

Anonymous Church History (CPG 6034)

[often falsely attributed to Gelasius of Cyzicus]

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An Account of the Holy Synod at Nicaea

About the things which the heretics argued against the holy fathers,
and the proclamation of the victorious orthodox teaching

Book 2

- 2.1.1 “Therefore, when Constantine was proclaimed sole emperor and obtained absolute power by the assistance God had given him, he promoted the interests of Christians ever more eagerly. He did this in various ways, for he possessed a burning faith as well as a deeply rooted and extremely faithful devotion to the God of all. The whole church under heaven enjoyed profound peace.”²
- 2.1.2 Let us now listen to what the most excellent ploughman of ecclesiastical farming, truth-loving Eusebius, successor of the renowned Pamphilus, says:
- 2.1.3 “Licinius therefore followed a path of impiety like that of the godless tyrants and, as one might expect, staggered off the same cliff as they had.
- 2.1.4 And so he lay dead in the place where he had fallen, but Maximus Victor Augustus Constantinus, who excelled in every pious virtue, together with his son Crispus, a God-loving Caesar who was just like his father in everything, regained control of the eastern lands and made the Roman Empire one united empire as it formerly had been. Thus he brought peace to the whole globe, from east to west, over the north and south poles, and over the equator as well.
- 2.1.5 As a result, mankind had no reason to fear that anyone would oppress them, and they celebrated joyous and jovial festival days. Everything was full of light, and those who had previously been downcast greeted each other with smiling faces and beaming eyes. They even sang songs of praise throughout city and countryside. They gave honor especially to God their Emperor and Christ his true Son because they had been taught to do so, and then they honored their pious emperor together with his God-loving sons.

¹ Hansen, G.C. ed. *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte: (Gelasius Cyzicenus, CPG 6034)*. GCS, N.F. 9. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2002.

² Hansen identifies 2.1.1 as a quotation from Gelasius of Caesarea, *H.E., Fragm. 9*.

- 2.1.6 They forgot all about the evils of the past and all ungodliness, and they enjoyed good times and expected even better times to come. Thus decrees and laws which displayed the victorious emperor's kindness were introduced everywhere, revealing his generosity and true piety.
- 2.1.7 In this way, after he had cleaned out all tyranny, Constantine and his sons' absolute rule over the empire was secure and unrivaled."³
- 2.1.8 Those, then, are the exact words of the ecclesiastical history which the most reliable of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, Eusebius Pamphili, left behind for us, ten books in all, after he had endured so much labor and had investigated, putting his account together from the simple sources.
- 2.1.9 He began at the Lord's coming and ended at the times just discussed after more than a little labor. (How else could he have taken on such a great task and preserved the unity of such a vast collection?) As I just said, he expended much effort and a vast amount of labor.
- 2.1.10 However, no one should form an opinion of the man based on the things alleged about him, such as that at one time he somewhat favored Arius's depraved blasphemy. Rather, he should be confident that even if he said or wrote some things which are considered a little bit Arian, it was not because he agreed with Arius's ungodly opinion, but because of his straightforward simplicity, just as he himself also testified in his statement of defense, which he sent to the community of orthodox bishops, thus giving full assurance about his beliefs.
- 2.1.11 Everyone who rightly takes into consideration when the man lived will realize as a result that the teachings of Arius had never yet been heard in any place and will conclude that he was telling the truth. This was also demonstrated at the Synod of Nicaea when he contended against Arius's ungodliness on behalf of the apostolic and orthodox faith.
- 2.1.12 But let us return to the sequence of events of our church history.⁴ Christ our Savior's church throughout the world enjoyed profound peace, which God, the Absolute Emperor, obtained for it through his servant Constantine and his sons.
- 2.1.13 After the martyrdom of blessed Peter, bishop of the church of Alexandria, who by his martyrdom became perfect and received the imperishable crown for his struggle, the church there was without a bishop for one year.
- 2.1.14 After that year, Achillas was elected to the episcopal see of the holy martyr Peter. Achillas was a strong, good-natured, holy-minded man who stood out because of his

³ The quotation from 2.1.3-7 is from Eusebius, *H.E.*, 10.9.5-9.

⁴ After the long aside in 2.1.2-11 on Eusebius, the author again picks up his narrative of the church's progress under the rule of Constantine.

godly reverence and exceedingly great wisdom, as the accurate old writings relate to us. After much persuasion, he received Arius into the diaconate.

- 2.1.15 When Achillas died only five months after becoming bishop, Alexander immediately took up authority as bishop over the church of Alexandria. He was an honorable man in every respect to all the clergy and laity of the church. He was small in stature, generous, eloquent, and gentle. He loved God, loved people, and loved the poor. He was helpful and kind to all, as much as or more than anyone else. He himself also appointed Arius priest very near to him.
- 2.1.16 In his time, the churches enjoyed peace, which kept shining ever more radiantly day by day and brought them into absolute harmony with each other. This peace was extolled everywhere on earth, to the benefit of the holy martyrs. But the devil could not stand the fact that the number of faithful people of the church was growing so much because of the heavenly worship of God within it, so he once again instigated tumult through a love of strife among those in the church.
- 2.2.1 “That priest named Arius, whom, as we said, Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, considered worthy of such an honor, appeared to be a rather pious man, but in reality he was a hot-headed lover of glory and innovation.⁵ He began to promote some strange teachings about the faith in Christ which no one had ever sought out or introduced before.
- 2.2.2 By attempting to divide our only-begotten Lord Jesus Christ from the indescribable and eternal divine nature of the Father, he became responsible for much tumult throughout the church.
- 2.2.3 But Alexander, of course, with his gentle nature, wanted to change Arius for the better through appropriate pieces of advice, so for a time he decided not to pass judgment on him yet. Because of this, the pestilential heretical condition spread to many. Then, as from a small spark, a great fire burst out.
- 2.2.4 And the evil which began in the church of Alexandria ran rampant throughout other cities and districts.
- 2.2.5 Finally, when Alexander realized that the problem was becoming even worse, he convened a council of the bishops under him and deposed Arius. He explained his reasoning to his fellow ministers, laying out the situation concerning Arius rather extensively and inspiring zeal to destroy the heresy. He encouraged them to prepare especially to be discerning by writing to them as follows:”⁶
- 2.3.1 “To our beloved and most honorable fellow ministers everywhere within the catholic church, from Alexander: Greetings in the Lord.

⁵ Some manuscripts say “vanity” instead of “innovation.”

⁶ The following letter was preserved in Socrates, *H.E.* 1.6.4-30; in Athanasius, *De decr.* 35-37; and, according to Hansen, in Gelasius, *Fragm.* 10.

- 2.3.2 Since the catholic church is one body, and since the Holy Scriptures command us to preserve the bond of unity and peace,⁷ it is fitting that we write and report to each other the things which are happening around each of us so that if one part suffers or rejoices, we may all suffer or rejoice with them.⁸
- 2.3.3 Therefore, we are writing that in the area under our jurisdiction, lawless men who attack Christ have recently gone out teaching apostasy, which one could reasonably regard and label a precursor to the Antichrist.
- 2.3.4 I would have preferred to handle this kind of matter quietly in order to destroy the evil among the apostates in private and prevent this kind of thing from advancing to other places and defiling the ears of any innocent people. But then Eusebius, who is now in Nicomedia, thinking he could take church matters into his own hands, abandoned the church of Beirut because he jealously desired the church of Nicomedia. Since he has not been punished for these actions of his, he has become the ringleader of these apostates, and he has set out to write letters to all parts commending them in order to drag some unsuspecting people down into this latest heresy which opposes Christ. Because I know what is written in the law, I must no longer be silent, but must finally report to all of you so that you know who the apostates are and what the wretched slogans of their heresy are, and so that you do not listen if Eusebius writes to you.
- 2.3.5 Through these men he now wants to revive his old evil ideas which he kept secret for a time. Thus he makes a show of writing for their sake, but in reality he shows that he is acting for his own sake.
- 2.3.6 These, then, are the ones who have become apostates: Arius, Achilles, Thales, Carpones, another Arius, Sarmates, Euzoius, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius, and Gaius; as well as Secundus and Theonas, who were once called bishops.
- 2.3.7 These are the kinds of things they have invented and speak contrary to the Scriptures: ‘God was not always a Father; rather, there was a time when God was not a Father. The Word of God did not always exist; rather, he came into being [γίγνομαι] from that which did not exist. God, who did exist, made one who did not exist from that which did not exist. Therefore, he did not always exist. The Son is a creature [κτίσμα] and a product [ποίημα]. He is not similar [ὅμοιος] in essence [οὐσία] to the Father, and by nature [φύσις] he is neither the true Word of the Father nor his true Wisdom; rather, he is one of the created products. Only by a misuse of the terms is he called “Word” and “Wisdom.”
- 2.3.8 For he himself came into being by God’s own word and by the wisdom which is in God, by which God made all things, including him. Therefore, he is mutable and subject to change in respect to his nature, just like all rational beings.

⁷ Cf. Ephesians 4:3.

⁸ Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26.

- 2.3.9 The Word is foreign to, different than, and separate from the essence of God, and the Father is unable to be described by the Son. The Word does not know the Father perfectly or exactly, nor can he see him perfectly, for the Son, as he is, does not even know his own essence. He came into being for our sake in order that God might create us through him, as through a tool. He would not have come into existence if God had not wanted to make us.’
- 2.3.10 Indeed, when someone asked them whether it was possible for the Word of God to fall away like the devil fell away, they fearlessly replied, ‘Yes, he could, for he has a mutable nature because he is made and created.’ We then assembled with around one hundred bishops from across Egypt and Libya and anathematized Arius and his inner circle⁹ who say these things and who act shamelessly in these matters, as well as those who follow them.
- 2.3.11 Eusebius and his close supporters, however, welcomed them and eagerly tried to blend their falsehood with the truth and their impiety with piety. But they will not succeed, for the truth shall prevail,¹⁰ and there is no ‘fellowship at all between light and darkness,’ nor is there ‘any agreement between Christ and Belial’ [2 Corinthians 6:14-15].
- 2.3.12 Who has ever heard such things? Or who, as he hears them now, is not astonished, plugging his ears to stop hearing these filthy words? Who hears John say, ‘In the beginning was the Word’ [John 1:1], and does not condemn those who say, ‘He did not always exist’? Or who hears in his Gospel, ‘only-begotten Son’ [John 1:18], and ‘through him all things were made’ [John 1:3], and does not hate those who say he is one of the products? How could he be one of the things which came into existence through him? Or how could he who, according to them, is numbered with all things, be only-begotten? How could he be from things which did not exist when the Father says, ‘My heart overflowed with a good Word’ [Psalm 45:1, LXX 44:2], and ‘I begot you from the womb before the morning star’ [Psalm 110:3, LXX 109:3]?
- 2.3.13 Or how could he who is the perfect image and reflection of the Father, who says, ‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father’ [John 14:9], have an essence unlike [ἀνόμοιος] the Father’s? If the Son is the Word and the Wisdom of God, how is it that he did not always exist? It is as if they were saying that there was a time when the Father was unreasoning [ἄλογος] and unwise [ἄσοφος].
- 2.3.14 How could the one who himself says, ‘I am in the Father, and the Father is in me’ [John 14:10], and ‘I and the Father are one’ [John 10:30], and who says through the prophet, ‘Behold, I am, and I do not change’ [Malachi 3:6], be mutable and subject to change? Even though one can interpret the passage as referring to the Father himself, it nevertheless applies more readily to the Word because although he became man, he did not change. Rather, as the apostle said, ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today,

⁹ Greek τοὺς περὶ Ἄρειον.

¹⁰ 1 Esdras 3:12 (LXX).

and forever' [Hebrews 13:8]. What, then, has persuaded them to say that he came into being for our sake, even though Paul says, 'All things exist for him and through him' [Hebrews 2:10]?¹¹

- 2.3.15 We need not be surprised by their blasphemous statement that the Son does not know the Father completely, for the moment they decided to fight against Christ, they also cast aside his words, 'Just as the Father knows me, I also know the Father' [John 10:15]. If in fact the Father knows the Son only in part, then it follows that the Son does not know the Father completely. But if it is incorrect to say this, and the Father knows the Son completely, then it follows that just as the Father knows his own Word, so also the Word knows his own Father, whose Word he is.
- 2.3.16 By saying these things in explanation of the Holy Scriptures, we put them to shame many times, and they, in turn, kept changing like chameleons, contentiously striving to bring upon themselves the consequence which has been written: 'When an ungodly man goes to the depths of evil, he becomes contemptuous.' [Proverbs 18:3]. Indeed, many heresies have previously appeared which have fallen into foolishness when they became more audacious than they ought. But these people, who by all their slogans have attempted to destroy the divinity of the Word, have vindicated those heresies in comparison, being nearer to the Antichrist. For this reason, they were publicly banished from and anathematized by the church.
- 2.3.17 We are therefore grieved by their destruction, especially because, although they at one time understood the teachings of the church, they have now turned away from them. But we are not shocked, for this happened to Hymenaeus and Philetus, and, before them, to Judas, who followed the Savior but later became a traitor and an apostate.
- 2.3.18 We have not been left uninformed about such people; rather, the Lord foretold, 'Look out so that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am he," and "The time has come," and they will deceive many. Therefore, do not follow them.'¹² Paul, who learned these things from the Savior, wrote, 'In later times, some will abandon the sound faith and pay attention to deceptive spirits and teachings of demons, who reject the truth.'¹³
- 2.3.19 Therefore, since our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ himself gave orders concerning such people and pointed them out through the apostle, we who heard their ungodliness firsthand have consequently anathematized such people, as we said before, proclaiming that they are foreigners [ἀλλότριον]¹⁴ to the catholic church and faith.

¹¹ Paul was almost universally considered the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the early church.

¹² A conflation of Matthew 24:4-5 and Luke 21:8.

¹³ A conflation of 1 Timothy 4:1 and Titus 1:14.

¹⁴ This word was also used by the Arians to denote that the Son's essence was not the same as the Father's.

2.3.20 Therefore, we have given this explanation to you, beloved and most honorable fellow ministers, so that you will not welcome any of them if they should come to you in their haste, nor be convinced if Eusebius or anyone else writes about them. Since we are Christians, we ought to turn away from all who speak and think against Christ and thus fight against God and corrupt souls. We ought not even greet such people lest we become participants in their sins, as the blessed John proclaimed.¹⁵ Greet the brothers with you. Those with me send their greetings to you.

2.3.21 The priests of Alexandria:

I, Colluthos the priest, agree with the things written here and with the deposition of Arius and those who have acted impiously along with him.

Likewise, Alexander the priest
Likewise, Dionysius the priest
Likewise, Alexander the priest
Likewise, Harpocraton the priest
Likewise, Nemesius the priest
Likewise, Silvanus the priest
Likewise, Apis the priest
Likewise, Paul the priest

Likewise, Dioscorus the priest
Likewise, Eusebius the priest
Likewise, Silas the priest
Likewise, Agathon the priest
Likewise, Longus the priest
Likewise, Piröus the priest
Likewise, Proterius the priest
Likewise, Cyrus the priest

The deacons of Alexandria:

Likewise, Ammonius the deacon
Likewise, Pistus the deacon
Likewise, Eumenes the deacon
Likewise, Olympius the deacon
Likewise, Athanasius the deacon
Likewise, Paul the deacon
Likewise, Amyntianus the deacon

Likewise, Macarius the deacon
Likewise, Athanasius the deacon
Likewise, Apollonius the deacon
Likewise, Aphthonius the deacon
Likewise, Macarius the deacon
Likewise, Peter the deacon
Likewise, Gaius the deacon

The priests of Marea:

Likewise, Apollos the priest
Likewise, Ammonas the priest
Likewise, Sostras the priest
Likewise, Tyrannus the priest
Likewise, Ammonas the priest
Likewise, Serenus the priest
Likewise, Heracles the priest
Likewise, Agathon the priest

Likewise, Ingenius the priest
Likewise, Dioscorus the priest
Likewise, Theon the priest
Likewise, Copres the priest
Likewise, Orion the priest
Likewise, Didymus the priest
Likewise, Boccon the priest
Likewise, Achillas the priest

¹⁵ 2 John 10-11.

The deacons of Marea:

Likewise, Sarapion the deacon
Likewise, Didymus the deacon
Likewise, Maurus the deacon
Likewise, Comon the deacon
Likewise, Tryphon the deacon
Likewise, Didymus the deacon
Likewise, Seras the deacon
Likewise, Hierax the deacon

Likewise, Justus the deacon
Likewise, Demetrius the deacon
Likewise, Marcus the deacon
Likewise, Alexander the deacon
Likewise, Ammonius the deacon
Likewise, Ptollarion the deacon
Likewise, Gaius the deacon
Likewise, Marcus the deacon”

- 2.3.22 After Alexander wrote such things to his fellow ministers in every city, the situation worsened. When Emperor Constantine learned this, his soul was deeply grieved, and he considered the matter to be his personal misfortune. Immediately hastening to extinguish the evil which had been kindled, the emperor sent letters to Alexander and Arius through a trustworthy man, the bishop of Cordova (one of the cities of Spain), whom the emperor loved and held in honor.¹⁶
- 2.4.1 “To Alexander and Arius, from Victor Constantinus Maximus Augustus: I understand the basis of the present dispute to be this: When you, father Alexander, inquired how each of your priests understood a certain passage in the law, or rather, inquired about a meaningless detail of dispute, then you, Arius, thoughtlessly responded in a way you should have never pondered in the first place, or, once you had pondered it, should have kept silent.
- 2.4.2 Because of this disagreement which has arisen between you, harmony has been annulled, and the holy people has been split into two and severed from the unity of its shared body. Therefore, each of you alike ought to present your opinion and then accept whatever your fellow servant rightly proposes.
- 2.4.3 What do I mean by this? It was not proper to ask about such things in the first place nor to give an answer when asked. No law commands such inquiries; rather, unproductive idle debate introduces them. Even if such an inquiry should occur because of a contemplation of nature, one nevertheless ought to keep it confined within his mind and not rashly disclose it at public councils or thoughtlessly say it for all to hear. How many people can accurately comprehend or sufficiently explain such great and difficult topics?”
- 2.4.4 A little later he wrote, “Therefore, we ought not engage in much talk about such matters. Otherwise, we will either be unable to explain the matter due to natural weakness, or the sluggish intellect of the hearers and learners will not accurately understand what we say.¹⁷ In either case, the common people would inevitably end up

¹⁶ This letter is also preserved in Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 2,64-72 with 5 extra paragraphs in the beginning and some minor differences, some of which will be noted. This same form is found in Socrates. Hansen also says that the following letter is taken from Gelasius, *H.E.*, fragment 10.

¹⁷ Hansen asserts that the Greek text of this sentence is corrupt. This translation reflects his emendation.

in blasphemy or schism.” Later he says, “It is not considered proper nor altogether lawful to disagree.

- 2.4.5 Let me call to your attention a trivial example. I presume you know that philosophers, while all adhering to one set of principles, nevertheless often disagree concerning some detail of their conclusions. Yet although they are divided at the level of understanding, they are still in agreement with each other in the unity of their set of principles. Since this is the case, how much more right is it for you,¹⁸ the appointed servants of the mighty God, to agree with each other in such a principle of religion?
- 2.4.6 So let us examine what was said with careful reasoning and ponder it with greater understanding. Is it right that, because of a few arguments between you about empty words, brothers oppose brothers, children oppose parents,¹⁹ and the honorable unity is divided by ungodly disagreement because of you two?
- 2.4.7 Let us deliberately stay away from the devil’s temptations. Our mighty God, the Savior of all, has extended the light for all to share. Under his providence, allow me, the servant of the Almighty, to bring this trouble to an end, so that by my declaration, service, and resolute admonition I might bring you,²⁰ his people, into the holy fellowship of unity.”
- 2.4.8 Later he wrote,²¹ “Concerning divine providence, let there be among you one faith, one understanding, and one agreement about the Almighty. But as for the things which you discuss in detail with each other during your trivial inquiries, if you do not arrive at one conclusion, they should remain in your own head, kept hidden in the secret recesses of your mind. Indeed, let remarkable shared friendship, true faith, honor towards God, and observance of the law remain unshaken among you.
- 2.4.9 Return to showing friendship and favor to one another. Embrace the whole people once again. When you have cleansed your own souls, acknowledge each other as brothers once again, for friendship is often pleasant after a hateful situation once it has reconciled.
- 2.4.10 Therefore give back my calm days and restful nights so that from now on I too may enjoy the pleasure of clear light and the gladness of a quiet life.
- 2.4.11 If you don’t, I will have to grieve and hold back tears all the time, and my life will not be serene. For if even the people of God (I mean my fellow servants) have become so divided by unrighteous and harmful disputes with each other, how can I, in the end, reunite them with reasoning?

