius, who had lodged in her house, had violated her chastity. After she had made her charge, the accused came forward, and with him a presbyter worthy of all praise, by name Timotheus. The court ordered Athanasius to reply to the indictment; but he was silent, as if he had not been Athanasius. Timotheus, however, addressed her thus: "Have I, O woman, ever conversed with you, or have I entered your house?" She replied with still greater effrontery, screaming aloud in her dispute with Timotheus, and, pointing at him with her finger, exclaimed, "It was you who robbed me of my virginity; it was you who stripped me of my chastity;" adding other indelicate expressions which are used by shameless women. The devisors of this calumny were put to shame, and all the bishops who were privy to it, blushed. The woman was now being led out of the Court, but the great Athanasius protested that instead of sending her away they ought to examine her, and learn the name of the hatcher of the plot. Hereupon his accusers yelled and shouted that he had perpetrated other viler crimes, of which it was utterly impossible that he could by any art or ingenuity ⁶³ be cleared; and that eyes, not ears, would decide on the evidence. Having said this, they exhibited the famous box and exposed the embalmed hand to view. At this sight all the spectators uttered a loud cry. Some believed the accusation to be true; the others had no doubt of the falsehood, and thought that Arsenius was lurking somewhere or other in concealment. When at length, after some difficulty, a little silence was obtained, the accused asked his judges whether any of them knew Arsenius. Several of them replying that they knew him well, Athanasius gave orders that he should be brought before them. Then he again asked them, "Is this the right Arsenius? Is this the man I murdered? this the man those people mutilated after his murder by cutting off his right hand?" When they had confessed that it was the same individual, Athanasius pulled off his cloak, and exhibited two hands, both the right and the left, and said, "Let no one seek for a third hand, for man has received two hands from the Creator and no more." Even after this plain proof the calumniators and the judges who were privy to the crime, instead of hiding themselves, or praying that the earth might open and swallow them up, raised an uproar and commotion in the assembly, and declared that Athanasius was a sorcerer, and that he had by his magical incantations bewitched the eyes of men. The very men who a moment before had accused him of murder now strove to tear him in pieces and to murder him. But those whom the emperor had entrusted with the preservation of order saved the life of Athanasius by dragging him away, and hurrying him on board a ship. When he appeared before the emperor, he described all the dramatic plot which had been got up to ruin him. The calumniators sent bishops attached to their faction into Mareotis, viz., Theognis, bishop of Nicaea, Theodorus, bishop of Perinthus, Maris, bishop of Chalcedon, Narcissus of Cilicia, with others of the same sentiments. Mareotis is a district near Alexandria, and derives its name from the lake Maria. Here they invented other falsehoods, and, forging the reports of the trial, mixed up the

charges which had been shown to be false with fresh accusations, as if they had been true, and despatched them to the emperor.

CHAPTER 29

Consecration of the Church of Jerusalem.- Banishment of St. Athanasius.

All the bishops who were present at the council of Tyre, with all others from every quarter, were commanded by the emperor to proceed to Aelia to consecrate the churches which he had there erected. The emperor dispatched also a number of officials of the most kindly disposition, remarkable for piety and fidelity, whom he ordered to furnish abundant supplies of provisions, not only to the bishops and their followers, but to the vast multitudes who flocked from all parts to Jerusalem. The holy altar was decorated with imperial hangings and with golden vessels set with gems. When the splendid festival was concluded, each bishop returned to his own diocese. The emperor was highly gratified when informed of the splendor and magnificence of the function, and blessed the Author of all good for having thus granted his petition. Athanasius having complained of his unjust condemnation, the emperor commanded the bishops against whom this complaint was directed to present themselves at court. Upon their arrival, they desisted from urging any of their former calumnies, because they knew how clearly they could be refuted; but they made it appear that Athanasius had threatened to prevent the exportation of corn. The emperor believed what they said, and banished him to a city of Gaul called Treves. This occurred in the thirtieth year of the emperor's reign.

CHAPTER 30

Will of the blessed Emperor Constantine.

A Year and a few months afterwards the emperor was taken ill at Nicomedia, a city of Bithynia, and, knowing the uncertainty of human life, he received the holy rite of baptism, which he had intended to have deferred until he could be baptized in the river Jordan. He left as heirs of the imperial throne his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, the youngest. He ordered that the great Athanasius should return to Alexandria, and expressed this decision in the presence of Eusebius, who did all he could to dissuade him.

CHAPTER 31

Apology for Constantine.

It ought not to excite astonishment that Constantine was so far deceived as to send so many great men into exile: for he believed the assertions of bishops of high fame and reputation, who skillfully concealed their malice. Those who are acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures know that the holy David, although he was a prophet, was deceived; and that too not by a priest, but by one who was a menial, a slave, and a rascal. I mean Ziba, who deluded the king by lies against Mephibosheth, and thus obtained his land. It is not to condemn the prophet that I thus speak; but that I may defend the emperor, by showing the weakness of human nature, and to teach that credit should not be given only to those who advance accusations, even though they may appear worthy of credit; but that the other party ought also to be heard, and that one ear should be left open to the accused.

CHAPTER 32

The end of the Holy Emperor Constantine.

The emperor was now translated from his earthly dominions to a better kingdom. The body of the emperor was enclosed in a golden coffin, and was carried to Constantinople by the governors of the provinces, the military commanders, and the other officers of state, preceded and followed by the whole army, all bitterly deploring their loss; for Constantine had been as an affectionate father to them all. The body of the emperor was allowed to remain in the palace until the arrival of his sons, and high honors were rendered to it. But these details require no description here, as a full account has been given by other writers. From their works, which are easy of access, may be learnt how greatly the Ruler of all honors His faithful servants. If any one should be tempted to unbelief, let him look at what occurs now near the tomb and the statue of Constantine, and then he must admit the truth of what God has said in the Scriptures, "Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."