¹⁸ On the basis of Eusebius’s text, Hansen changes “you” to “us.”

¹⁹ Hansen notes that the phrase “children oppose parents” is an addition by the anonymous author.

²⁰ Eusebius’s account does not have “you” here, which Hansen asserts is the better reading.

²¹ A couple paragraphs have been omitted (see *Vita Const.* 71.5-6).

- 2.4.12 Listen so that you grasp the depth of my grief in this matter. I recently stopped in the city of Nicomedia with the intention of immediately hastening to the East. But while I was hurrying toward you and was nearly already there, news of this matter threw my plans in the opposite direction so that I would not have to see with my eyes things I did not think it was possible for my ears to hear.
- 2.4.13 From now on, then, by renewing harmony between you, reopen for me the path to the East which you closed by your disputes with each other. Enable me rather soon to gladly visit you together with all the other communities and to give due thanks to the Almighty with laudatory orations for the harmony and freedom we all share.”
- 2.4.14 Such were the admirable and wise warnings of the emperor’s letter, but evil overpowered the emperor’s zeal and the credibility of the one who delivered the letter.
- 2.5.1 Therefore, when the emperor saw that the church was in disorder, he convened an ecumenical council, sending letters urging bishops from all parts to meet at Nicaea in Bithynia. It was in the sixth month of the sixteenth year of his reign when he zealously undertook these efforts for ecclesiastical peace.²²
- 2.5.2 Bishops came from many provinces and cities. Eusebius Pamphili says the following about them in the third book of his Life of Constantine: “The foremost ministers of God had gathered together from all the churches throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia.
- 2.5.3 One house of prayer, as if enlarged by God, held Syrians, Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs, Palestinians, Egyptians, Thebans, Libyans, and Mesopotamians. A Persian bishop was present at the council, nor did the company want for a Scythian. Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia sent their finest men. Moreover, Thracians, Macedonians, Achaeans, and Epirotes, who live far away, attended the meeting. Even the highly celebrated Hosius of Spain himself, acting in the place of Bishop Silvester of great Rome together with the Roman priests Vito and Vincent, sat in council with many others.
- 2.5.4 The bishop of the current capital city [Byzantium], Metrophanes, was absent due to his old age, but his priests were present to represent him. One of those priests was Alexander, who became bishop of that city after him.
- 2.5.5 Since the beginning of time, Emperor Constantine alone presented such a crown, woven with a bond of peace, to Christ his Savior as a divinely suitable offering of thanksgiving for victory against his enemies in the war, bringing together this image of the apostolic company in our own time.
- 2.5.6 For it is said that also in the days of the apostles ‘God-fearing men from every nation under heaven’ gathered together, according to the Acts of the Apostles, among whom

²² Constantine’s accession could be dated to various events from 306 to 310, making the dating of this claim uncertain but well within the range of reasonable dates.

- were ‘Parthians, Medes, and Elamites’ [Acts 2:5, 9], but their gathering was lacking in that not all of them were ministers of God. In the case of the present company, however, the number of bishops exceeded three hundred, and the number of priests, deacons, and many other attendants who accompanied them was beyond reckoning.
- 2.5.7 Some of these ministers of God were renowned for their wise words; others were renowned for their strict lifestyle and patient endurance; still others possessed a mild manner. Some of them were respected because of their many years; others radiated with youth and high spirits; still others had just begun their ministerial service.
- 2.5.8 The emperor ordered that food should daily be supplied to all of them in abundance.”²³ This is what Eusebius Pamphili reported about those who assembled there.
- 2.6.1 After the emperor had held a festival in honor of his victory against Licinius, he himself also went to Nicaea. The next day, all the bishops assembled. The emperor arrived after them. When he entered, he stood in the center and did not sit down until the bishops signaled to him, such great reverence and respect for these men filled him.
- 2.6.2 The all-praiseworthy emperor offered a word of encouragement and instruction giving praise, glory, and thanks to the God of all who had graciously given such great things to him. He said the following:²⁴
- 2.7.1 “The flourishing righteousness of God Almighty has paved many remarkable paths for the benefit of humanity, not least of which the outstanding, brilliant path he prepared for us all in the chief point of his catholic church’s holy law more than any wonder: faith, which is the Lord’s dwelling place.
- 2.7.2 We see that his dwelling place reaches up to the shining stars, and even though the work is just beginning, we know God’s command has planted its foundations so deeply and securely that all the world perceives it.
- 2.7.3 Moreover, from the top of this dwelling, which sits above everything else, a smooth and level path, illuminated by bright light, extends to the end of this life. Twelve pillars, brighter than snow and immovable on the foundation of faith, eternally support, by the power of our Savior’s divine nature, the front wall of his dwelling, which is adorned with a star-like seal.

²³ The quotation from 2.5.2-8 is taken from Eusebius, *Vita Const.*, 3.7-9.

²⁴ The following speech is introduced by “something like this” (ὅδε πῶς) and has usually been taken as a fictional account of the author. Hansen points to preliminary remarks in Theodoret in support of this and conjectures that the address comes from Philip of Side. However, the author, like Eusebius, uses ὅδε πῶς several times to introduce a direct quotation, even a biblical quotation. So the anonymous author seems to portray this as indeed a speech of Constantine himself addressed to the Council of Nicaea.

- 2.7.4 The architect of this mighty building, when we received the righteous faith of the soul, placed his majestic undying law in our minds. Whoever wishes to enter its gates requires nothing except holy and pious desire driven by the singular confidence of a pure mind.
- 2.7.5 The Savior's plan added wonderful brilliance to this building as a decoration. What I mean is this: Inside, human faith is honored through all the courts of the Lord's house with wreaths, gathers the fruit of immortality, reveals pure products of human life, and makes them manifest. Outside, heavenly glory, likewise wreathed, designs prizes for the contest which is constantly beginning, or rather increasing, and the prizes adorn the total completion of this building with due praise.
- 2.7.6 Two guards watch over this house of the Lord. Fear of God opposes the ambition of some as a warning, and praise of God is always next to it for those who think rightly, a reward for their understanding. When both guards stand before the doors of the most holy place, wide open doors welcome righteousness, and it remains undisturbed dwelling inside. Injustice may not even approach the doors; it is banished and shut out of this house.
- 2.7.7 Honorable brothers worthy of praise, these clear facts led me to the brightness of the eternal, immortal light, so that, even if I stand far away, my soul's wavering faith will not make me unfit for the truth.
- 2.7.8 But what should I assert first—the blissful image enclosed within my breast, or the divine benefits granted to me by God Almighty? Of his many works, it is enough to say that our God himself, the Father of all things, has rightly caused my humble self to submit to him.
- 2.7.9 Believe me, honorable brothers, and accept my words with unprejudiced faith. Even if my mind, saturated with divine blessings, appears happy and therefore able to render excellent praise, my guarantee of truth nevertheless clearly demonstrates that neither voice nor tongue can adequately do what the mind commands, and for good reason.
- 2.7.10 Since his great blessings are immeasurable, the mind, lofty as it is, reaches up far above the physical realm. But the tongue, limited in what it can express and thus almost useless, remains altogether silent. Who of us would think so hastily that he utters such a self-confident word and audaciously claims that he can easily and perfectly speak glorious, worthy praise of God, who can do all things, who created all good things?
- 2.7.11 If anyone should merely consider the magnificence of the one who ordained his birth, he would surely realize that he cannot find anything to say which is worthy of God.
- 2.7.12 Therefore, what should I speak about, devoted and humble as I am, except what God's true Word demonstrates? Deep reverence ought to clearly contemplate the

greatness of the Word; if it is able to attain to the things said about the Word, then no error will make it slip.

- 2.7.13 If only I, your fellow servant, had ample ability to speak in praise of those things which deserve to be proclaimed, which our divine Savior, the guardian of all things, demonstrated by his calm divine will when he first came. He deigned for our sake to receive a pure body from a virgin as a dwelling place. In this way he proved his compassion for all humans.
- 2.7.14 So where shall I begin? With his teaching and dignity? Or with the teachings of God, of which he has proven to be the sole teacher, without anyone having taught him? Or how through his providence such large crowds, which could not be numbered, were refreshed through a small amount of food—very little bread and only two fish?
- 2.7.15 By his divine providence he also raised Lazarus with a short staff after his death and brought him back into the brilliant light.
- 2.7.16 How should I speak of his pure divine nature through which he saw that a woman was secretly suffering from an illness, and after he let her merely touch him, he restored her to health, free of sickness?²⁵
- 2.7.17 Who could speak adequately of his immortal deed by which he suddenly restored strength by divine healing to someone weakened by constant, prolonged illness, who was lying with his limbs spread out wide, and the man placed on his shoulders the very mat on which he had been lying and ran throughout his hometown and the region, offering thankful praises?²⁶
- 2.7.18 Or of his sure divine step as he bound the stormy sea, walking and treading upon it, and with his divine footsteps he made the liquid of the deep sea solid and went straight through the middle of the sea, not limited in depth, as if it were land?²⁷
- 2.7.19 Or of his gentle forbearance through which he, victor in all things, overcame the insolence of the foolish masses and, removing their conquered savagery far away, subjected them to the law?
- 2.7.20 Or of the bright and great works of his divine nature by which we live, in which we find pleasure—we who not only hope for future bliss, but in a sense already possess it?
- 2.7.21 What more dare I say, given my meager preparation for this speech, except the following, which my pure devoted soul ought to understand: how God Almighty, who dwells in heaven, relates to the entire human race, and especially to the noble

²⁵ Cf. Matthew 9:20-22.

²⁶ Cf. Mark 2:1-12; John 5:5-15.

²⁷ Cf. Matthew 14:22-33.

- righteousness above all praise, since even his own Holy Spirit deigned to take a body, live in it, and thus grant salvation to human bodies.
- 2.7.22 Therefore, since our immeasurably insane enemies, as if shrouded by fog, waste no time in spreading their poisonously perverse interpretations concerning Almighty God's most holy saving arrangement, I will try to briefly explain how much my faithful devoted soul overflows with words.
- 2.7.23 The heresies of these pagans make them so shameless that they are not afraid to sacrilegiously say that God Almighty has neither done nor willed to do all the things described in his holy law.
- 2.7.24 What a sacrilegious statement! It merits every excessive punishment against itself. Truly insane and reckless, it wishes to obscure the glory of this divine blessing, glory which no human being can comprehend.
- 2.7.25 What quality is more fitting for God than purity? Purity has gone forth from its holy dealings with the source of righteousness, has flooded the whole world, and has shown humanity the effects of its holy virtues. They at first thought these virtues were hostile to them, so they suffered the fate of the Assyrians, who set a bad example. The other peoples were determined to support them.
- 2.7.26 In this situation, as we scrutinize it with our consideration, we see that the divine compassion of God our Savior cooperates, for day by day and year by year he called many of them, once driven by the fiery sting of madness, to return to the Savior's patient healing. Such a great blessing is nevertheless unable to benefit the rest, for humans are unaware of God's power to exalt any people, and, once exalted, make them secure or again tear down and dissolve them.
- 2.7.27 Yet human history would have turned out even worse if God Almighty had not determined to manage all things with his silent divine will. Human insanity would have been more widespread, limitless human arrogance would have corrupted all souls, and many other things which fulfill their own function in the operation of the universe could not have appeared.
- 2.7.28 Rather, all things together would have quickly perished due to their ignorance of the divine. The crime of envy and jealousy would not have remained limited to a few people. Rather, no one would have been free from this jealousy, for the various superstitions would have become so big and broad in human souls that, as a result of their shamelessness, this bright light of ours would have been obscured so that they would never benefit from it.
- 2.7.29 Therefore, no spoken word can snatch my faith from my soul, for when nothing evil hinders faith, perfect power attends it—the living Word of truth, the only Almighty, the guardian of all things, the protector of our salvation. So he seems, in a way, to

give the use of his holy Word in order to preserve knowledge of the Liberator and grant us clear light.

- 2.7.30 Why, then, do all the pagan nations still fail to perceive the heavenly light and thus despise the glorious Holy One, instead pursuing the earthly, which has no true substance, no pure bright splendor, and no divine heavenly authority?
- 2.7.31 What an outrageous deed! Even now they do not forsake their godlessness, do not look to what is right, and do not notice that they are succumbing to wretched deception. They do not stop tarnishing his splendor with their filthy worldly works, consecrating wood, stone, bronze, silver, gold, and other such earthly materials for worship. They promise hope of life through them and build magnificently decorated temples for them. They thus increase their adoration, for the great buildings they have made are a veritable wonder, in their opinion.
- 2.7.32 Therefore, when they make such plans, one can clearly see (although they themselves certainly do not perceive or realize, arrogant as they are) that they are seemingly guilty of boasting in their works. Moreover, we do not see the greatness and might of God Almighty, who is Lord and Judge of all. Some, by confidence in their supposed excellence, inadvertently revile him.
- 2.7.33 By his arrangement even our bodily form received the shape it ought to have. The same God connected all our limbs with strong tendons so that our physical structure might have untiring stamina in every action we undertake. Moreover, when he had accomplished this by his preserving arrangement, he breathed into us so that all our parts could move and be strong. He granted sight to our eyes, placed them in our head to aid our understanding, and enclosed therein the reasoning of all our thinking faculties.
- 2.7.34 Therefore, if any sensible person should consider the reason for this arrangement and disregard other things which can be grasped neither by reasoning nor by arithmetic, with quick reflection he would be able to see and understand the eternal saving power of the immortal God, and no one could entangle him in snares of deception, for he would clearly also be able to see that everything which has been made exists by God's power, just as God has willed everything to exist.
- 2.7.35 In order that you may see that a lawless, worldly way of life has made people ignorant of God in that the enemy's deception produced sin rather than reasoning in the wretched souls of wicked people, we will show you clear proof from the holy law.
- 2.7.36 From the moment those two created in the beginning failed to keep God's holy command with due reverence, the flower called sin was born. It became constant and grew even more after those two were banished according to God's will.

- 2.7.37 Matter itself was prostituted to such a degree with human depravity that sin condemned the eastern and western foundations. This excess of hostile power seized and impaired human minds.
- 2.7.38 Even in this circumstance, to be sure, God Almighty's inexhaustible mercy is eternal and undying. Day by day, in the years which have gone by, God keeps releasing countless multitudes of enslaved peoples from the burden of sin through me, his servant, and will lead them to the perfect splendor of the eternal light. Therefore, dearest brothers, I am confident because of our immortal God's special providence and glorious blessings that in the future I will be even more distinguished by my pure faith in him.
- 2.7.39 Therefore, may your pure holy council accept me. Let the prudent church, which is the pure mother common to us all, not oppose me at its doors. Although my soul's reasoning, even now seeking the completely pure catholic faith, denies that this will happen for it easily, it nevertheless impels and reminds me. The modesty of its self-respect has produced a seal of all noble virtues. It begins to touch and knock at the gates of immortality so that you also have forthwith deigned to grant your affectionate brotherhood with a view toward complete peaceful unity in the catholic faith.
- 2.7.40 This is indeed proper in the sight of God, agreeable to the catholic church's faith, and beneficial for the common good of the state, with the result that we all publicly give worthy thanks to God for the honorable peace which he has graciously granted to us.
- 2.7.41 It would indeed be awful, and in fact worse than awful, now that our enemies have been defeated and no one dares to oppose us any longer, to reproach each other and thus provide our opponents an object of malicious pleasure and ridicule, especially by arguing about theological questions even though we have the written teaching of the Holy Spirit. The Gospels, the apostolic epistles, and the prophetic writings of the ancient prophets clearly teach us what we should believe concerning God. Therefore, let us cast out conflict which leads to war and find the solution to these questions in the Scriptures inspired by God."
- 2.7.42 The wise emperor offered these and similar words to his fathers the priests like a child who loves his father, trying to understand the apostolic beliefs. Of the bishops gathered in council there, who numbered 318, 300 were persuaded by what he said, and they embraced harmony with each other and sound doctrine.
- 2.7.43 The rest, however, as we said before, kept fighting against apostolic doctrine. They tried their utmost to support the opinion of Arius. There were seventeen of them: Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was mentioned before, Theognis of Nicaea, Maris of Chalcedon, Theodore of Heraclea in Thrace, Menophantus of Ephesus, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Narcissus of Neronias (which is now called Irenopolis) in Cilicia Secunda, Theonas of Marmarica, Secundus of Ptolemais in Egypt, and with them

eight others who had mixed themselves in with that company of 300 saints, as if they were actually orthodox, yet opposed apostolic doctrine by advocating for Arius.²⁸

- 2.7.44 Our holy fathers Alexander of Constantinople, who was a priest at the time, and Athanasius, archdeacon of the church of Alexandria, staunchly resisted them. This is why malice took up arms against them, as we will report later. But our holy bishops invited Arius to the council with permission to defend his doctrine, according to the all-victorious emperor's will, for he also attended the council, as we just said.
- 2.8.1 Moreover, I ought not omit the amazing deed which the all-victorious emperor performed during the synod. When all the bishops gathered, as is the custom, some of the bishops introduced investigations and controversies over quarrels they had with each other. When they filed indictments and brought their charges before the pious emperor, he accepted the indictments, sealed them with his signet ring, and ordered that they be kept safe.
- 2.8.2 On observing the mutual strife between these bishops, he said that they should all meet on a specific day to sort out these issues. When the appointed day came, the emperor took a seat in the middle, and when everyone had fallen silent, as was fitting for the occasion, he had everyone's indictments brought in. Then he took them and put them on his lap. Because he desired not to examine them, he said:
- 2.8.3 "God appointed you as priests and rulers, and he has determined that you will judge and evaluate the multitudes and be gods, for you stand above all people, according to the Scripture, "I said, 'You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High'" [Psalm 82:6, LXX 81:6], and "God stands in the assembly of gods" [Psalm 82:1, LXX 81:1]. Therefore, you need not worry about political affairs. Instead, direct all your attention to theology."
- 2.8.4 He had them start a fire and burn the indictments, for he was trying to ensure that no one outside would learn of the inappropriate efforts of these bishops. Such was the emperor's reverence for the priests of God. All who think clearly should admire this reverence.
- 2.8.5 Nor should I omit a similar deed of his. Quarrelsome and slanderous laymen had indicted some of the bishops and delivered the indictments to the emperor. This happened before harmony had been established.
- 2.8.6 After receiving the indictments, he tied them together, sealed them with his signet ring, and ordered that they be kept safe. Then, after he had orchestrated harmonious agreement, he had the indictments brought in. With all the bishops present, he burned them with an oath that he had read nothing written in them.
- 2.8.7 He said that the priests' wrongdoings should not be revealed to the people lest they use the scandal as an excuse to sin without restraint. It is said that he added that if he

²⁸ Sections 41-43 are taken from Theodoret with a few additions from the anonymous compiler.

had seen a bishop undermining someone else's marriage with his own eyes, he would have concealed the lawless act with his purple cloak so that no one would be harmed by seeing the act. Such was the emperor's admirable, godly discernment.

- 2.8.8 While he met with the bishops for many days and even years,²⁹ the emperor discussed matters of faith with them and gathered their various opinions. There were some among them, as we have said several times, who agreed with the heinous doctrine of Arius and opposed the majority of holy bishops, champions of the truth. Our excellent, holy fathers, however, guarding themselves with the weapon of truth, boldly preached the clear, blameless faith. There were also many confessors among them who resisted the willing adopters of the wretched doctrine of Arius.
- 2.9.1 Among them was the great saint Paphnutius, whose presence adorned the company of confessors and bishops. He was an Egyptian, a man of God numbered among those whose right eyes Emperor Maximinus had gouged out and whose left hamstring tendons he had cut.³⁰ Then he handed them over to work in the mines.
- 2.9.2 God's grace was so strong in him that he did miracles equal to those done long ago by the apostles. He drove away demons with a single word, healed various sick people with prayer, granted sight to the blind by entreating God, and restored natural strength to the paralyzed, making their limbs function normally. The emperor regarded him with great honor; he frequently invited him to his palace and kissed his empty eye socket. Such was the pious emperor's trust in the saints.
- 2.10.1 There was also Spyridon, a Cyprian man, distinguished in the Lord, who dedicated his experience herding sheep since childhood to the flock of Christ. He became known for his prophetic lifestyle. Even while he served as bishop, he did not stop shepherding his own sheep.
- 2.10.2 He was so kind and patient that when robbers who had tried to raid his flock were restrained by invisible chains so that they were unable to move until morning, he came near and released them from their restraints with a prayer, blessed as he was. He even gave them his best ram as they left, saying, "Young men, take this for your use, lest you leave empty-handed tonight and blame your poverty on me."
- 2.10.3 We have heard many other stories of miracles related to this saint, but we will mention just one.
- 2.11.1 This blessed, famous man of God had a daughter named Irene. While caring for her old father, as is proper, she passed away from human life as a virgin.

²⁹ The council started on May 20; Constantine arrived on June 14; the Nicene Creed was ratified on June 19; minor matters were discussed until August 25.

³⁰ While the manuscripts read Maximianus, the correct reading must be Maximinus, referring to Maximinus Daza (r. 310-313), who ruled Egypt until his death in July, 313. Maximianus (r. 306-311) was Augustus in the West.

- 2.11.2 After her death, a merchant returned from a journey and asked the old man for a deposit which he had entrusted to his virgin daughter.
- 2.11.3 Blessed Spyridon had no idea what he was talking about, but since the man begged him so urgently, he carefully searched his house from top to bottom. When he could not find it, he was greatly distressed. He told the man that he knew nothing about the deposit and that there was nothing in the house.
- 2.11.4 The merchant shouted, burst into tears, and moaned as he asked for the deposit. He said that he would kill himself because of the loss if he did not get his deposit back. He explained that he had entrusted the deposit to the virgin for safekeeping that he might use it in his old age.
- 2.11.5 Therefore, the holy old man had to head to his daughter's tomb with the merchant to inquire about the matter. When he got there, he called his daughter by name, saying, "Irene, my child." Answering from the grave, she said to him, "What is it, father?" The old man said to her, "Where did you hide this man's deposit, my daughter?" She said to him, "It is hidden here, father," clearly indicating the place to her father. He said to her, "Go in peace, Irene, my child."
- 2.11.6 Then the old man returned home, found the deposit hidden right where the virgin said it was, and returned it to the man.
- 2.11.7 People still celebrate many other wonders and miracles of Spyridon. Even to this day the locals tell them to travelers as certain proof of our true faith in Christ. The church up to those times was adorned with such holy men, many of whom were present at the Synod of Nicaea.
- 2.11.8 Moreover, Athanasius, about whom we have already spoken, at that time still a deacon, belonged to the company of those saints, as everyone attests. He accompanied Alexander, bishop of the church of Alexandria, since he was a great help to him.
- 2.11.9 Day by day our holy bishops discussed numerous matters of faith for a long time, for they did not want to make any rash or presumptuous decisions on such a critical issue.
- 2.11.10 They often summoned Arius. By frequent inquiry they examined and disproved his theses. Their greatest trouble and concern was how they might overthrow his lawless doctrine and define sound doctrine with their vote.
- 2.11.11 After much consideration and prayer to God, they made the following decision. As is proper, they wisely refuted the lawless doctrine of Arius and his supporters, utterly uprooting and obliterating their abominable blasphemies against the Son of God.
- 2.11.12 Our bishops opposed their assertion that the Son of God is "not from God" by saying that he is "God from God." They opposed their assertion that he is "not true God" by

writing that he is “true God from true God.” They opposed their assertion that he is a “created being” by defining that he is “begotten, not made.” They opposed their assertion that he is “of a different essence” by saying that “the Son is of the same being as the Father, that is, begotten from the being of the Father.” They declared that he is creator and craftsman of the visible and the invisible in keeping with the apostolic faith entrusted to the church from the beginning³¹ after they had provided evidence from Scripture, as this account will show.

- 2.11.13 Rendering the deadly poisons ineffective with this antidote, they proceeded to write down the apostolic faith they had agreed upon even more clearly.
- 2.12.1 The holy, great, ecumenical council of our holy fathers gathered at Nicaea spoke through the blessed, holy Bishop Hosius of Cordova in Spain, who was also representing the bishop of Rome along with the previously named priests from his see. Through an interpreter, he said:
- 2.12.2 “The deity is not one person [πρόσωπον] as the Jews think, but three persons in true substance [ὕπόστασις], not merely in name. Both the Old and New Testament proclaim this in many passages.
- 2.12.3 The Old Testament, speaking rather physically, treats the Word as a spoken word. The New Testament, however, shows that the Word is God: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ [John 1:1]. It also shows that he is a perfect person [πρόσωπον τέλειον] from what is perfect, for the Son is not partially God, but wholly God, just like the Father is, for he is of the same essence [οὐσία] as the Father, who begot him in an inexpressible way.
- 2.12.4 In the same way, the Holy Spirit coexists with the Father and the Son, for he is of the same essence [οὐσία] and the same substance [χρῆμα] as the Father and the Son.³²
- 2.12.5 Therefore, we must confess that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one will, one reign, one authority, one lordship over all created beings [κτιστὰ φύσει], both perceivable and only conceivable, one divine nature [θεότης], and one essence [οὐσία]. We must not mix or divide the indescribable, blessed Trinity.
- 2.12.6 Rather, we must proclaim the Father, who always truly exists and subsists as Father of the true Son, the Son, who always truly exists and subsists as Son of the true Father, and the Holy Spirit, who always truly exists and subsists as Holy Spirit—an inseparable, indescribable, truly incomprehensible, inexpressible Trinity—with the conviction that there is one deity which has one divine essence.
- 2.12.7 We confess this deity in accordance with the true accurate doctrine of the faith, which the Lord entrusted to us from the beginning³³ through his holy apostles and our holy

³¹ Or “from above.”

³² Such expressions concerning the Holy Spirit became common only in the late fourth century.

³³ Or “from above.”

fathers of old who faultlessly guarded the holy faith. We are ready, with the Holy Spirit's goodwill, to prove this with many passages from the Holy Scriptures."

- 2.12.8 When they had said this (or rather, the Holy Spirit had said this through them), the defenders of Arius's godlessness muttered, distressed. (They were the followers of Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea whom we previously mentioned.) They glanced at Arius's mercenary philosophers—highly learned men whom Arius had hired as advocates for his depravity, with whom he had come to the holy ecumenical council.
- 2.12.9 Many philosophers were present. The enemies of truth, having placed their hope in them, as we just said, were fittingly refuted along with their teacher and his blasphemy. So the Holy Scripture which says, "Cursed is everyone who puts his hope in humans and whose heart turns away from the Lord" [Jeremiah 17:5],³⁴ was fulfilled with respect to him and to them.
- 2.12.10 For the blasphemous heart of Arius, who fought against God, and of those who participated in his godlessness truly turned away from the Lord. They dared to call the Son of God a creature and a product even though he is the creator of all things and the craftsman of visible and invisible created beings.
- 2.13.1 One of Arius's mercenary philosophers, admired much more than all the others, fiercely contended for Arius against our bishops for many days. So each day a large audience gathered to hear the war of words. The crowd of those who gathered grew larger as the philosopher poured forth the ungodly blasphemies of Arius against the holy council's statements. He said about the Son of God, "He did not always exist" [ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν], and, "He is a creature, a product from what did not exist, and of a different essence and substance."
- 2.13.2 He staunchly supported the abominable doctrine of Arius; his words were like a blizzard as he ranted against the Son of God and derided that company of holy priests, for the enemy of mankind's salvation was speaking in him and through him.
- 2.13.3 But our bishops, fighting for truth, fearlessly employed proper and fitting arguments for apostolic doctrine against the philosopher. They thus imitated the great prophet and king David, who said, "I was prepared and was not deterred" [LXX Psalm 118:60, Psalm 119:60],³⁵ for they destroyed all the philosopher's crafty premises with God's Word just as flax is consumed by fire.
- 2.13.4 Nevertheless, trusting in his devilish skill with words, the philosopher kept shooting his arrows at the truth the bishops proclaimed. He easily addressed all the arguments brought against him very well, so he thought. He vigorously tried to resolve the issues which had been raised. Although he seemed to vindicate himself by these arguments,

³⁴ The middle of the verse is left out of the quotation.

³⁵ The LXX differs slightly in meaning from the MT, which has, "I have hastened and have not delayed to keep your commands."

slipping free like an eel by presenting his superior thoughts, he got caught by his own words and fell with them.

- 2.13.5 Yet he kept arguing against the peaceful council, deluded in his frenzy, in the hope of overcoming the invincible power of Christ's invincible Spirit in them.
- 2.13.6 But God, "who catches the wise in their craftiness" [Job 5:13; 1 Corinthians 3:19], wanted to show that "his rule resides not in word but in power" [1 Corinthians 4:20], so through one of his servants there he not only forcibly silenced the evil demon speaking in the philosopher but also drove it out.
- 2.13.7 There was a man among the holy confessors present at the council who was simple in nature, like hardly any of the other saints, who knew nothing "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" [1 Corinthians 2:2] in the flesh, according to the Scriptures. He was together with the bishops and saw that the philosopher was belittling our holy bishops and boasting about his fallacious argumentation. So he asked the bishops, as priests of God, to grant him the floor to speak to the philosopher.
- 2.13.8 Our holy bishops, seeing the man's simplicity and lack of education, tried to dissuade him from joining the debate lest he become a laughingstock for the wretched enemies of truth.
- 2.13.9 Refusing to be deterred, he approached the philosopher and said to him, "In the name of Jesus Christ, God the Word, who always exists with the Father, listen to true doctrine, philosopher!" The philosopher replied, "Speak." The saint said to him, "There is one God, who created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them. He also formed man from earth and brought everything into existence by his Word and by the Holy Spirit.
- 2.13.10 Because we know this Word as the Son of God, philosopher, we worship him, confident that he took on flesh from a virgin to redeem us, was born, and became man. Through the suffering of his flesh on the cross and through his death, he freed us from eternal damnation. Through his resurrection, he obtained eternal life for us. We have the hope, now that he has ascended to the heavens, that he will come again and judge all our deeds. Do you believe this, philosopher?"
- 2.13.11 The philosopher, as if he had no experience in debate, became speechless. He remained silent like a dumb or mute man. He could only say to him with a very weak voice, "I, too, think this is true; I disagree with nothing you said."
- 2.13.12 The old man said to him, "If you believe this is true, philosopher, get up and follow me. Let's hurry to the church, where you will receive the seal of this faith."
- 2.13.13 The philosopher, directing his whole self towards true devotion to the God of all, got up and followed the old man. Looking back, he addressed his disciples and all who

had gathered in the audience: “Gentlemen, listen. While I was zealous for arguments, I set my arguments against others and refuted opponents with artful speech.

2.13.14 But when, instead of arguments, divine power emerged from the mouth of my adversary, my arguments could no longer withstand the power, for man cannot resist God. Therefore, if any of you can understand, as I have come to understand, then he will trust in Christ and should follow this old man, through whom God has spoken.”

2.13.15 So the philosopher came to his senses, was enlightened, and became a Christian. He rejoiced that he had been defeated by the old man. When the philosopher was baptized, was accepted into the church of God, rested, and exulted in the mighty works of God, the council rejoiced.

The refutation of another philosopher named Phaedo, who also argued on behalf of Arius, who fought against God, and on behalf of the blasphemy Arius invented

2.14.1 *The philosopher’s inquiry addressed to the holy synod concerning the phrase, “Let us make man”:* ““God said, “Let us make man in our image and likeness”” [Genesis 1:26]. If this means what the wording might suggest, someone might be misled so as to assert that God has a human form. But we know that God is simple and formless. Therefore, tell me, what do these terms mean? God does not have a human form, does he?”

2.14.2 *The holy fathers’ answer through Eustathius, bishop of Antioch:* “You are correct, philosopher. Rather, when God says, ‘Let them rule all the earth,’ and ‘Let them exercise dominion over it and everything in it,’³⁶ this is the meaning—making man lord, in God’s image, to rule all the earth.

2.14.3 For just as God rules all the earth and everything in it, so he also appointed man as the second ruler of all the earth and everything in it. This, I say, is what it means that man was made ‘in God’s image and likeness.’”

2.14.4 *Another response of the holy fathers through the same Bishop Eustathius concerning the same question:* ““God said, “Let us make man in our image and likeness.”” We must investigate to whom he said this, philosopher. By saying, ‘God said, “Let us make man in our image and likeness,”’ he raised a question for us to consider. To whom did he say, ‘Let us make’? After the words, ‘God said, “Let us make man,”’ it says, ‘God made man; in the image of God he made him; male and female he made them’ [Genesis 1:27].

2.14.5 Therefore, ‘let us make’ indicates that there is a person [πρόσωπον] who is co-craftsman and thus introduces someone of equal status. Just as the Father, who said, ‘Let us make man,’ is God, so the one to whom he said, ‘Let us make,’ is God also. So the two persons, both he who said, ‘Let us make man in our image and likeness,’ and he who made man, have one divine essence.

³⁶ Cf. Genesis 1:28-29.

- 2.14.6 The phrase, ‘Let us make,’ expresses the steadfastness³⁷ and immutability of the Father and the Son’s divine nature. The image of God is simple and not composite, being fire by nature.”³⁸
- 2.14.7 *The unanimous answer of the holy fathers:* “The essence [οὐσία] of the Holy Trinity is ‘unapproachable light’ [1 Timothy 6:16] and an ‘unbearable’³⁹ nature. This is the meaning of the phrase, ‘Let us make.’”
- 2.15.1 *The philosopher’s response on behalf of Arius:* “I repeat: God is simple, formless, and not composite. How, then, can one understand the phrase, ‘in our image and likeness,’ in such a way that he who spoke did not exist before him to whom he said, ‘Let us make man,’ and so on? Give us a clear explanation of this, if you can.”
- 2.15.2 *Through an interpreter, Hosius, bishop of Cordova, spoke for the holy bishops:* “If, as you say, the Father existed before the Son and the Son is younger [μεταγενέστερος] because God created him later then designated him as his Son (just as you impiously and blasphemously claim that he created him beforehand to make created beings), then, according to your ungodly understanding, the uncreated God would have said to the created God, in your thinking, ‘Make a man for me in my image and likeness.’
- 2.15.3 But since God is always Father, as we already demonstrated, the Son also always coexists with the Father, not temporally younger, not lesser in power, not circumscribed in place, but always eternally coexisting with the Father, begotten of him in an incomprehensible and inexpressible way, as we said before. He is always true God from him who is always true God and Father, without beginning along with the Father, coeternal with the Father, always ruling with the Father, consubstantial with the Father, equal in power with the Father, co-craftsman with the Father.
- 2.15.4 Even though God’s Word says in the Gospels that all things were made through the Son and that ‘without him nothing was made that has been made’ [John 1:3], he did not create without the Father, for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one divine essence and one will. The Father is always with the Son inseparably and the Son with the Father.
- 2.15.5 Therefore, philosopher, one must understand that the Father and the Son are one according to the divine essence, just as in the Gospels the same Son to whom he said, ‘Let us make man in our image and likeness,’ proclaims, ‘I and the Father are one’” [John 10:30].
- 2.15.6 *The philosopher’s response:* “We already said in our previous questions that God does not have a human form. Tell us, then, what is the significance of the phrase, ‘in

³⁷ Some manuscripts have “absolute holiness.”

³⁸ The reference is not clear. Perhaps the author is thinking of Deuteronomy 4:24.

³⁹ LXX Odes 12:5.

- our image and likeness'? This phrase presents no small difficulty; we must discuss it now."
- 2.15.7 *The holy synod's answer through the same Hosius, bishop of Cordova:* "Philosopher, the phrase, 'in our image,' is not to be understood in the sense of physical composition. Rather, the word of truth shows that it was embedded with a spiritual meaning. Therefore, listen and understand.
- 2.15.8 God, being good by nature, implanted that which is 'in his image and likeness' in the spiritual essence of man, namely, goodness, sincerity, holiness, purity, generosity, kindness, blessedness, and the like, so that, in accord with God's grace, humans created by him could also spiritually possess those qualities which he has by nature.
- 2.15.9 Just as skilled painters, who create illustrated representations on panels, paint their whole pictures with several colors and not just one, so also God caused humans, whom he created, to possess that which is 'in his image and likeness' in the spiritual treasury of the soul, that is, the mind, through the virtues.
- 2.15.10 Thus one finds the flawless image in humans through the aforementioned divine qualities God placed in them, saying, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness.'"
- 2.16.1 *The philosopher's response:* "Allow me to defer this topic for the time being. Instead, we must further inquire about him through whom God made man and all things, visible and invisible. Your statement that the Father and the Son are eternally one in the same relationship and that the Son eternally coexists with the Father does not seem correct to me.
- 2.16.2 Rather, I would assert that God made him as an assistant for his creating acts. God needed an assistant to create man and the universe. Therefore, when the Creator God was going to create the created beings, he brought a tool into existence for himself, through which he would create all beings.
- 2.16.3 As a builder first makes tools for building the buildings he is going to make, so also one can presume in the case of God that after he brought the Son into existence as a tool for himself, he created the universe through him.
- 2.16.4 This is what the apostles said: 'All things were made through him' [John 1:3]. So beings were created through him as through a tool. When God said, 'in our image and likeness,' he was saying that man was created through a tool, that is, through the Son, in his own image and likeness."
- 2.16.5 *The holy fathers' answer through Leontius, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Eupychius, bishop of Tyana:* "If, as you say, the Son was created by the Father as a tool to make created beings, you fall by your own words, philosopher. The word of the Gospel, as you yourself just mentioned, says, 'All things were made through him.' It continues, 'Without him nothing was made that has been made.'

- 2.16.6 Therefore, if every created thing was made through him and nothing was made without him, and if, as you say, the Son is also a creature, then he created himself, not the Father.”
- 2.16.7 *The philosopher’s response:* “I already said that God made all things through him as through a tool. For this very reason he made him before all creation and prepared him as a tool for making created beings.”
- 2.16.8 *The holy fathers’ answer through the same Bishops Leontius and Euppsychius:* “Please tell us, most excellent man, where has anyone spoken to you of the Son of God or his Holy Spirit as tools? Provide us with evidence for these suppositions. Which man was inspired by the Spirit to give the descriptions you maintain, namely, that the Son of God, the creator of all ages, all heavenly hosts, and everything on earth, is a tool?
- 2.16.9 Therefore, philosopher, listen to the passages of the Holy Scriptures which teach that the Son is God, coeternal with the Father, creator and craftsman of all created beings.
- 2.16.10 In Genesis the prophet Moses called the Son co-craftsman with God the Father, as we already said to you, most excellent man: ‘God said, “Let us make man in our image and likeness.”’ He naturally calls a person co-craftsman, not a tool. The wording, ‘God made man; in the image of God he made him; male and female he made them,’ indicates their status as persons.
- 2.16.11 By saying, ‘Let us make man,’ he removes any notion of tools. Take an even clearer authentic passage, which deals solely with the person of the Son and shows that he is the craftsman of all created beings. It is written in the book of Baruch dictated by the prophet Jeremiah:
- 2.16.12 ‘He who established the earth for time everlasting filled it with four-footed animals. He sends the light out, and it goes. He called it, and it obeyed him with trembling. The stars shone in their stations and rejoiced. He called them, and they said, “We are here.” They shone with joy for him who made them. This is our God. No one can be compared to him. He uncovered every way of knowledge and presented it to his child Jacob, his beloved Israel. Then he appeared on the earth and lived with humans.’⁴⁰
- 2.16.13 Isaiah says to Israel, ‘Do you not know? Have you not heard? God, who established the ends of the earth, is the eternal God’ [Isaiah 40:28]. Who, then, philosopher, is the eternal God, who established the ends of the earth, appeared on the earth, and lived with humans? What do you say? Was it the Son or the Father who lived with humans?”
- 2.16.14 *The philosopher’s response:* “The Son lived with humans, just as the Holy Scriptures say and I accept since I believe them. But I still have a powerful, indisputable

⁴⁰ Baruch 3:32-38.

argument showing that God created him before all creation in order to create everything through him. I will prove this as the debate goes on.”

- 2.16.15 *The holy fathers’ answer through the same devout Bishops Leontius and Euppsychius:* “Not so, philosopher. You cannot prove what you are saying. He is begotten of God and not a product, as we have proven with many passages. Who among men rich in godliness and wisdom is not amazed at the magnificent workmanship of the beings he crafted (that is, created) as God, philosopher? As Scripture proclaims, ‘God made man,’ and, ‘God saw everything he had made, and it was very good.’
- 2.16.16 John the Evangelist clearly demonstrates that he always coexists with the Father and is coeternal and without beginning with the Father, for he says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that has been made.’
- 2.16.17 This clearly proves, philosopher, that the Son is the craftsman of every created being. Therefore, if he is the craftsman of all creatures, both perceivable and only conceivable, as he really is, then he is clearly true God by nature and not, as you say, a tool, nor a creature, nor a product, nor younger than the Father.
- 2.16.18 For the word, ‘was,’ which the Evangelist uses four times, does not admit of anything existing before him. But so that you may know beyond doubt that he is not subordinate, but rather autonomous, as the Father is, take another transparent passage.
- 2.16.19 Listen to what the prophet Isaiah proclaims: ‘They will wish they were burnt with fire,’⁴¹ prophesying about the Jews, ‘For⁴² a child was born; to us a son was given. His government is on his shoulder, and his name is called “Messenger of Great Counsel,” “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Authoritative One”’ [Isaiah 9:5-6, LXX 9:4-5].⁴³ Take note, philosopher, that he calls him authoritative and not subordinate, as you claim.
- 2.16.20 But let us return to the passage: “Mighty God,” “Authoritative One,” “Ruler of Peace,” “Father of the Age to Come.” In one of his merciful deeds, the same only-begotten Son of God presents himself under his own authority as the creator of man. (I am speaking about the healing of the man blind from birth, which he accomplished as the Son of God.⁴⁴)

⁴¹ The LXX differs in meaning from the MT. Hansen says that this has been deliberately taken out of context and misinterpreted in an anti-Semitic sense.

⁴² LXX adds ‘to us,’ following the MT.

⁴³ Rahlfs’ edition of the LXX prints a shorter text of this verse, following Vaticanus, but other manuscripts (Alexandrinus, Ephraemi, marginal reading in Sinaiticus) and Lucian’s recension have the longer version of the text which the author quotes here and which more closely resembles the MT.

⁴⁴ Cf. John 9.

- 2.16.21 He is the coeternal radiance of the Father and the exact representation of his whole being, as his chosen vessel, the apostle Paul, says.⁴⁵
- 2.16.22 So many people, philosopher, have shown that the Son of God is without beginning, for he is uncreated with the Father, and that he is the creator of all created beings, both perceivable and only conceivable, as we have often said.
- 2.16.23 But where are the passages which speak of tools? Speak, if you have any. Perhaps you were baptized into a belief in tools, if you really do believe in God, as you claim.”
- 2.17.1 *The philosopher’s response concerning the passage, “The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works,” from the Proverbs of Solomon: “Since you do the truth such violence, what should we say about this clear passage: ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works?’” [Proverbs 8:22].*
- 2.17.2 *The holy fathers’ answer through Eusebius Pamphili, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine: “Why do you think you can easily escape from the depths by persuasion? Philosopher, stop piling up unmanly pretexts for yourself. Look out lest you fall headlong as you carelessly climb up dangerous cliffs.*
- 2.17.3 Nevertheless, we will now address the phrase, ‘The Lord created me.’ Our predecessors had many different interpretations about this phrase, ‘The Lord created me,’ with regard to the divine plan [οὐκονομία] of our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearance in the flesh. As to what they decided, you are certainly acquainted with their comments.
- 2.17.4 We now want to provide an interpretation based on different observations, with the assistance of the Lord Jesus Christ. If it please you, philosopher, we will present the entire passage, including its beginning.
- 2.17.5 It begins, ‘If I announce to you the things which happen day by day, I will remember to enumerate things from eternity’ [LXX Proverbs 8:21a]. Then it says, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works. Before the present age he established me in the beginning, before the earth was made, before the springs of water came forth, before the mountains were settled, and before all the hills. He begets me’ [Proverbs 8:22-25].⁴⁶ He thus clarifies the phrase, ‘The Lord created me.’ Then he adds, ‘The Lord made inhabited and uninhabited places’ [Proverbs 8:26].
- 2.17.6 Let us now discuss the Lord, who created him, who also made inhabited and uninhabited places. Solomon, spurred on by the words of him who spoke to Job, ‘Where were you when I founded the earth?’ [Job 38:4], says, ‘The Lord made inhabited and uninhabited places.’

⁴⁵ Cf. Hebrews 1:3 and Acts 9:15.

⁴⁶ Whereas the MT has a perfect form verb, the LXX has a present verb, which apparently has a bearing on the argument later on (see 2.17.26, 27).

- 2.17.7 The book of Baruch dictated by the prophet Jeremiah, as we demonstrated before, speaks about the one who made inhabited and uninhabited places: ‘The sons of Hagar, who seek understanding on the earth, the merchants, and the seekers of understanding did not know the way of wisdom nor remember its paths.’⁴⁷
- 2.17.8 A little later it says, ‘But the omniscient knows it; he found it by his insight.’⁴⁸ After mentioning the one who found wisdom by his insight, he speaks of his works: ‘He who established the earth for time everlasting filled it with four-footed animals. He sends the light out, and it goes.’
- 2.17.9 You must not ignore, philosopher, that this again clearly proves our present point. ‘He sends the light out, and it goes. He called it, and it obeyed him with trembling. The stars shone in their stations and rejoiced. He called them, and they said, “Here we are.” They shone with joy for him who made them. This is our God. No one can be compared to him. He uncovered every way of knowledge and presented it to his child Jacob, his beloved Israel. Then he appeared on the earth and lived with humans.’⁴⁹
- 2.17.10 Now we have properly presented these two passages about ‘the one who made inhabited and uninhabited places,’ which Solomon and Baruch (or rather, Jeremiah) spoke. (After saying ‘The Lord created me,’ he speaks of his works: ‘The Lord made inhabited and uninhabited places.’) So, most excellent man, let us infer who the Lord ‘who made inhabited and uninhabited places’ is.
- 2.17.11 Let us keep in mind that it was certainly none other than ‘he who established the earth for time everlasting’ (for establishing the earth is no different from making inhabited and uninhabited places) who filled it ‘with four-footed animals,’ who called the light ‘and it obeyed him with trembling,’ and so on. About him it says, ‘He appeared on the earth and lived with humans.’
- 2.17.12 Therefore, one must understand that he is the Lord, who created rational wisdom as ‘the beginning of his ways.’ He who made ‘inhabited and uninhabited places’ and ‘established the earth for time everlasting’ prepared this wisdom for humans, who are ‘in his image.’
- 2.17.13 But let us look again at the beginning of the passage: ‘If I announce to you the things which happen day by day...’ He did not speak of the future. He says, ‘I will remember to enumerate things from eternity.’ He did not say, ‘things before eternity.’
- 2.17.14 We have recognized that the Son of God is the one who created rational wisdom, who ‘established the earth for time everlasting,’ who made ‘inhabited and uninhabited places,’ who said to Job, ‘When the stars came into being, all my angels praised me’ [Job 38:7]. Moses says about him who made the light: ‘God said, “Let there be light”

⁴⁷ Baruch 3:23, quoted loosely.

⁴⁸ Baruch 3:32.

⁴⁹ Baruch 3:33-38.

[Genesis 1:3], and he adds, ‘God made the two great heavenly lights and the stars’ [Genesis 1:16], and so on.

- 2.17.15 Philosopher, I think the passages I have mentioned provide sufficient proof that the Son of God, not a tool, is the one who created the rational wisdom at work in Solomon and who created all creatures.
- 2.17.16 But to provide you with even clearer genuine proof of this and reach an understanding of the matter and its interpretation more quickly, we will quote Scripture.
- 2.17.17 When the prophet Moses was about to depart this life, as is written in the Assumption of Moses, he summoned Joshua son of Nun and told him: ‘God foresaw before the founding of the world that I would be the mediator of his covenant.’⁵⁰ In the Secret Words of Moses,⁵¹ Moses himself prophesied about David and Solomon.
- 2.17.18 About Solomon he prophesied: ‘God will pour out on him wisdom, righteousness, and knowledge in full measure. He will build the house of God,’ and so on.
- 2.17.19 But to make my point even clearer, let us carefully consider this question: Do humans exist for the world, or the world for humans?”

The philosopher: “The world certainly exists for humans.”

- 2.17.20 *Our holy bishops said through the same Bishop Eusebius Pamphili:* “Since the world certainly exists for humans, seeing as God thought about humans first, God thought about the world after humans and rational wisdom. Therefore, humans and wisdom are prior to the world. So what is prior exists before the world and the beings of the world, namely, heaven and earth, day, night, clouds, winds, depths, springs, mountains, and hills.
- 2.17.21 God thought about wisdom and humans, for whose sake the world exists, before all these things. Therefore, humans and wisdom, which God thought about before the beings of the world, already existed before the world.
- 2.17.22 God nevertheless created and produced humans afterward during creation, and before humans he produced during creation that which he thought about after humans.
- 2.17.23 Moreover, wisdom, which the Son of God ‘found by his insight,’ which he gave to humans, who are ‘in his image,’ also existed before the world and its beings in the mind of God.
- 2.17.24 Therefore, because he had been taught by the wisdom given him by God, Solomon knew within himself that humans and wisdom existed before the world and its beings

⁵⁰ Assumption of Moses 1:14.

⁵¹ This may be another title for the same apocryphal book just cited; the idea mentioned here, however, is not present in the one incomplete (Latin) manuscript that has survived.

in the mind of God. Although the Lord had ‘before the founding of the world’ thoroughly considered that which existed before the world in the mind of God, which he ‘found by his insight,’ the same Lord nevertheless created it after the world and its beings.⁵²

- 2.17.25 So Solomon has human wisdom, which existed before the world in the mind of God, say, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works.’
- 2.17.26 As for what he had rational wisdom (which is in humans and was prepared for humans, who were made ‘in the image of God’) proclaim, namely, ‘The Lord created,’ Solomon attributed this phrase to what existed before the world in the mind of God. He said, ‘he begets me,’ on the other hand, because he understood it as referring to subsequent natural procreation. Understand, then, philosopher, that ‘he begets me’ relates to the same nature growing old and being renewed until the end.
- 2.17.27 Therefore, we must understand the passage, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works,’ with regard to the rational wisdom given to humans and ‘he begets me’ according to God’s foreknowledge with regard to the rotation of nature itself, which, to speak figuratively, rolls of its own accord like a wheel, returning to the original goal—the first human, created in the image of God, in whom God placed the rational wisdom he created and in whom he engraved his pure love.
- 2.17.28 As the Savior himself was producing the new creation of humans, he spoke to the Father regarding the plan of salvation: ‘You loved me before the founding of the world’ [John 17:24]. Solomon recorded the phrase, ‘Before the present age he established me in the beginning,’ because the present age of this world consists of the cycle of day and night. Thus, to exist before day and night is to exist before this present age. Solomon harmoniously expressed this observation in terms of humans and wisdom.
- 2.17.29 For this reason he has wisdom proclaim, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works. Before the present age he established me in the beginning.’ He again reasoned within himself that God wanted to bring these mundane beings into existence before man and wisdom and that they had to be present first. But since the beings were already present, Solomon had to investigate the arrangement of beings which were present. He reasoned that man and wisdom were granted authority over the other works.
- 2.17.30 Therefore, the rational, discerning wisdom God gave to man, which poured out on Solomon, according to the great Moses,⁵³ says through Solomon, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works,’ and so on.

⁵² Hansen resorts to emendation to make sense of this sentence, but this is unnecessary. By reading ὅτι in the sentence, not found in most witnesses, Hansen is forced to supply a new main verb (ἔγνω) in the critical apparatus, following Lietzmann.

⁵³ Cf. 2.17.18.

- 2.17.31 He has wisdom, which is prior to the world along with man, describe the works of God, who produced the beings of the world: ‘The Lord made inhabited and uninhabited places, the highest inhabited places of the earth. When he prepared heaven, I was present with him as he marked off his throne above the winds. When he set the clouds on high and firmly established the springs under heaven, when he laid down his command for the sea so that the waters would not go further than he would permit, when he strengthened the foundations of the earth, I was beside him as his suitable companion. It was I in whom he rejoiced’ [Proverbs 8:26-30].
- 2.17.32 That he had wisdom say this demonstrates with certainty that the one who existed before the world in the mind of God, for whose sake the world was prepared, clearly also existed before the beings of the world.
- 2.17.33 Therefore, knowing about the creation of beings, the one who existed before them—wisdom, which ‘he found by his insight,’ which he prepared for humans—enumerates their order.
- 2.17.34 Who, then, prepared this wisdom, which guided his works, and gave it to humans? It was certainly none other than he who ‘established the earth for time everlasting,’ who ‘filled it with four-footed animals,’ who called the light, ‘and it obeyed him with trembling,’ who ‘appeared on the earth and lived with humans.’
- 2.17.35 He was assigned to powerfully create the beings. As for the fact that it says, ‘The Lord created me,’ with respect to wisdom—not the Son of God, but rather rational wisdom, which the Lord himself prepared and gave to humans, for whose sake the world was made, we have clearly demonstrated in every way that it is with respect to rational wisdom.
- 2.17.36 The Lord confirms what we just said in the Gospel: ‘The Sabbath was made for humans, not humans for the Sabbath’ [Mark 2:27]. He thus substitutes the Sabbath for the world, as if to say, ‘The world was made for humans, not humans for the world.’
- 2.18.1 *Another response of the philosopher:* “But the wisdom Solomon possessed is the Son of God, that is, the Wisdom of God, who said, ‘The Lord created me,’ and so on.”
- 2.18.2 *The holy bishops’ answer to the philosopher through Bishop Eusebius Pamphili:* “Tell me, philosopher: The wisdom which Solomon possessed, as you say, is the Wisdom of God?”
- The philosopher:* “Yes, it is.”
- The bishop:* “Tell me, is the Wisdom of God prescient, or not?”
- The philosopher:* “Yes, it is.”

The bishop: “Is the Wisdom of God, which you say Solomon possessed, the Son of God?”

The philosopher: “Yes.”

The bishop: “How does the judge render judgment? According to prescience, or not?”

The philosopher: “Yes, how else?”

The bishop: “Then does the one who judges according to prescience render judgment according to works, since he is prescient?”

The philosopher: “Yes, I have said so.”

- 2.18.3 *The bishop:* “How, then, can the wisdom which Solomon possessed say, ‘Three things I do not understand; a fourth I do not know’ [LXX Proverbs 24:53, Proverbs 30:18]? After the three things it does not understand, the wisdom Solomon possessed said the fourth: It does not know ‘the ways of a man in his youth’ [LXX Proverbs 24:54, Proverbs 30:19].
- 2.18.4 Therefore, if it is the Wisdom of God which Solomon possessed, how does it ‘judge the world’ [Romans 3:6] without knowing ‘the ways of a man in his youth’? And how can it be true that he who made man in the image of God, namely, the Son of God (as the prophet Moses and John the Evangelist say: ‘All things were made through him’ [John 1:3]), does not know ‘the ways of a man in his youth’?
- 2.18.5 It is he ‘who formed all their hearts, who observes all their works’ [Psalm 33:15, LXX 32:15], who ‘examines hearts and minds’ [Psalm 7:9, LXX 7:10], according to the prophet who said, ‘You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive all my thoughts from afar. You trace out my track and my path, and you foresee all my ways’ [Psalm 139:2-3, LXX 138:2-3].
- 2.18.6 Elsewhere, ‘He who disciplines the nations, who imparts knowledge to humans—will he not punish? The Lord knows that the thoughts of humans are vain’ [Psalm 94:10-11, LXX 93:10-11].
- 2.18.7 Does the one who understands all this and foreknows everything not know the ‘ways of a man in his youth’? One can find many passages in the Scriptures which refute those who wrongly interpret this passage in their foolishness.
- 2.18.8 How could he who ‘imparts knowledge to humans’ not himself know ‘the ways of a man in his youth’? Therefore, know this, philosopher: Solomon received discerning wisdom, which the Son of God ‘found by his insight,’ which he prepared for humans, who were made in his image, as a means of inference.

- 2.18.9 The Lord further confirms this in the Gospels: ‘Now one greater than Solomon is here.’⁵⁴ With these words he refuted those who say he is the wisdom Solomon possessed. Although in both cases the word ‘wisdom’ sounds the same, the Wisdom of God, the Son of God, as creator and craftsman of all things, is prescient and judges according to prescience and according to works, as his ‘chosen vessel’ [Acts 9:15], Paul, says about him, writing to the Hebrews:
- 2.18.10 ‘The word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to the point of dividing soul and spirit; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in creation is hidden from him; rather, everything is bare and open before the eyes of him to whom we are accountable’ [Hebrews 4:12-13].
- 2.18.11 To the Romans the same Paul writes: ‘Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, came the Christ, who is God over all, forever blessed. Amen’ [Romans 9:5].
- 2.18.12 In this way he shows that the wisdom of God the Father is truly God, from God himself, eternal from eternal, true God from true God, and by nature is always Son of him who is always God and Father.”
- 2.19.1 *The philosopher’s response:* “What, then, is the meaning of the passage, ‘They did not know the way of wisdom nor remember its paths,’ and so on?”
- 2.19.2 *The response of the holy bishops through the same Eusebius Pamphili:* “Often, philosopher, after looking at wisdom’s words, you have been amazed at wisdom’s power, because one can find in wisdom great intellectual truth in concise expressions.
- 2.19.3 One could rightly compare Scripture’s words in the parable in the Gospel which teaches that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. Although it is the smallest ‘of all the seeds on earth,’ it provides ample shelter for birds when fully grown.
- 2.19.4 Thus we see that concise expressions scatter the power of divine words. But when the thoughts fully mature and extend like branches over the understanding of the birds (that is, of humans), one finds power so great that it can provide ample shelter not only to the farmers but also to the birds standing nearby.
- 2.19.5 Where did I get this understanding other than from the word of Holy Scripture through the psalmist David? It proves and confirms that he is not rational wisdom, as you concluded, but is the incomprehensible, uncreated Wisdom, without beginning, who crafted this rational wisdom as well as everything which has been made, that is, Christ.

⁵⁴ Cf. Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31. The quotation changes the neuter *πλεῖον*, “something greater,” to masculine *πλείονα*, “one greater,” to make it refer more explicitly to Christ.

- 2.19.6 Since Christ is the power of God and the Wisdom of God according to the character of his inexpressible, inconceivable divine nature, he is God's true divine Word. For David says, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; all their power by the Spirit of his mouth' [Psalm 33:6, LXX 32:6].
- 2.19.7 You hear 'the word of the Lord;' you hear 'the Spirit of his mouth.' Now listen again for confirmation of the true faith, which the religious piously apprehend and proclaim, since (I suppose) you have not accepted from this great spiritual company of holy priests any knowledge of what they proclaimed to you.
- 2.19.8 So listen dutifully and stop trying to understand the inexpressible with human arguments. He who is perfect neither decreases nor increases. There is one who is unbegotten, God the Father. There is one who is begotten of him, the only-begotten Son, God the Word.
- 2.19.9 Therefore, just as there is not another unbegotten God along with God the Father, there is not another Son of God who was begotten with, before, or after God's only-begotten Son, God the Word. There is truly one God the Father, and there is truly one Son, incomprehensibly begotten of him, God the Word.
- 2.19.10 Therefore, just as God is not Father in name only, the Son is not Son in name only, but in actuality. The Father is actually Father; the Son is actually Son. The Father is God; the Son, begotten of him, is God. The Father is perfect; his Son is perfect. The Father is incorporeal; the Son is incorporeal (for the imprint and image of the incorporeal is certainly incorporeal).
- 2.19.11 Philosopher, do you believe that the Father's only-begotten Son was begotten of his essence [οὐσία], as we have demonstrated from the beginning of our debate by so many passages of Scripture, or not?"
- The philosopher's response:* "Explain how this occurred."
- 2.19.12 *The holy bishops said through the same Eusebius Pamphili:* "Do not ask 'how,' philosopher. Otherwise, as we told you many times and solemnly declared at the beginning of this debate, you may quickly fall headlong as you try to understand the unsearchable.
- 2.19.13 For if, in speaking of the unbegotten, it were permissible to ask 'how,' then, in speaking of the begotten, it would also be permissible to ask 'how.' But since the unbegotten does not admit of investigation as to how he is unbegotten, neither does the begotten admit of investigation as to how he was begotten. Stop seeking the unsearchable, for you will not find it. Seek what may be found, and you will find it.
- 2.19.14 If you would investigate, from whom could you learn? The earth? It did not yet exist. The sea? The waters had not yet been created. The heavens? They had not yet been made. The sun, moon, and stars? They had not yet been created. Angels and

archangels? They did not yet exist, for the Son made even them. What about time? The only-begotten was before time.

- 2.19.15 Do not apply the standards of things which have not always existed to him who has always existed. The unbegotten Father is incomprehensible. The Son incomprehensibly begotten of him is incomprehensible.
- 2.19.16 Keep silent about ‘how.’ Leave this to him who has begotten and him who was begotten. The Father alone knows who the Son is; the Son knows the Father (and ‘he to whom the Son desires to reveal the Father’ [Matthew 11:27]), as the Gospel about him says.
- 2.19.17 If, however, you insist on asking ‘how’ and are determined to understand the unsearchable, we laugh at your audacity. Rather, we mourn for you because you are unwilling to apprehend by faith that God is always Father of his Son and that his only-begotten Son is always his Son, always coexisting with the Father and not created later, as you irreverently say.
- 2.19.18 Instead, apprehend by faith and confess that the Son is a perfect being from a perfect being (as you have often heard), eternal light from eternal light, true God from true God and Father, uncreated from uncreated, not composite from one who is not composite, always existing with the Father. For John the Evangelist says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’
- 2.19.19 Philosopher, the word ‘was’ does not admit of something existing before him. The word ‘was’ repudiates ‘was not,’ as we already demonstrated, philosopher. The word ‘God’ repudiates ‘not God.’ Believe what has been written. Do not consider nor investigate what has not been written.
- 2.19.20 Believe that the Son himself crafted everything which has been made in accord with the Father’s will, not by seeing with his eyes (for God does not have parts, as we said before), but by his will, as he alone knows. Apprehending this by faith, we proclaim according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures that, by the will of the Father and of himself, he crafted all creation, in heaven and on earth, perceivable and only conceivable, not with tools nor devices nor the assistance of another, but by the will of the Father (as we just said), who said to him and the Holy Spirit, ‘Let us make man in our image and likeness.’
- 2.19.21 He did not say, ‘Make!’ or ‘You two, make!’ but rather, ‘Let us make,’ showing the sameness of essence and equality of honor in the blessed, indescribable Trinity.
- 2.19.22 Do not mutter to yourself and roll your eyes, philosopher, but rather use your intellect to see the accuracy of apostolic doctrine and faithfully accept it. Do not be unfaithful any longer, but rather faithful.

- 2.19.23 Listen and understand: The Word of God, God's Son before time, to whom he said, 'Let us make man,' and so on, himself became human in the last days by the will of the Father and of himself, taking on flesh through a virgin for the sake of Adam, the fallen man.
- 2.19.24 He who is without a body emptied himself, as the apostle Paul said,⁵⁵ taking on a body for the body.⁵⁶ God the Word took the body on like a cloud so that he would not consume the created beings of the world,⁵⁷ for 'no one has ever seen God' [John 1:18].
- 2.19.25 He was restrained in flesh that flesh might be freed from death through its inalterable union with him, the invisible in the visible that he might endure visible circumstances as a human subject to time. In both cases, the same is truly God and man, man and God. From both there is one Christ. Thus we apprehend and recognize the difference between his essences, namely, his divine nature and his flesh. He was and is God. He became man for the plan of salvation [οἰκονομία].
- 2.19.26 Because of him there were prophets; because of him there were apostles; because of him there were martyrs. There were prophets because of the one prophesied; apostles because of the one sent out for the plan of salvation; martyrs because of the first martyr. God the Son came to earth, concealing his great divine nature in flesh, according to his will. Yet he did not leave heaven desolate, nor was he absent from the world before he took on flesh.
- 2.19.27 He was and is God. He became man for the plan of salvation, taking on flesh and being born of a virgin because of his love for mankind.
- 2.19.28 The Father begot a Son worthy of and equal to himself, as God the Father, who begot him, and the Son begotten by him both know, philosopher.”
- 2.20.1 *The philosopher's response:* “Stop doing such great violence to the truth and trying to use your skill with words to obscure the shining splendor of Scripture like a cloud. Instead, accept the clear scriptural truth I have set before you and stop fleeing from the passages, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works,’ and, ‘The Lord made inhabited and uninhabited places, the highest inhabited places of the earth.’
- 2.20.2 These passages express the same thought concerning the one Lord God, who created him first as ‘the beginning of his ways for his works,’ addressed him as his Son, and through him, as through a tool, created ‘inhabited and uninhabited places’:

⁵⁵ Cf. Philippians 2:7.

⁵⁶ This clause could be drawing on the frequent image of the church as Christ's body in the New Testament.

⁵⁷ This comparison is reminiscent of the pillar of cloud which indicated God's presence during the Exodus (cf. Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24; Numbers 12:5; 1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

- 2.20.3 Even though the created Wisdom of God, namely, the Son, was at work, God was nevertheless the one creating what did not exist through him as through a tool.”
- 2.20.4 *The holy bishops’ answer through the same Eusebius Pamphili:* “Since you are far removed from the royal highway, that is, the apostolic faith, you carelessly drift away from it. You are determined to fall headlong once and for all, for you scarcely rejected the deep wickedness which surrounds you when you heard from this holy council the prophecy of great Jeremiah, pointing his finger, so to speak: ‘This is our God. No one can be compared to him,’ and so on.
- 2.20.5 He continues, ‘Then he appeared on the earth and lived with humans.’ You know, philosopher, that the holy bishops asked you, ‘Who appeared on the earth and lived with humans—the Father or the Son?’ You confessed, ‘The Son, just as the Holy Scriptures say.’
- 2.20.6 Did you not say this? How is it that you are again throwing yourself into the depths of Arius’s wickedness, or rather, sinking into it? You have not broken free from Arius, to whom you yoked yourself. Wretched man, you prefer the blasphemies of Arius to apostolic doctrine, for you call the Son of God a creature and a tool.
- 2.20.7 So listen to us, philosopher—if you really are a philosopher. Believe that the Son of God is not created, rational wisdom, which the Son himself, who created ‘inhabited and uninhabited places,’ gave to humans.
- 2.20.8 Pay attention, and do not strive for hatred, but for truth. Truth itself will guide you to recognize that the only-begotten Son of God is not a creature but is himself creator and craftsman of all created beings, as you yourself have seen and apprehended to a small degree, and—as I, at least, am confident—will apprehend, if in fact you desire to be saved.”
- 2.21.1 *The philosopher’s response against the Holy Spirit:* “This is indisputably trustworthy: The Son, as you say, created, or rather created with God the Father, as the passages demonstrate, and is not a product of God but rather begotten of him—begotten by nature of him. We accept this.
- 2.21.2 But surely you can’t say anything about the Spirit, can you? Who would dare to say that the Holy Spirit is the creator of any created beings? Where do the passages say about him that he has crafted any creatures, seen or unseen? Moreover, who wrote about him as about the Son? Any of you may speak up if you can answer.”
- 2.21.3 *The fathers’ answer through Protogenes, bishop of Sardica:* “Philosopher, it is no challenge to show you the passages about the work of the Holy Spirit in which our fathers outlined the fact that he created. Let us repeat what was said about creation: ‘God said, “Let us make man in our image and likeness.”’ It continues, ‘God made man; in the image of God he made him; male and female he made them.’

- 2.21.4 The Father, who said to the Son, ‘Let us make,’ is God. In the same way, the Son made man, for he is God. Therefore, if we call the one who spoke and the one who made Adam and Eve God, listen now about the Holy Spirit: Was the one who made Adam God, or not?”
- 2.21.5 *The philosopher*: “Yes, he is God.”
- The bishop*: “In the book of Job, Elihu the Buzite says to Job, ‘The Spirit of God made me’ [Job 33:4]. Therefore, if the one who made Adam is God, what would you call the one who made Elihu? Or do you think Elihu was of a different essence than Adam? The uniformity of the final product in the person of man naturally reveals the equal skill of the craftsmen.
- 2.21.6 What, then, would you call the one who made Elihu, philosopher? Isn’t he God, the maker of man? Just as it says about the one who made Adam, ‘God made Adam,’ so also we are right to say that the one who made Elihu, the Holy Spirit, is God. The product of their craftsmanship is equal; the title of the craftsmen is also equal, for the Holy Trinity has one divine essence, apprehended in three perfect and equal persons [ὑπόστασις].
- 2.21.7 In the Assumption of Moses, the archangel Michael, while disputing with the devil, says, ‘We were all created by his Holy Spirit.’ Again he says, ‘God’s Spirit went out from his presence, and the world was made.’ This is the same as saying, ‘All things were made through him.’
- 2.21.8 The divine, indescribable Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is always indivisible. The Trinity together crafted all creation, conceivable and perceivable.
- 2.21.9 He also says in Psalm 32, ‘By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; all their power by the Spirit of his mouth’ [Psalm 33:6, LXX 32:6]. Moreover, listen to what God says in Isaiah: ‘I am the Lord your God. I, the God of Israel, will listen to you’ [Isaiah 41:17].
- 2.21.10 After listing his kind acts to the people, he continues: ‘...that they may together see, consider, and understand that the hand of the Lord made all these things and that the Holy One of Israel made them known’ [Isaiah 41:20]. ‘Hand’ signifies God’s Holy Spirit, and ‘the Holy One of Israel’ signifies his Son.
- 2.21.11 He also said to Jacob, ‘My hand laid the foundation of the earth; my right hand made the heavens firm’ [Isaiah 48:13], as Ezekiel also says, ‘The hand of the Lord was upon me’ [Ezekiel 3:22].
- 2.21.12 Philosopher, Scripture usually calls God’s Holy Spirit either his hand or his arm and calls the Son his right hand.”

- 2.21.13 *Moreover, the holy fathers spoke through Bishop Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia:* “What has been said about the work of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to persuade you, philosopher, that the Holy Spirit is co-craftsman of all created beings with the Father and the Son and has the same divine nature and essence as the Father and the Son.
- 2.21.14 Therefore, meditate on what has already been said to you and now hear even clearer proof about him from the Holy Scriptures. The prophet David says in Psalm 97, ‘Sing to the Lord a new song.’ Why? ‘The Lord has done marvelous things. His right hand’ (meaning his Son) ‘and his holy arm’ (meaning the Holy Spirit) ‘have wrought salvation for him’ [Psalm 98:1, LXX 97:1].
- 2.21.15 In the general epistles, John the Evangelist proclaims that the Holy Spirit is God, as all the others do: ‘The Spirit testifies, for the Spirit is truth’ [1 John 5:6]. A little later he says, ‘Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony of God’ (meaning the Spirit of God) ‘in him, but whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar’ [1 John 5:10].
- 2.21.16 The great rock of the apostles, godly Peter, says to Ananias, ‘Why has Satan filled your heart so that you lied to the Holy Spirit?’ [Acts 5:3]. Then he says, ‘You have not lied merely to humans, but also to God’ [Acts 5:4]. Moreover, in the Old Testament it says, “‘I fill heaven and earth,” declares the Lord’ [Jeremiah 23:24]. Solomon shows who fills them when he says, ‘The Spirit of the Lord fills the world.’⁵⁸
- 2.21.17 Therefore believe that the Holy Spirit is also Lord. Accept the passages about him, believing that the Holy Spirit has the same divine nature and essence and the same substance as the Father and the Son, always coexisting with the Father and the Son. Do you understand, philosopher?”
- 2.21.18 *The philosopher’s response to our holy fathers:* “Yes. As you assert, and as the passages of Scripture you have cited make clear, one must call the Holy Spirit God as well. This conclusion would seem forced to me, had you not cited Scripture.
- 2.21.19 However, while the proof is clear as regards Elihu the Buzite, I’ve never heard about the Assumption of Moses, concerning which you just spoke, until now. I therefore ask you to present a clearer explanation of what you said.
- 2.21.20 What you have said thus far is not enough for me to be completely certain about the Spirit. This subject requires clearer, nobler language, for our discussion is not about trifling matters.”
- 2.21.21 *Our holy fathers’ answer to the philosopher through the same Bishop Leontius:* “Since there is much proof of what we have explained to you and since these clear passages of Holy Scripture can convince you of the present subject, philosopher, we

⁵⁸ Wisdom of Solomon 1:7

are amazed that you keep doubting even though you seem to be full of such great understanding.

- 2.21.22 But since we want you to see the truth and pray for that to happen, we exhort you, wise as you are, to begin to apprehend that uncreated, unchangeable being by faith. Furthermore, we exhort you not to presume that you can use human reasoning to meddle with things beyond reasoning, as we have said many times. Do not involve yourself in the perverse, ungodly opinions of Arius any longer, philosopher, if you are, as you say, a lover of wisdom. Instead, as we just said, accept with faith what has now been said to you and what is about to be said.
- 2.21.23 Accept that the Father, who begot the Son in an indescribable way, the Son, who was begotten of him, and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and is the Son's own Spirit, have one divine nature. As the apostle Paul says:
- 2.21.24 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him' [Romans 8:9]. Elsewhere he says, 'The Lord is the Spirit' [2 Corinthians 3:17]. Again, 'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are different kinds of service, but the same Lord; there are different kinds of working, but the same God works everything in everyone' [1 Corinthians 12:4-6]. Not much later he says, 'One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing them to each individual as he desires' [1 Corinthians 12:11].
- 2.21.25 See, philosopher, this clearly and directly calls the Holy Spirit God and demonstrates his autonomy. Notice how he says, 'There are different kinds of working, but the same God works everything in everyone,' and, 'One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing them to each individual as he desires.'
- 2.21.26 As you know, in the Gospels the Lord speaks clearly with the Samaritan woman. What does he say? 'God is spirit' [John 4:24]. Therefore, if God is spirit, the Spirit is certainly also God. But they are not two different beings; rather, the two persons have one divine nature in the sense of subsistent entities.
- 2.21.27 But when we hear 'person' [πρόσωπον], let us not suppose that God has a human form, for he is formless and not composite, as you yourself confessed at the beginning of our debate, and as we also confess.
- 2.21.28 For the Lord himself testifies in the Gospels that heaven and earth also have a 'person' [πρόσωπον] while speaking with the scribes and Pharisees: 'You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance [πρόσωπον] of the heavens and the earth' [Luke 12:56], and so on.
- 2.21.29 Everything which exists, insofar as it exists, is said to have a 'person' [πρόσωπον] or form of its own nature [φύσις]. Indeed, heaven and earth are created, as are all beings which have been made, but the indescribable divine essence is uncreated since it is simple, not composite, formless, eternal, and immortal.

- 2.21.30 But let us return to the topic at hand. We demonstrated through many passages from the Holy Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is co-craftsman with the Father and the Son of all creation, both perceivable and only conceivable, since he is always inseparable from the Father and the Son, just as the Son is inseparable from the Father and the Father from the Son.
- 2.21.31 Now, if it seems good, come receive useful instructions through examples, even if they are rather weak. Your word, just like the word of every man, is uttered, and it is indivisibly begotten of your mind. In the same way, your breath [πνεῦμα] also proceeds from you, and you would not alienate your word or your breath from yourself.
- 2.21.32 You would not deny understanding this with humans. But with the indescribable, incomprehensible, unfathomable essence of God, his Word is not uttered but is always ‘living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword’ [Hebrews 4:12]. He is judge of all since he is craftsman of all. ‘Nothing in creation is hidden from him; rather, everything is bare and open before his eyes’ [Hebrews 4:13].
- 2.21.33 And his Holy Spirit searches ‘even the depths of God’ [1 Corinthians 2:10]. Would anyone dare to alienate the Word or the Spirit from God, or to embrace those who alienate them? Would they, philosopher?”
- 2.22.1 *The philosopher’s response to the company of holy bishops:* “Since you have led me to a higher level of thinking in saying that one must apprehend and believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one divine nature, I recall what you said before: The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
- 2.22.2 Now you affirm that the three perfect persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—have one divine nature. Please explain these thoughts to me more clearly.”
- 2.22.3 *The holy fathers’ answer to the philosopher through the same Bishop Leontius:* “It is inexpressible, for the divine, indescribable essence which transcends and encompasses all things is incomprehensible to mind and thought and entirely inscrutable.
- 2.22.4 But listen to us: We have not spoken to you about two different gods, as ungodly Arius did in his blasphemy, saying that there is one uncreated God and another created one and likewise proclaiming that the Spirit of God is created (perish the thought!); rather, we apprehend and believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one divine nature, one essence, one lordship and will.
- 2.22.5 We know that the persons of the Holy Trinity are neither separate nor localized. But by faith alone we apprehend and believe, as we have often said, that the Holy, consubstantial Trinity, deserving of worship, has one divine nature.

- 2.22.6 Through all this the true faith has shown that one must not conceive of any difference in the Holy Trinity. Therefore, willingly give us your attention for a little while, and your faith will be strengthened as you receive from the Holy Spirit, through us, salutary instructions so that you may know that the Holy Trinity has one divine nature, which eternally exists and subsists—a Trinity which is truly a Trinity, none of them existing before another, but always an indivisible, consubstantial Trinity.”
- 2.22.7 *The philosopher’s response:* “Don’t think that I am turning away from true doctrine (if I were, I would have rejected your words from the very start of the debate), but I am weighing the implications of your thoughts so that the conclusion you are defending may be clearly evident to me.”
- 2.22.8 *The holy fathers’ answer to the philosopher in hypothetical terms about fire, radiance, and light, through the same Bishop Leontius:* “Listen, now, philosopher. Through many passages of the Holy Scriptures we have already explained to you that the divine nature is simple and not composite, as you yourself confessed when you started asking questions.
- 2.22.9 It is everlasting, eternal, uncreated fire, for it is uncontained, unapproachable light by nature. One must not think of it as one person, as the Jews do. Rather, all Christians believe in and proclaim the inseparable Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—as a Trinity, for the persons are eternally inseparable, as has been shown.
- 2.22.10 Learn now, philosopher. Even though we act boldly, the majestic God nevertheless deals with us mercifully, for we are working to save you and everyone else. Therefore learn from objects of perception about objects of consideration, from objects of the mind about objects beyond the mind, from words about objects beyond words.
- 2.22.11 Although everything in creation, perceivable and only conceivable, ‘in heaven and on earth and under the earth’ [Philippians 2:10], is incomparable to the uncreated, incomprehensible, immortal essence of God, a suitable illustration is, nevertheless, of considerable value to those who receive it in faith. Rather, let’s say it provides an adequate picture of piety to those who want to understand it piously.
- 2.22.12 Perceivable fire, although it has one nature or essence, is a trinity. It is at the same time fire, radiance, and light. One finds that none of these exist before another; the three are inseparable from each other—the fire, the radiance which comes from it, and the light.
- 2.22.13 Therefore, philosopher, separate the three, if you can, and show us which one exists before another, whether fire existed by itself before radiance, and radiance came after fire, or perhaps light came after fire and radiance or before them.
- 2.22.14 Separate the three from each other, if you can, and show us that fire, radiance, and light are not simultaneous although the nature of fire is one.

- 2.22.15 Keep these perceivable created things in mind. Although they are incomparable to the eternal, incomprehensible essence of God (as we just said), even so, receive from them a starting point towards salvation, and by faith furnish your mind's eye with wings to ascend to sublime knowledge of God.
- 2.22.16 As we pray and believe, the grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit will come to you like lightning and show you that there is one divine nature, which is everlasting fire, radiance, and light, simple, not composite, inseparable, indivisible, incomprehensible, and indescribable, a truly consubstantial Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”
- 2.22.17 *The philosopher believes in the Holy Trinity:* Having heard these things, the philosopher became speechless for quite a while as if he were in a trance, “his thoughts troubled him” [Daniel 5:6], and great fear seized him. Then he came to his senses and cried out in a loud voice:
- 2.22.18 “Glory to you, O God, who breathed into these saints of yours the mystery beyond every mind of the immaculate, inseparable, uncreated divine nature. Moreover, I implore you, Christ, as the benevolent Son of the benevolent Father, to forgive the sins I committed against you while the ungodly opinions of Arius held sway over me so that I will not have to endure your punishment, righteous Judge, for those ungodly words which I, a wretch, spoke against you.
- 2.22.19 Woe to Arius and his ungodly associates, who blasphemously say against the Son of God, ‘He did not always exist.’ They also say that the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are creatures, products, and of a different essence. They say that the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are not of the same essence as the Father.
- 2.22.20 Now and forever I anathematize Arius, his ungodly opinions, all who agree with him, and all who blaspheme against the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Whoever does not have the Son ‘does not have the Father’ [1 John 2:23], and whoever has blasphemed against the Son and the Holy Spirit has blasphemed against the Father.
- 2.22.21 I beseech you, holy council of elders: Help me by praying to Christ, the Son of God, on my behalf, for I am certainly a follower of the teachings the Holy Spirit has explained and defined through you. I confess that they are true and reliable.
- 2.22.22 I am confident that this is what Paul, the teacher of sacred truths, called ‘the mystery which has been kept hidden for ages and generations,’ which ‘has now been revealed’ [Colossians 1:26], as it says, ‘to his holy apostles and prophets’ (and to you) ‘by the Spirit’ [Ephesians 3:5]—that the Son and the Holy Spirit exist eternally, coexisting and coenduring with God the Father.”
- 2.23.1 *The holy fathers also spoke to the philosopher about a spring, a river, and water through Bishop Leontius:* “This too you must consider, philosopher—you who finally love truth. Let us consider a spring which produces a river of water. As you know,

every river has a spring which produces it. So the river proceeds from the spring of water, but no one calls the river a spring or the spring a river. Rather, they call the spring a spring and the river a river, and both are one water.

- 2.23.2 When someone wants to have water drawn from a river or spring, he uses a different noun. He would not say, 'Go draw and bring me the spring or the river,' but rather water. There is one nature, but we must speak of three 'faces' [πρόσωπα]: spring, river, and water.
- 2.23.3 Moreover, we have shown that Holy Scripture declares this; we are not speaking to you anything foreign to it, O finally genuine son of grace, although we introduced the word of truth in examples, pictures, and images.
- 2.23.4 For this reason Holy Scripture says about the Son that he bends 'towards them like a river of peace' [Isaiah 66:12], proceeding, clearly, from the true spring of life, that is, from the Father's divine nature, as the Lord himself proclaims in the Gospels: 'I came from the Father, and I am here' [John 8:42]. He also very clearly said: 'I and the Father are one' [John 10:30], and 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me' [John 14:11].
- 2.23.5 The Lord says that we believers all receive from him the Holy Spirit, being of the same essence as the Father and the Son, proceeding from the Father, and being the Son's own Spirit, as we have shown above. The Lord himself clearly taught in the Gospels that the Holy Spirit pours out from him upon us when he said, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within him' [John 7:37-38]. The Evangelist, inspired by God, adds the following to interpret what was said: 'He said this about the Spirit, whom those who believe in him were going to receive' [John 7:39].
- 2.23.6 See what the prophet David proclaims about this truly living spring, the Holy Trinity: 'With you is the spring of life. In your light we will see light' [Psalm 36:9, LXX 35:10]. He calls God the Father the spring of life while addressing the Son since the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. He addresses the Son as light, and by this light he says he will see light, that is, the Holy Spirit. For he says, 'In your light we will see light.'
- 2.23.7 The Father is the true spring of life and light; the Son is light from the light of the Father; the Holy Spirit is light from the Son's light.
- 2.23.8 As we have said many times, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one divine nature, as God himself proclaims through the prophet: 'I am God; there is no other' [Isaiah 45:21], and 'I, God, am the first, and I am the last' [Isaiah 44:6], and 'I am forever' [Isaiah 48:12], and again, 'I am, and I do not change' [Malachi 3:6], and so on, in keeping with what we demonstrated before.

- 2.23.9 In fact, I find it necessary to repeat the passages—if not all of them because of their quantity, then at least the clearer ones—so that you may have a firmer understanding of what has been said.
- 2.23.10 Therefore, we will explain the words of the prophet Jeremiah: ‘He who established the earth for time everlasting filled it with four-footed animals. He sends the light out, and it goes. He called it, and it obeyed him with trembling. The stars shone in their stations and rejoiced. He called them, and they said, “We are here.” They shone with joy for him who made them. This is our God. No one can be compared to him,’ and so on.
- 2.23.11 Therefore, God-loving philosopher, one must pay attention here and ponder the meaning of this Scripture. He showed, as you yourself have agreed, that this was foretold about the Son, for it says, ‘Then he appeared on the earth and lived with humans.’
- 2.23.12 Therefore, consider what would be true if, as Arius claims in his ungodly depravity, the Son had a different, created essence and were God after the Father. Scripture says about him, ‘This is our God. No one can be compared to him.’ Then, according to ungodly Arius, the Father is not God, for it says about the Son, ‘No one can be compared to him.’ Thus the ungodly Ariomaniacs⁵⁹ along with the author of their blasphemy are convicted of rejecting the deity of the Father in their denial of the Son. So the enemies of truth prove to be utterly atheistic.
- 2.23.13 As it says in the general epistles, whoever does not have the Son ‘does not have the Father.’ The catholic faith knows and worships one deity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—to whom no one can be compared. The mystery of the Holy, consubstantial Trinity, deserving of worship, is inconceivable, indescribable, and entirely incomprehensible; it can only be apprehended by faith.”
- 2.24.1 *The philosopher*: “What the Holy Spirit has uttered through you is truly divine and full of light. Since your words of holy instruction are lovely to me, I ask you to give me your undivided attention and instruct me as I ask questions so that God will grant you a lavish reward for my salvation.”
- 2.24.2 *The holy fathers’ answer through the same Bishop Leontius*: “Ask your questions. We want to lead you to maturity, and now you are entirely ready to accept the evidence in the passages because the Holy Spirit has enlightened you.”
- 2.24.3 *The philosopher expresses gratitude and inquires about the incarnation of the Lord*: “Thanks be to your holiness. Tell me, most holy ones: How does one understand that God the Word, the Son of God, appeared on the earth and lived with humans? He is invisible to every created being, both perceivable and only conceivable. Please also teach me why he did this.”

⁵⁹ Cf. 1.0.4, n. 5.

- 2.24.4 *The holy fathers' answer to the philosopher through Bishop Leontius:* "He came to carry out the plan of salvation because of the apostasy of the first humans, Adam and Eve, in Paradise. This apostasy infected the whole human race.
- 2.24.5 Therefore, since they had forfeited God's gift of grace by breaking his command, the craftsman wanted to return this grace to the human race. Here one must understand that just as 'God said, "Let us make man in our image and likeness,'" and 'God made man' (according to the explanations given above), so the same God said, 'Let us save lost man, whom we made in our image and likeness.'
- 2.24.6 Just as God the Father said, 'Let us make,' and the Son created, being God from God, so the same Son wanted to redeem man in himself by the Father's will."
- 2.24.7 *The philosopher inquires about the same topic:* "How did he 'appear on the earth and live' as a human 'with humans' when he is unchangeable God?"
- 2.24.8 *The holy fathers' answer through Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem:* "According to blessed Paul, 'The mystery of godliness is great.' The Son of God 'was revealed in the flesh,' then 'was seen by angels' [1 Timothy 3:16]. The only-begotten is not visible to angels, archangels, or any heavenly powers, for 'no one has ever seen God' [John 1:18].
- 2.24.9 When you hear of his descent from heaven, you should not think of his unconfined divine nature moving from one place to another. Rather, understand this whole truly great 'mystery of godliness,' by which we were renewed, with respect to the plan of salvation.
- 2.24.10 Renewal is a restoration of newness. Therefore the Word of God himself descended to our likeness to restore his likeness to us.
- 2.24.11 It was impossible for God to become like us without taking on flesh, for he did not take on a bodiless form of a bodiless entity (which he himself was), but a bodily form. He could not come without taking on bodily substance. Therefore he truly took on a body so that, having fallen from initial brotherhood due to the change of bodiless form which occurred when we lost the Spirit's grace through Adam and Eve, the first humans, we might be restored to brotherhood through his taking on of a body and might again receive the bodiless divine form.
- 2.24.12 He took on flesh from woman. Thus he became like us to share his glory with us as members of the same race and to save woman through his birth. For it says woman 'will be saved through childbearing' [1 Timothy 2:15].
- 2.24.13 He took on flesh, which is naturally full of life. No flesh lacks that which gives life, which Scripture specifically calls the soul."

- 2.24.14 *The philosopher*: “Who would not be amazed at these wonderful deeds of God you have described? How did he take on flesh from woman, as you just said?”
- 2.24.15 *The holy fathers’ answer through the same Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem*: “We have already told you, most excellent man, not to speak of ‘how’ with the mysteries of God, for they are indescribable and beyond comprehension. But as we have been taught from Holy Scripture, we will say as much as speech can express.
- 2.24.16 No human nor angel can fully grasp the mystery of the Lord’s incarnation. Not even Gabriel himself, who was the servant of that mystery, nor the all-pure, chaste, holy Virgin Mary could present a complete picture of the divine Word’s incarnation. The only-begotten Son of God himself is the only one who knows the precise nature of his incarnation for our sake.
- 2.24.17 Granted, ‘the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed traditions down to us’ [Luke 1:2], as Luke says, about his incarnation—he was ‘a descendant of David’ and Abraham ‘according to the flesh’ [Romans 1:3]; ‘from her’ (the virgin) ‘was born Jesus, who is called Christ’ [Matthew 1:16]; ‘theirs are the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, came the Christ’ [Romans 9:5]; ‘he did not help angels but the seed of Abraham’ [Hebrews 2:16]; he became like us in every respect except for sin.⁶⁰ We know these things.
- 2.24.18 But the way this happened surpasses the understanding of every rational being. The prophet Jeremiah says about this: ‘He is a man, but who will know him?’” [Jeremiah 17:9].⁶¹
- While the philosopher and the entire crowd which gathered to listen were amazed, the holy fathers added through Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem:*
- 2.24.19 “We have already proven through numerous arguments that as God, the only-begotten Son of God became man because of his love of mankind, becoming flesh and being incomprehensibly born of the Virgin Mary.
- 2.24.20 Since, as our discussion has already demonstrated, he wanted to renew what was destroyed by the apostasy of the first-formed humans, he became equal to us to make us equal to him, condescending to our weakness as an excellent physician.
- 2.24.21 We again say that ‘condescend,’ ‘come down,’ and ‘be sent’ must be used in the sense of his incarnation, as we previously demonstrated. As regards his divine nature, he always fills the universe with the Father as described before.

⁶⁰ Cf. Hebrews 4:15.

⁶¹ The consonants of the MT may be read either as a noun meaning “man” (so LXX) or as an adjective meaning “incurable” (so Masoretic pointing). The latter is clearly the correct reading in the context of the whole verse.

- 2.24.22 So listen: We are begotten of woman. He came for this purpose because of his love for mankind. We are begotten of the pleasure of sleep and the seed of man,⁶² but he alone was begotten of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. We are nourished with milk. He who by his deity nourishes all flesh came for this also in flesh. We mature and grow older. Nor did he despise this bodily growth, as is written: ‘Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men’ [Luke 2:52].
- 2.24.23 When he was thirty years old, to bless every stage of life, he got baptized. John, the son of Zechariah, preached to the people ‘a baptism of repentance’ [Mark 1:4]. John could not give the gift of forgiveness of sins or adoption to sonship, for they were not his to give, nor even an angel’s; only God the Word himself, who was incarnate and became human, could give them.
- 2.24.24 He received the baptism destined for us. Although as God he is sinless, he was baptized physically like a human, not because he needed baptism, but to glorify our baptism, that we might believe the Holy Spirit descends on us who are baptized into him, just as the Spirit descended on him.
- 2.24.25 Then he lived with humans, conveying his divine commands and performing miraculous signs for three years and the beginning of a fourth. He thus willingly entered upon his bodily suffering for our sake. We had earned the penalty of the cross, but even if we had all been crucified, we could not have rescued ourselves from death.
- 2.24.26 Rather, ‘death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin’ [Romans 5:14]. There were many saints, prophets, and righteous persons, but none of them could redeem himself from the power of death. But the Savior of all came and took the penalty due us into his sinless flesh, from us, in our place, for our sake.
- 2.24.27 After death we sink down to the grave. He undertook this also and willingly descended to the grave. He did not sink down like we do; he descended. He was not subject to death, but lord of death. He descended by himself, but he returned with a multitude.
- 2.24.28 He was the spiritual grain of wheat which fell to the ground and died in the flesh for our sake. By the power of his divine nature he made his bodily temple rise, according to the Scriptures, which produced the fruit of the resurrection of the entire human race. After three days of burial and his resurrection from the dead, he appeared to his disciples and showed them the marks of his bodily suffering on the cross: ‘Touch me and see that it is I myself’ [Luke 24 39], the miracle-worker, who received these marks of suffering in my flesh for your race.
- 2.24.29 Then he lived with them for forty days, instructed them concerning his saving commands, and ascended into heaven as they watched. The Holy Scriptures teach that he is seated at the right hand of the Father. We await his coming at the end of the age

⁶² Cf. Wisdom of Solomon 7:2.

to judge the living and the dead, when he will reign forever and ever with the Father for infinite ages.

- 2.24.30 This is the apostolic, blameless faith of the church, which the Lord himself entrusted to it from the beginning⁶³ through the apostles, from parents to children. The church preserves it and adheres to it up to now and forever, as the Lord told the disciples: ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’” [Matthew 28:19].
- 2.25.1 When the Holy Spirit had thus pronounced this through our holy fathers assembled at the holy council, the whole audience which had gathered glorified God.
- 2.25.2 The God-loving emperor, who also attended most of the council, was himself in the audience. Greatly pleased, he glorified God on hearing such godly doctrine. Rejoicing at the agreement of our bishops, he was overjoyed in the Spirit. It was his ambition that no one, great or small, would disagree with this saving confession.
- 2.25.3 Therefore, after extensive pious deliberation finished, all our people saw the need to define God’s consubstantiality [τὸ ὁμοούσιον] within the church’s faith, as our holy fathers who came after the apostles also passed down this faith, namely, confessing that the Son and the Holy Spirit have the same essence as the Father.
- 2.25.4 All the holy bishops assembled at Nicaea affirmed this faith. The assembled holy priests and confessors, the praiseworthy, God-loving emperor, and the whole multitude of believers who were gathered there gladly accepted the confession of faith.
- 2.25.5 But the seventeen bishops about whom we have spoken above did not. Arius seemed to be delighted with them. He was convicted with them, his followers, for they said with him that God created the Son from substances which did not exist, as something exterior, and that the Son was not begotten from the divine essence of the Father.
- 2.26.1 For this reason, all our holy fathers in turn unanimously decided to banish them from the catholic church together with Arius. They anathematized them, their ungodly opinion, and the blasphemous words and thoughts which they had directed against the Son of God, saying that he is from things which did not exist, that he did not always exist, that the Son of God is capable of choosing evil or good, and that he is a creature and a product.
- 2.26.2 The holy council anathematized them and all these thoughts, refusing to listen to their ungodly opinion, their insanity, and their blasphemous words.
- 2.26.3 The council forthwith tore up their document, which they had dared to submit, full of their ungodliness. This was the end of their cause at the holy council.

⁶³ Or “from above.”

- 2.26.4 All the bishops unanimously summarized the content of the orthodox faith briefly to accommodate the simplicity of the multitude of faithful people. They formulated the symbol of the catholic faith in writing as follows:
- 2.27.1 “The exposition of the catholic apostolic faith, presented by the Synod of Nicaea under the God-loving Emperor Constantine, during the consulate of the illustrious men Paulinus and Julian, in the year 636 after Alexander [the Great],⁶⁴ on the 19th of June, 13 days before the Kalends of July, in Nicaea, capital of Bithynia:
- We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, seen and unseen.
- 2.27.2 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. Through him all things were made, in heaven and on earth.
- 2.27.3 For us men and for our salvation he came down, was incarnate, and became human.
- 2.27.4 He suffered, was buried, and rose on the third day. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- 2.27.5 We believe in his Holy Spirit.
- 2.27.6 The catholic apostolic church anathematizes those who say, ‘He did not always exist,’ ‘Before he was begotten he did not exist,’ and that he was made from things which did not exist, or who claim that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or is created, changeable, or mutable.”
- 2.27.7 This is the faith which our holy fathers at Nicaea, the orthodox bishops, set forth primarily against Arius, who blasphemously said that the Son of God is a creature.
- 2.27.8 With it they also rejected Sabellius, Photinus, Paul of Samosata, Mani, Valentinus, Marcion, and every heresy which arose against the catholic apostolic church.
- 2.27.9 The council of orthodox saints gathered at Nicaea, whose names and provinces have been appended, condemned them.
- 2.27.10 So the council communicated its decisions to the pious, praiseworthy emperor—the condemnation of those who fought against God and the exposition of the orthodox faith. He gladly received them with extreme reverence like they had been presented by God. He condemned his enemies to exile because they opposed God.
- 2.27.11 Therefore, six of the bishops on Arius’s side were content to be exiled with Arius himself and his supporters.

⁶⁴ This dating system was used by the Seleucid empire and later much of the Greek world.

- 2.27.12 But eleven feared that the God-loving emperor and the multitude of bishops of the council would banish them. So they hypocritically subscribed to God's consubstantiality with their hand, not out of conviction.
- 2.27.13 The leader of this deceit was Eusebius of Nicomedia, who demonstrably represented both opinions until his death, just as Eustathius of Antioch, Eusebius Pamphili, Athanasius the Great, and all writers who report the events of the council describe that in his hypocrisy he seemed to favor our opinion but actually fought for the opponents' faction.
- 2.28.1 Hosius, bishop of Cordova, for the holy churches of God in Rome, Spain, all Italy, and the other provinces beyond me up to the ocean, through the Roman priests Vito and Vincent accompanying him.
- 2.28.2 Alexander of Alexandria, with Athanasius, then archdeacon, for the churches in all Egypt, Libya, the Pentapolis, and the neighboring regions up to the provinces of India.
- 2.28.3 Eustathius of great Antioch, for the churches in Coele Syria, all Mesopotamia, and both Cilicias.
- 2.28.4 John the Persian, for the churches in all Persia and Greater India.
- 2.28.5 Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, which is the ornament of our Lord's church, for the churches in Cappadocia itself, Galatia, Diospontus, Paphlagonia, Pontus Polemoniacus, and Lesser and Greater Armenia.
- 2.28.6 Theonas of Cyzicus, for the churches in Asia, the Hellespont, Lydia, and Caria, through his subordinate bishops Euty chius of Smyrna and Marinus of Troas.
- 2.28.7 Macarius of Jerusalem, with Eusebius Pamphili, bishop of Caesarea, for the churches in Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia.
- 2.28.8 Alexander of Thessalonica, through his subordinates, for the churches in Macedonia Prima and Secunda along with Greece, all of Europe, both Scythias, and all the churches in Illyricum, Thessaly, and Achaea.
- 2.28.9 Nunechius of Laodicea, for the churches in Phrygia Prima and Secunda.
- 2.28.10 Protogenes, the admirable bishop of Sardica, for the churches in Dacia, Calabria, Dardania, and the neighboring regions.
- 2.28.11 Caecilian of Carthage, for the holy churches of God in all the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and both Mauritanias.

- 2.28.12 Pistus of Marcianopolis, for the churches in Mysia, the provinces of Athens and Gaul, and their neighboring cities.
- 2.28.13 Alexander of Constantinople, then still a priest but later granted the bishopric of the local church, together with Paul, then still a lector, Alexander's secretary, for the churches on all the islands of the Cyclades.
- 2.28.14 All these holy apostolic men delivered the decisions of the holy great ecumenical Synod of Nicaea to all the holy churches of God under heaven and brought them to all parts of the world.
- 2.29.1 Emperor Constantine rejoiced in the exposition of the orthodox apostolic faith pronounced by the Holy Spirit through our three hundred holy fathers as if from one mouth, confirmed by all. He rose from his throne before the entire crowd of holy high priests and all who assembled for that holy discussion of the faith.
- 2.29.2 He stretched out his hands, turned his eyes toward God in heaven, and praised God, the Savior and benefactor of us all, because God had made the bishops united, as he desired, and had led them to agree about the true saving faith.
- 2.29.3 The God-loving emperor, who was excellent in every respect, had such concern for the churches of God and for peaceful unity among their shepherds.
- 2.29.4 I think it is reasonable to include in my narrative the words Eusebius Pamphili excellently chose at the beginning of his account of this (what was discussed at the council, I mean) in the third book of his Life of Constantine:
- 2.29.5 While both sides advanced many arguments and some initially started intense quarrels, the praiseworthy emperor listened to everything, calmly accepting the proposals of both factions.
- 2.29.6 Taking up the statements of each side in turn, he gently took those who were stubbornly contentious and dealt kindly with each of them. He spoke Greek, for he was familiar with it.
- 2.29.7 So he proved to be friendly and pleasant, winning some by persuasion, rebuking others with words, commending those who spoke well, and compelling everyone to unity until he had led them to a common opinion and belief with him so that the pious formula of faith prevailed unanimously and they confirmed the saving faith truly pronounced by the Holy Spirit through all our aforementioned holy fathers.
- 2.29.8 At that time he also ordered by law that everyone must agree on a common date for the saving festival of Easter.

- 2.29.9 Then he had them confirm their common belief in writing with their signatures and encouraged the bishops to codify individual regulations and laws for the church in writing.
- 2.30.1 The emperor's faith leads us to mention another event as well. He was diligently taking precautions for the peace of the church without neglecting any detail. He had invited even the Novatian bishop Acesius and his companions to the council, for they believed in God's consubstantiality and in the Trinity.
- 2.30.2 After the council and the emperor had composed and signed the standard of faith, Emperor Constantine asked Acesius whether he agreed with the faith and with his establishment of the festival of Easter.
- 2.30.3 Acesius replied, "The council has defined no new doctrine, emperor; we all received this standard of faith and the date of the festival of Easter from the beginning, even from the time of the apostles."
- 2.30.4 Then the Emperor asked, "Why, then, do you separate yourself from our fellowship?" Acesius described how during the Decian persecution some could not contend to the point of martyrdom but rather refused it. He presented their rigorously strict rule, namely, that the church should not accept those who have sinned after baptism, even if they repent, nor consider them worthy of fellowship in the mysteries in the future.
- 2.30.5 After Acesius said this, the emperor replied, "Acesius, put up a ladder for yourself and climb up to heaven."
- 2.30.6 After this, all the bishops set forth various ecclesiastical rulings:
- 2.31.1 "Let us dwell in the light, that is, Christ, for we are near to him. Let us employ prayers of sanctification as if we see him, for our prayers sanctify us if we pray with the word of God, and the word of God is present where one preserves a pure heart and life in humility. Israel strove to offer the sacrifices. The prophets cried out to God, 'Send out your light and your truth' [Psalm 43:3, LXX 42:3]. They cried out, and we received them. As the Lord said, 'Others have labored' [John 4:38], and we have reaped the benefits. The Lord himself came to us, saying, 'I am the light' [John 8:12]; 'I am the truth' [John 14:6]. We have received grace without effort, but we must guard grace with effort.
- 2.31.2 *Of those who say Christians need not work:* Since some who wish not to work but to be busybodies misunderstand the Lord's holy words, 'Do not worry about your life, what you will eat' [Matthew 6:25], to mean that Christians, who follow this order, need not work the ground, we must show that this is not what the Lord meant. We can work without worrying. We know and believe that the Lord himself causes our work to grow and bear fruit, for he said, 'The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters his seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how' [Mark 4:26-27].

- 2.31.3 *Of the ordained:* The ordained should serve as types and images of heavenly beings. The bishop should occupy the throne of the Lord himself as head, second to the Lord, of the church he has received; the priest that of the seraph; the deacon that of the cherub. The attendant must assist them.
- 2.31.4 *That the laity may not go up into the ambo:* The laity may not go up into the ambo, except those appointed to read or sing from the parchment books.
- 2.31.5 *Of Holy Baptism:* Our baptism is not to be considered with physical eyes but with spiritual eyes. When you see water, recognize the power of God which is hidden in the water. Holy Scripture teaches that we are baptized ‘with the Holy Spirit and fire’ [Matthew 3:11]. Recognize that by the faith of the baptizer and the faith of the person being baptized, through sacred invocation, the water is full of the Spirit’s sanctification and divine fire, for it says, ‘He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.’ So the person being baptized descends guilty of his sins and subject to ‘the slavery of decay’ [Romans 8:21], but he ascends free from such slavery and from sin. By God’s grace he has become God’s son and heir, and co-heir with Christ,⁶⁵ having clothed himself with Christ, as is written: ‘All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ’ [Galatians 3:27].
- 2.31.6 *Of the table of God and the mystery of the body and blood of Christ, which occurs on it:* Likewise, we should not scorn the bread and cup placed on the table of God but should lift up our minds to understand by faith that on that holy table is ‘the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world’ [John 1:29], a bloodless sacrifice by the priests. Since we truly receive his precious body and blood, we believe they guarantee our resurrection. We do not receive much, but little, so that we realize its purpose is not to satisfy our hunger but to sanctify us.
- 2.31.7 *Of the resurrection of the dead:* The Lord did not merely give his flesh over to suffering and death for us. His goal was to procure our salvation despite being free from death (as the explanation above has demonstrated).⁶⁶ The Lord also predicts through the prophet the coming mystery of his incarnation in flesh: ‘I became like a helpless person, free among the dead’ [Psalm 88:4-5, LXX 87:5-6]. But who is free from death besides God? According to the passages cited above, he became flesh due to his love for mankind and became ‘like a helpless person,’ humbling his flesh ‘to the point of death, even death on a cross’ [Philippians 2:8]. It also proclaims that his flesh arose so that, by making us immortal, he might obtain for us forsaken humans hope for our own resurrection through our firstfruits. Thus we are no longer slaves to eternal death, but free like Christ, our firstfruits, as the blessed apostle Paul says: ‘Christ, the firstfruits, then, when he comes, those who belong to him’ [1 Corinthians 15:23]. He also testifies that we expect this very Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God the Father, to come from heaven to raise our bodies from

⁶⁵ Cf. Romans 8:17.

⁶⁶ This reference does not seem to resemble any of the rulings described here. Hansen refers to 2.24.27, which would make this a parenthetical remark by the anonymous compiler.

- their graves: ‘Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body’ [Philippians 3:20-21]. Thus must the Lord glorify our bodies like his, no longer subject to wickedness nor any sufferings which presently exist, free from death and sin, and holy, so that we can live a new life⁶⁷ with him in heavenly light, reigning forever with Christ himself. In this hope we have received holy baptism and receive saving communion with his holy members. This is the doctrine of the catholic church.
- 2.31.8 *That there is one church of God:* There is one church in heaven. The same church is also on earth. The Holy Spirit rests on it. The heresies outside of it, to which people adhere, are not the teachings of our Savior nor of the apostles but of Satan, their father the devil.⁶⁸ They teach the heresies of Jews and Greeks in a different form to take away true life from people.
- 2.31.9 *Of God’s foreknowledge and the world:* The world became lesser because of foreknowledge. God foreknew that humans would sin. Therefore we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, according to the Holy Scriptures,⁶⁹ when the appearance and reign ‘of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ’ [Titus 2:13], will be revealed to us. At that time, as Daniel says, ‘saints of the Most High will receive dominion’ [Daniel 7:18]. The earth will be pure and holy, a land of the living and not of the dead, which David foresaw with the eye of faith: ‘I am confident that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living’ [Psalm 27:13, LXX 26:13], the land of the meek and humble, for it says, ‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth’ [Matthew 5:5]. The prophet says, ‘The feet of the meek and humble will walk on it’” [Isaiah 26:6].
- 2.31.10 We have compiled this small selection of the many ecclesiastical rulings our holy fathers set forth. They also composed twenty canons for the church at that same Synod of Nicaea, which I also saw fit to include in this book:
- 2.32.1 *“Of eunuchs who castrated themselves:*⁷⁰ If someone underwent surgical operation because of disease or was castrated by barbarians, he may remain in the clergy. But if someone belonging to the clergy castrated himself while healthy, he must resign, and from now on no such person should be admitted. Because this obviously applies only to those who deliberately castrate themselves in their audacity, church law admits to the clergy those who were made eunuchs by barbarians or slaveowners but otherwise prove worthy.
- 2.32.2 *Of those admitted to ordination from paganism:* Whether by necessity or because people were in a hurry, it has often happened that men who had just come to faith from pagan life, having been briefly catechized, immediately received the spiritual bath and were promoted to bishop or priest as soon as they were baptized, contrary to

⁶⁷ Cf. Romans 6:4.

⁶⁸ Cf. John 8:44.

⁶⁹ Cf. Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13.

⁷⁰ Cf. [the Canons of Nicaea on FCC](#). The canon numbers are the same as the section numbers of this chapter.

the law of the church. We therefore thought it appropriate that nothing like this should occur in the future, for the catechumen needs time and further examination after baptism. The apostle's rule is clear: 'He must not be a recent convert, lest he become conceited and fall into judgement and the devil's trap' [1 Timothy 3:6-7]. If in the course of time a spiritual deficiency is discovered in a person and proven by two or three witnesses, this person should leave the clergy. Anyone who boldly violates this ruling of the great council will endanger his position in the clergy.

2.32.3 *Of clergy who have housekeepers:* As regards housekeepers, the great council generally decided not to allow bishops, priests, deacons, or anyone else in the clergy to have a housekeeper except for a mother, a sister, an aunt, or other such persons who are beyond all suspicion. Anyone who violates this ruling will endanger his reputation.⁷¹

2.32.4 *Of the ordination of bishops:* It is most proper for a bishop to be ordained by all the bishops in his province. If this causes difficulty because of urgent necessity or because of long distances, at least three should meet, with the absent bishops also participating in the election and agreeing in writing. Then they should carry out the ordination. The metropolitan bishop should confirm the ordinations which occur in his province.

2.32.5 *Of the excommunicated:* As regards the clergy and laity who are excommunicated by the bishops responsible for each province, church law shall apply the principle that those rejected by one bishop should not be admitted by another. He should, however, investigate to ensure they were not excommunicated out of pettiness, contentiousness, or some such hostility on the part of the bishop. To properly investigate this, we thought it appropriate to hold councils twice a year in each province so that all the bishops of the province might meet to review such questions together. In this way, those who by common consent have given offence to their bishop should accordingly be excommunicated by all until the community or their bishop sees fit to pass a milder sentence on them. The first council should occur before Lent so that a pure gift may be offered to God after every petty matter has been cleared up, and the second around autumn.

2.32.6 *Of the special honorary rights granted under church law to those who govern greater dioceses:* The ancient custom in Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis which grants the bishop of Alexandria authority over all of them shall remain in force, for this is also the custom for the bishop of Rome. The church in Antioch and the churches in the other provinces shall likewise retain their privileges. It is generally evident that if anyone has become bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, the great council has determined that he may not be bishop. If, however, two or three due to their belligerence oppose an ordination which has been duly approved by common vote in accord with the law of the church, the decision of the majority should stand.

⁷¹ This sentence is absent in other sources containing the Canons of Nicaea.

- 2.32.7 *Of the bishop of Aelia:*⁷² Since custom and ancient tradition have established that the bishop of Aelia deserves honor, he shall have the next place of honor after the metropolitan, whose place of honor shall be preserved.
- 2.32.8 *Of those who call themselves 'pure':* Of those who once called themselves 'pure' but are now joining the holy catholic apostolic church, the holy great council thought it appropriate that they remain in the clergy after being ordained. Before all this, however, they must confess in writing that they agree with and follow the doctrine of the catholic apostolic church, namely, that they will commune with those who have remarried and those who have apostatized under persecution, for whom a time and a season has been established to follow the doctrine of the catholic church in everything. Wherever all the ordained are of this faction, be it in a village or a city, they shall retain their rank in the clergy. But if they join where there is already a bishop or priest of the catholic church, it is evident that the bishop of the church shall retain the rank of bishop while the one named bishop by the 'pure' shall have the rank of priest, unless the bishop is willing to share the honor of his title. But if he is unwilling, he shall create a position as either country-bishop or priest so that the one named bishop by the 'pure' may remain in the clergy, lest there be two bishops in the city.
- 2.32.9 *Of the ordination of priests:* If any priests were promoted without examination or confessed their sins when questioned, yet people, contrary to church law, ordained them despite their confession, church law does not admit such men. The catholic church demands irreproachable behavior.
- 2.32.10 *Of apostates who were ordained in ignorance:* Whether apostates were ordained in ignorance or with the knowledge of those who ordained them makes no difference in the law of the church. When they are convicted, they will be deposed.
- 2.32.11 *Of those who sinned without compulsion:* Of those who sin without compulsion, removal of possessions, danger, or the like, which happened under the tyrant Licinius, the council decided to show mercy to them even though they were unworthy of mercy. Those who sincerely repent shall spend three years as hearers and seven as prostrators, then may join the congregation in prayer for two years without receiving the Eucharist.
- 2.32.12 *Of those who had renounced worldly life but returned to the world:* Those called by grace who showed their first zeal by resigning from military service but then returned to their vomit⁷³ by paying bribe money to regain their military rank shall spend three years as hearers and ten as prostrators. With all of them one must examine their conduct and the manner of their repentance. Those who demonstrate repentance with genuine fear, tears, perseverance, and good works, not just a show of them, shall complete the set time as hearers then may participate in the prayers. At that point the bishop may make a milder decision in their case. But those who indifferently accept

⁷² This was the Roman name for Jerusalem.

⁷³ Cf. Proverbs 26:11.

the penance and think the prescribed manner of entering the church is enough for their repentance should in any case complete the whole time.

- 2.32.13 *Of the dying who request communion:* Of the dying, we must even now keep the ancient law of the church that the Lord's provisions must not be withheld from anyone who is dying. But if hope of his recovery has been lost and he has received communion and partaken of the sacrifice, yet he survives, his place shall be with those who participate in prayer only. In general, the bishop should, with examination, distribute the sacrifice to any dying person who asks to partake of the Eucharist.
- 2.32.14 *Of apostate catechumens:* Of catechumens who apostatize during the catechumenate, the holy great council thought it appropriate that they spend three years as hearers and after this may again pray with the catechumens.
- 2.32.15 *That clergy must not transfer from one city to another:* Because of great tumult and quarrels which have arisen, we thought it appropriate to completely abolish the custom practiced in some regions contrary to church law. Consequently, neither bishop nor priest nor deacon may move from one city to another. In any case, if anyone tries any such thing after this ruling of the holy council or undertakes such an endeavor, the arrangement will be cancelled, and he must return to the church of which he was ordained bishop or priest or deacon.
- 2.32.16 *Of those who do not remain in the churches where they were promoted:* Those who neither fear God nor know the law of the church and so recklessly leave their church, be they priests, deacons, or anyone at all who belongs to the clergy, may not by any means be received into another church. Rather, they must certainly return to their parishes. If they remain, they must be excommunicated. If someone dares to snatch one who belongs to another and ordain him in his church without the consent of the bishop whom the clergy member has left, the ordination shall be invalid.
- 2.32.17 *Of clergy members lending for interest:* Since many clergy members, pursuing greed and vile profit, have forgotten the Scripture which says, 'He does not lend his money for interest' [Psalm 15:5, LXX 14:5], so that they demand percentages when they lend, the holy great council found it right that anyone discovered taking interest after this ruling, seeking it from business or otherwise, demanding half as much again, or contriving something else for vile profit, shall surely be removed from the clergy.
- 2.32.18 *Of priests receiving the Eucharist from deacons:* It has come to the attention of the holy great council that in certain regions or cities deacons give the Eucharist to priests, though neither church law nor custom has taught that those without authority to sacrifice may give the body of Christ to those who do sacrifice. We also learned that some deacons touch the Eucharist before even the bishops. This must be completely abolished. Deacons should remain within their proper sphere, knowing that they are servants of the bishop and inferior to priests. They should receive the Eucharist after priests, in accord with their rank, from either the bishop or a priest. Moreover, deacons must not be allowed to sit amidst priests, for this is contrary to

- church law and contrary to order. If anyone refuses to obey even after these rulings, he shall be removed from the office of deacon.
- 2.32.19 *Of those who have joined or are joining the catholic church from the faction of Paul of Samosata:* Of the former Paulianists who then converted to the catholic church, we have ruled that they should in any case be baptized again. As for any who formerly belonged to the clergy, if they appear blameless and irreproachable, the bishop of the church should ordain them after they are baptized again. But if they prove unfit under examination, they should be removed. The same procedure should likewise be observed with deacons⁷⁴ and members of the clergy in general. As for the deaconesses who belong to this rank with them, we mentioned that they in any case belong to the laity because they have not been ordained.
- 2.32.20 *Of those who kneel on Sunday:* Seeing as some kneel on Sunday and the days of Pentecost, the holy council thought it appropriate that people stand while offering prayers to the Lord so that everything may unanimously be observed in the same way in every parish.”
- 2.32.21 The same holy assembly wrote these twenty laws regulating church government in the presence of the God-loving praiseworthy Emperor Constantine.
- 2.32.22 Some of the bishops planned to enact another law, but godly Paphnutius stopped them. I thought it necessary to recount this astonishing event. Some of the bishops thought it appropriate to introduce a new law for the church at the council and pass this law, as the council did with the other affairs of the church.
- 2.33.1 To this end, they proposed that members of the clergy, be they bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, or other members of the priesthood, should not sleep with their wives, whom they had married when they were laymen.
- 2.33.2 When they conceived this idea, godly Paphnutius stood up amidst the crowd of bishops and loudly exclaimed, “Do not make the yoke of the clergy burdensome (for Scripture says, ‘Marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure’ [Hebrews 13:4]), lest you harm the church with excessive strictness.” He said not everyone could practice abstinence.
- 2.33.3 “I believe no one will continue in self-control if husbands are deprived of their wives. I maintain that intercourse with one’s lawful wife is noble self-control. So do not separate man from the woman with whom God yoked him, whom he married when he was formerly a reader, a cantor, or a layman.”
- 2.33.4 Paphnutius said this despite being unacquainted with marriage because he had been raised in a monastery. His counsel therefore persuaded the entire assembly of bishops, and they stopped discussing this issue, letting those who by mutual consent wanted to avoid intimacy with their wives decide for themselves.

⁷⁴ Other sources containing the Canons of Nicaea have “deaconesses.”

- 2.33.5 This happened at the holy great ecumenical council gathered at Nicaea in Bithynia. But Eusebius, Theognis, and the Arians in their circle could not bear the victorious confirmation of the true faith, nor would they anathematize Arius. Once again caught, they were exiled by decision of the God-loving emperor and by judgement of the holy council of bishops. Others were installed to replace them in their parishes by vote of the council as well as the clergy and laity of their respective parishes.
- 2.33.6 Amphion took over leadership of the church of Nicomedia; Chrestus of the church of Nicaea itself; others of the churches of those in agreement with them. Once again resorting to their usual tricks, Eusebius and Theognis found in the emperor's kindness an opportunity for deception, so they kept trying to reverse the decision and regain their former power.
- 2.33.7 I would like to refer those who want to learn about their wicked machinations, which were numerous and entirely ungodly, to Theodoret and the other authors of church history. My account will now pass on to the contents of the letters the council of bishops sent to the absent bishops and to their own parishes. Moreover, I will describe what the victorious, faithful emperor wrote to confirm the holy faith they had formulated and the holy festival of Easter and to refute the champions of ungodliness.
- 2.33.8 After this great meeting of the council and their marvelous proclamation of the faith, our holy fathers established complete order in the church and eagerly wrote letters to all the holy churches of God under heaven to disclose all their resolutions, including the events involving Melitius.
- 2.34.1 A certain Melitius, who was ordained bishop shortly before the Arian delusion, was convicted and deposed by godly Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who later donned the wreath of martyrdom. But Melitius did not comply with his sentence of deposition, instead spreading tumult and distress throughout Thebes and the neighboring part of Egypt by revolting against the primacy of Bishop Alexander. The council jointly wrote to the church of Alexandria, describing what they had decided about his revolutionary actions.⁷⁵
- 2.34.2 *The letter of the council to the holy churches of God in Alexandria, Egypt, the Pentapolis, Libya, and everywhere under heaven, and the clergy and laymen of the orthodox faith, from the holy council at Nicaea.*⁷⁶
- “To the church of Alexandria, holy and great by the grace of God, the dear brothers in Egypt, the Pentapolis, Libya, and everywhere under heaven, and the orthodox clergy and laymen, from the bishops who gathered at Nicaea, forming the holy great council: Greetings in the Lord.

⁷⁵ This same paragraph is found in Theodoret 1.9.1.

⁷⁶ The following letter ([CPG 8515](#)) is also preserved in Athanasius, *De decretis* 36; Socrates 1.9.1-14; Theodoret 1.9.2-13.

- 2.34.3 Seeing as the great holy council which gathered at Nicaea handled questions about the church's faith after God's grace and our God-loving Emperor Constantine summoned us from various provinces and cities, we thought it necessary to send you letters so that you would know what questions we raised and reviewed and what we decided and confirmed. First, we reviewed the ungodliness and lawlessness of Arius and his followers before our God-loving Emperor Constantine.
- 2.34.4 We unanimously decided to anathematize Arius, his ungodly opinion, and his blasphemous words and thoughts with which he blasphemed the Son of God by saying that he is from things which did not exist, that he did not exist before he was begotten, that 'he did not always exist,' and that the Son of God is capable of evil or good by his own free will, and by calling him a creature and a product.
- 2.34.5 All this the holy council anathematized, not even bothering to listen to his ungodly opinion, his insane talk, and his blasphemous words. You have certainly heard or will hear about the outcome of his cause, lest we seem to trample a man who has already received the punishment he deserves for his sin.
- 2.34.6 His ungodliness was so strong that it even destroyed Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, for these two had the same outcome as the others. Moreover, when God's grace freed Egypt from those blasphemous heretics who dared to sow disagreement and division among a people who had always lived in peace, the rash actions of Melitius and of those he ordained were still unresolved. We are reporting to you what the council decided on this matter, dear brothers.
- 2.34.7 Although Melitius, strictly speaking, did not deserve pardon, the council graciously decided that he may remain in his city but may not ordain, appoint, or lay hands on anyone nor appear in the country or another city for this purpose but may merely possess the honorable title.
- 2.34.8 Those whom he appointed, however, are to be accepted after they have been confirmed by a more legitimate ordination, with the following conditions. They shall keep their honorable position and shall perform liturgical duties but shall in any case be second to the members of the clergy in every parish and church who were appointed as subordinate to our honorable fellow minister Alexander. Thus they may not appoint those whom they please, make nominations, or do anything at all without the consent of a bishop of the catholic apostolic church subordinate to our pious fellow minister Alexander.
- 2.34.9 However, those who by the grace of God and by your prayers prove not to be involved in schism but are blameless within the catholic apostolic church may make appointments, nominate those who are worthy to be clergy, and generally do everything according to church law and custom.
- 2.34.10 If such a member of the clergy within the church happens to fall asleep, then those who have recently been admitted shall ascend to the honorable position of the

deceased, provided that they are worthy and the people choose them, with the bishop of Alexandria approving and ratifying the election.

- 2.34.11 We made this concession for all the others but did not find the same concession appropriate for Melitius in particular because of his earlier lack of discipline and his hasty and presumptuous attitude. We do not want him to receive any power or authority, for he could cause the same disorderly behavior again.
- 2.34.12 These are the specific resolutions pertaining to Egypt and the holy church of Alexandria. If any other church law or doctrine was defined in the presence of our honorable fellow minister and brother, lord Alexander, he will report it to you more precisely when he returns, for he was an influential participant in our actions.
- 2.34.13 We also bring you good news of the agreement on holy Easter. Your prayers have succeeded in this matter. So all the brothers in the East, who previously celebrated it when the Jews celebrate Passover, will from now on celebrate the holy festival of Easter in harmony with the Romans, with you, and with all of us who have been observing Easter with you since ancient times.
- 2.34.14 In joy at these victories, at the shared peace and harmony, and at the eradication of all heresy, therefore, welcome our fellow minister, your Bishop Alexander, with great honor and much love. He has gladdened us with his presence and has exerted great effort in his old age in order that you and everyone might have peace. Pray for all of us so that these decisions which we found appropriate might remain firm, for they have come about, we are confident, through the goodwill of God Almighty, his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”⁷⁷
- 2.35.1 “Dear friends, you have probably already learned from other sources what matters concerning the church’s faith were negotiated at the great council which met in Nicaea, for rumors often travel faster than accurate accounts of events. But lest you learn something other than the truth from such hearsay, we are of necessity sending you the original version of our document regarding the faith, then also the second version, which they have put out with some additions to our wording.
- 2.35.2 Our letter, which we read aloud in the presence of our God-loving emperor and which was shown to be correct and valid, says the following:
- 2.35.3 ‘The faith which we have set forth. As we received it from the bishops before us when we were first catechized and when we received baptismal washing, as we have learned it from Holy Scripture, and as we have believed and taught it as priest and bishop, thus we believe now also. Therefore we will describe our faith for you.

⁷⁷ The surviving manuscripts of our work seem to be defective; they omit the transition and superscription to the following letter ([CPG 3502](#)) from Eusebius to his church in Caesarea. The letter is also preserved in Athanasius, *De decretis* 33; Socrates 1.8.35-54; Theodoret 1.12, in which sources the superscription is preserved.

- 2.35.4 We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, light from light, life from life, the only-begotten Son, the firstborn of all creation, begotten of the Father before all ages. Through him all things were made. For our salvation he was incarnate, lived among men, suffered, rose on the third day, and ascended to the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.
- 2.35.5 We believe in one Holy Spirit. [We believe that each of them is and exists; the Father is truly Father, the Son is truly Son, and the Holy Spirit]⁷⁸ is truly Holy Spirit, as our Lord said when he sent out his disciples to preach: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [Matthew 28:19]. We affirm that we adhere to this faith and think this way. Moreover, we have adhered to this faith and will maintain it until death, condemning every ungodly heresy.
- 2.35.6 We testify before God Almighty and our Lord Jesus Christ that we have always thought this with heart and soul since we have known ourselves and that we now think and speak the truth. We can show evidence to persuade you that we have believed and preached this same way in the past.’
- 2.35.7 When we presented this faith, no one had any reason to disagree. Our God-loving emperor himself was the first to testify that its contents were orthodox, confessed that he had the same belief, and encouraged everyone to conform to this faith and to subscribe to and agree with its doctrine, having added only one word: ‘consubstantial.’ He offered the explanation that we would not call him ‘consubstantial with the Father’ with respect to bodily properties, for he did not take substance from the Father by division nor by segmentation. His immaterial, spiritual, and bodiless nature could not give substance to a bodily property, but one must think about such things in divine and mysterious terms. Our wise pious emperor was philosophizing about such things, and the bishops wrote the following on account of the addition of the word ‘consubstantial’:
- 2.35.8 ‘The faith which was dictated at the council: We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. Through him all things were made, in heaven and on earth. For us men and for our salvation he came down, was incarnate, and became human. He suffered, was buried, and rose on the third day. He ascended into heaven. He will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit.

The catholic apostolic church anathematizes those who say, “He did not always exist,” “Before he was begotten he did not exist,” and that he was made from things

⁷⁸ One manuscript adds the text enclosed in brackets, following the parallel sources, to fill a lacuna caused by homeoteleuton.

which did not exist, or who claim that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or is created, changeable, or mutable.’

- 2.35.9 When they dictated this document, we were sure to ask how they understood ‘from the essence of the Father’ and ‘consubstantial with the Father.’ Questions and answers therefore arose, and reason cross-examined the meaning of the words. They agreed that ‘from the essence of the Father’ expresses that he is from the Father, but not that he exists as part of the Father.
- 2.35.10 We too found it appropriate to agree to this meaning, for holy instruction tells us that the Son is of the Father but is not part of his essence. So we agreed to this meaning and did not reject the expression, especially because our goal of peace was before our eyes, and we desired not to fall from correct thinking.
- 2.35.11 In the same way we also accepted ‘begotten, not made.’ They said that ‘made’ is a common designation for the other creatures, which were created through the Son. They have nothing in common with the Son. He is not a product like the creatures made through him; his essence is superior to every product. The Holy Scriptures teach that his essence was begotten of the Father, but how he was begotten is inexpressible and incomprehensible to every created being.
- 2.35.12 The logical investigation thus established that the Son is consubstantial with the Father not as the word is used of bodies nor like mortal beings (neither by dividing nor segmenting the essence, nor yet by modifying, changing, or altering the power of the Father, for none of these apply to the Father’s unbegotten nature).
- 2.35.13 Rather, ‘consubstantial with the Father’ indicates that the Son of God bears no resemblance to the creatures which have been made but absolutely resembles the Father alone, who begot him. Nor is he of a different substance or essence; he is from the Father. It seemed good to agree with this term once they explained it this way because we recognized that certain learned, well-known ancient bishops and authors had used ‘consubstantial’ when discussing the doctrine of the Father and the Son.
- 2.35.14 This much, then, can be said of the faith which was formulated, with which we all agreed not as with something unexamined. Rather, we agreed with the cited meanings after they had been examined before the God-loving emperor himself and had been acknowledged based on the mentioned arguments.
- 2.35.15 We did not think that the condemnation which they formulated after the faith was objectionable, for it prohibits using unscriptural expressions which brought about nearly all the confusion and instability in the church. Since no inspired Scripture uses the expressions ‘from things which did not exist,’ ‘he did not always exist,’ and the others which were cited, it seemed impermissible to say and teach them.
- 2.35.16 We agreed with this because it seemed right, for it was not customary to use these expressions formerly. Nor did it seem wrong to anathematize the expression ‘before

he was begotten he did not exist' because all confessed that he was the Son of God before he was begotten in flesh.

- 2.35.17 Our God-loving emperor himself was then proving with reasoning that he existed before all ages according to his divine generation. Before he was begotten in actuality, he was unbegotten in the Father in potentiality. The Father is always Father as he is always King and Savior and has all potentiality; he is always exactly the same.
- 2.35.18 We wrote this to you of necessity, dear friends, to inform you of the decision which we examined and approved and how we objected with good reason from that time up to the last hour as long as different formulations offended us. But because we are not fond of strife, we accepted that which no longer troubled us when, upon benevolent examination of the meaning of the words, it clearly agreed with what we ourselves confessed in the faith previously cited. We greet you and the brothers who are with you. We pray that you are strong in the Lord, dear brothers.”⁷⁹
- 2.36.1 “To the bishops and laypeople, from Victor Constantinus Maximus Augustus. Since Arius imitates evil and ungodly people, he deserves the same dishonor they do. Porphyry, an enemy of godliness who wrote certain illegal treatises against religion, received the reward he deserved (he was disgraced from then on, his reputation was ruined, and his ungodly treatises were destroyed). So now it also seemed right to call Arius and those who agree with him Porphyryians so that they would have the same name as those they have imitated. In addition, anything written by Arius should be burned. In this way his bad teaching will be obliterated and absolutely no memory of him will survive.
- 2.36.2 Moreover, I declare that anyone caught hiding a work written by Arius rather than immediately handing it over to be burned shall incur the death penalty. Upon conviction on this charge, he shall at once face capital punishment. May God watch over you, dear brothers.”
- 2.36.3 The emperor also wrote other more eloquent letters against Arius and those of the same opinion as him and had them posted all over the cities.⁸⁰
- 2.37.1 “To the catholic church of the Alexandrians and of all the orthodox, from Constantinus Augustus: Greetings, dear brothers. We have received perfect grace by God’s providence. Freed from all error, we now approve the exact same faith.
- 2.37.2 No longer can the devil do anything against us. Every wicked scheme he has attempted has been razed to the ground. By God’s command, brilliant truth conquered quarrels, divisions, confusions, and the deadly poison of discord, as I would call it. So we all worship one by name and believe that he exists.

⁷⁹ The surviving manuscripts of our work lack a transition to the following letter ([CPG 2041](#)), which is also preserved in Athanasius, *De decretis* 39; Socrates 1.9.30-31. Hansen notes that the letter dates from 333.

⁸⁰ The following letter ([CPG 8517](#)) is also preserved in Athanasius, *De decretis* 38; Socrates 1.9.17-25.

- 2.37.3 That this might happen, I by the will of God summoned very many bishops to Nicaea, with whom I myself undertook an examination of the truth, though I, like any of you, rejoice exceedingly to be your fellow servant.
- 2.37.4 We tested and carefully examined everything which seemed to give cause for doubt and disagreement. Let God's Majesty have mercy on those who spoke so many awful indecent blasphemies about our Savior, about our hope and life, as they proclaimed what is contrary to inspired Scripture and to the holy faith and confessed that they believe such things.
- 2.37.5 More than three hundred bishops, who are admirable for their wisdom and discernment, confirmed the exact same faith, which is, in truth, the very faith of God's law. It so happened that Arius alone had been defeated by the devil's work and had spread this evil with ungodly intent among you first, and then among others.
- 2.37.6 Let us therefore accept the faith God Almighty has given us. Let us return to our dear brothers, from whom the devil's shameless servant has separated us. Let us together return to the body of our true members; let us go with all zeal.
- 2.37.7 This befits your wisdom, faith, and piety: Now that the error of him who continues to be an enemy of truth has been refuted, return to God's grace.
- 2.37.8 For the resolution of the three hundred holy bishops is nothing other than the judgment of the Son of God alone, especially since the Holy Spirit has cast light on the will of God by dwelling in the thoughts of these great men.
- 2.37.9 For this reason, no one should doubt nor hesitate. Instead, you should all eagerly return to the true path so that when I come to you soon, I may with you express due thanks to God, who oversees everything, because he has restored to us the love which we prayed for by showing the pure faith. May God protect you, beloved brothers."⁸¹
- 2.37.10 "To the churches and bishops who were unrepresented at the holy great council at Nicaea, from Constantinus Augustus: Greetings. From the prosperity of the state I have learned the extent of God's powerful grace. I therefore decided that the most fitting goal for me would be the preservation of one faith, of pure love, and of unanimous piety toward God Almighty among the blessed multitudes of the catholic church.
- 2.37.11 But this could not become steadfast and secure unless all or most of the bishops would gather in the same place and make a decision on every matter pertaining to holy religion. For this reason, very many God-loving bishops assembled in this city, Nicaea (including myself, for I happened to be there just like one of you, and I confess that I am thrilled to be your fellow servant) and carefully examined every

⁸¹ The following letter ([CPG 8518](#)) is also preserved in Eusebius, *Vita Const.* 3.17-20; Socrates 1.9.32-46; Theodoret 1.10.

- pertinent matter until the opinion of God, who oversees all things, came to light, resulting in harmonious unity and leaving nothing which could cause division or religious controversy.
- 2.37.12 When a debate arose here about the holy day of Easter, we unanimously thought it appropriate that all Christians everywhere celebrate the saving festival of holy Easter on one day. For what could be more appropriate, more sacred for us all than to unerringly observe this festival, from which we have received true hope, with uniform order by a clear principle? Above all, it seemed inappropriate to follow the custom of the Jews in observing the holy festival. They defile their hands with unlawful sin and are spiritually blind, unclean as they are. Now that we have rejected their custom, we can establish the celebration of this festival, which we have observed from the first day of the passion up to the present, in more legitimate order for ages to come.
- 2.37.13 Let us therefore have nothing in common with the hostile Jewish people. We have received another way from the Savior; the path and proper law for our holy religion lies ahead. Let us with one accord cling to it and tear ourselves away from that shameful complicity, honorable brothers.
- 2.37.14 It is indeed horrendous that they boast over us, as if we would be incapable of observing this festival were it not for their instruction. What could they rightly comprehend now that they have lost their minds after killing the Lord? They are not led by rational thought any longer, but rather by uncontrollable impulses, wherever their inborn madness carries them. Thus they fail to see the truth even in this matter so that they constantly err severely and celebrate the Passover twice in the same year instead of making a proper improvement.
- 2.37.15 Why then do we follow these people who are admittedly in terrible error? We would never allow two celebrations of Easter in one year. But even if this were not prescribed, we by our intellect ought [to be able through effort and prayer]⁸² to always keep our pure souls from seeming to appear similar to those utterly evil people.
- 2.37.16 Furthermore, it is obvious that disagreement is unlawful in so great a matter as this festival of our great religion.
- 2.37.17 Our Savior granted to us a singular day of freedom, the day of his holy suffering. He has willed that his catholic church be one. Although its members gather in many different places, one Spirit nevertheless comforts it, namely, the will of God.
- 2.37.18 Now let your pious wisdom consider how terrible and improper it is that on the same days some devote themselves to fasting while others celebrate feasts and that after Easter some are found feasting and relaxing while others surrender themselves to the appointed fasts. This is why God's providence wants us to make appropriate improvement and establish a uniform regulation, as I think everyone sees.

⁸² One manuscript adds the text enclosed in brackets, following the parallel sources.

- 2.37.19 It was therefore proper to improve this in such a way that we would have nothing in common with those parricides and dominicides. There is a proper arrangement which all the churches in the western, southern, and northern parts of the world observe but which some in the eastern regions do not accept. All therefore now found it good (and I myself maintained that it would be satisfactory to your wisdom) that you also, wise as you are, should gladly accept what is observed in Rome, Italy, all Africa, Spain, Gaul, the Britains, Egypt, both Libyas, all Greece, the district of Asia, Pontus, and Cilicia with one entirely harmonious mind, recognizing not only that the majority of churches are in the aforementioned regions, but also that it is most pious that all decide by common consent not to share in the perjury of the Jews, as careful reasoning also seems to demand.
- 2.37.20 To briefly summarize the most important point: It pleased the common judgment of all to celebrate the holy festival of Easter on the same day. Disagreement is not proper in such a holy matter, and it is better to follow the opinion in which foreign deceit and sin are not mingled.
- 2.37.21 Since God's decision has taken this form through so many great holy bishops, gladly accept heavenly grace and the genuine command of God. Everything which the holy meetings of bishops decided, they decided with God's will as their standard. You should therefore announce what was written above to all our dear brothers. Then you should also take up the previously mentioned statement of the catholic faith and the observance of the holy day of Easter and make the necessary arrangements. I will come to check on your condition, as I have long desired.
- 2.37.22 Then I can celebrate the holy festival with you on the same day and will rejoice with you in every respect, seeing that God's power has destroyed the devil's cruelty through our deeds. Because our faith, peace, and harmony flourish everywhere, I will offer up hymns of thanksgiving with you to God, the omnibenevolent Savior. May God watch over you, dear brothers."
- 2.37.23 This is what he wrote to those absent from the council. He favored those who gathered with words and gifts, and, after having many couches prepared, he entertained them all there, seating the more prominent ones at his table and spreading the rest among the other tables.
- 2.37.24 When he saw some who had no right eyes because they had been gouged out and learned that their steadfast devotion to Christ had caused their suffering, he kissed their wounds, for he believed that by kissing them he would be blessed. After the feast, he gave them other gifts.
- 2.37.25 He also gave them letters to the provincial governors with orders to provide yearly pensions to the perpetual virgins, the widows, and those consecrated for divine service in each city. He did this more in keeping with generosity than with need.

- 2.37.26 Eusebius Pamphili also treats of this: “The praiseworthy faithful Emperor Constantine thus refreshed the holy bishops with great reverence. He bade them farewell and dismissed them all to return home, which they did with much joy. One unanimous mindset finally prevailed before the emperor himself when those long divided joined together like one body.
- 2.37.27 Because the emperor rejoiced at his success, he shared this abundant fruit with the bishops not present at the council through letters, and he had bountiful quantities of goods distributed to all the people in the countryside and around the cities. Thus he festively celebrated the twentieth year of his reign.”
- 2.37.28 In the sixth month of the sixteenth year of his reign, as this book explained earlier using the ancient accounts,⁸³ Constantine assembled the holy council of bishops. In his twentieth year they dissolved the council meeting,⁸⁴ and each returned to his parish, as we said before.
- 2.37.29 Now that I have included in this ecclesiastical history, according to my ability, the decisions and determinations of the holy council concerning the catholic orthodox faith, the venerable festival of holy Easter, the regulations of the church’s divine liturgy, and the church laws for good order, I will end this book here for the full security of future readers of this book.
- 2.37.30 I have resolved to present the praiseworthy faithful emperor’s remaining pious acts on behalf of the faith in a third book, to the glory of Christ, the Savior of us all, clearly demonstrating the faithful emperor’s piety.
- 2.37.31 I must add here only the following, which in my mind is not merely incidental but really quite relevant: the names of the bishops whom all the bishops jointly dispatched to the provinces throughout the world, who sent out letters from the council and the praiseworthy emperor to all the holy churches of God under heaven detailing the decisions of the council, to the glory of God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- 2.38.1 Hosius, bishop of Cordova, for the holy churches of God in Rome, Spain, all Italy, and the other provinces beyond me up to the ocean, through the Roman priests Vito and Vincent accompanying him.
- 2.38.2 Alexander of Alexandria, with Athanasius, then archdeacon, for the churches in all Egypt, Libya, the Pentapolis, and the neighboring regions up to the provinces of India.

⁸³ Cf. 2.5.1 and the footnote there.

⁸⁴ This summary of the dates of the council repeats the start date reckoned from Constantine’s accession as Augustus but gives Eusebius’s end date reckoned from Constantine’s accession as Caesar. This could potentially confuse the reader by giving the impression that the council lasted four years (when in fact it lasted about eight weeks).

- 2.38.3 Macarius of Jerusalem, with Eusebius Pamphili, bishop of Caesarea, for the churches in Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia.
- 2.38.4 Eustathius of great Antioch, for the churches in Coele Syria, all Mesopotamia, and both Cilicias.
- 2.38.5 John the Persian, for the churches in all Persia and Greater India.
- 2.38.6 Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, which is the ornament of our Lord's church, for the churches in Cappadocia itself, Galatia, Diospontus, Paphlagonia, Pontus Polemoniacus, and Lesser and Greater Armenia.
- 2.38.7 Theonas of Cyzicus, for the churches in Asia, the Hellespont, Lydia, and Caria, through his subordinate bishops Eutychius of Smyrna and Marinus of Troas.
- 2.38.8 Alexander of Thessalonica, through his subordinates, for the churches in Macedonia Prima and Secunda along with Greece, all of Europe, both Scythias, and all the churches in Illyricum, Thessaly, and Achaea.
- 2.38.9 Nunechius of Laodicea, for the churches in Phrygia Prima and Secunda.
- 2.38.10 Protogenes, the admirable bishop of Sardica, for the churches in Dacia, Calabria, Dardania, and the neighboring regions.
- 2.38.11 Caecilian of Carthage, for the holy churches of God in all the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and both Mauritanias.
- 2.38.12 Pistus of Marcianopolis, for the churches in Mysia, the provinces of Athens and Gaul, and their neighboring cities.
- 2.38.13 Alexander of Constantinople, then still a priest but later granted the bishopric of the local church, together with Paul, then still a lector, Alexander's secretary, for the churches on all the islands of the Cyclades.
- 2.38.14 All these holy apostolic men delivered the decisions of the holy great ecumenical Synod of Nicaea to all the holy churches of God under heaven and brought them to all parts of the world, as this book has just shown.