

Harmony 1.3 - Rise of Arianism to Nicaea (300-325)

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Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
Christianity spreads under Constantine		
	<p>1.15.1a Although, as we have seen, our religion flourished during this time,</p>	<p>1.2.1 After the overthrow of the wicked and impious tyrants, Maxentius, Maximinus, and Licinius, the surge which those destroyers, like hurricanes, had roused was hushed to sleep; the whirlwinds were checked, and the Church henceforward began to enjoy a settled calm.</p> <p>1.2.2 This was established for her by Constantine, a prince deserving of all praise, whose calling, like that of the divine Apostle, was not of men, nor by man, but from heaven.</p> <p>1.2.3 He enacted laws prohibiting sacrifices to idols and commanded churches to be erected. He appointed Christians to be governors of the provinces, ordered honor to be shown to the priests, and threatened with death those who dared to insult them. By some the churches which had been destroyed were rebuilt; others erected new ones still more spacious and magnificent.</p> <p>1.2.4 Hence, for us, all was joy and gladness, while our enemies were overwhelmed with gloom and despair. The temples of the idols were closed; but frequent assemblies were held, and festivals celebrated, in the churches.</p>
Satan seeks new ways to tempt men		
	<p>1.15.1b ...yet some contentious issues troubled the churches.</p>	<p>1.2.5 But the devil, full of all envy and wickedness, the destroyer of mankind, unable to bear the sight of the Church sailing on with favorable winds, stirred up plans of evil counsel, eager to sink the vessel steered by the Creator and Lord of the Universe.</p> <p>1.2.6 When he began to perceive that the error of the Greeks had been made manifest, that the various tricks of the demons had been detected, and that the greater number of men worshipped the Creator, instead of adoring, as heretofore, the creature,</p>

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		<p>1.2.7 he did not dare to declare open war against our God and Saviour; but having found some who, though dignified with the name of Christians, were yet slaves to ambition and vainglory, he made them fit instruments for the execution of his designs, and by their means drew others back into their old error, not indeed by the former method of setting up the worship of the creature, but by bringing it about that the Creator and Maker of all should be reduced to a level with the creature. I shall now proceed to relate where and by what means he sowed these weeds.</p>
300-310 - Arius supported Meletius during days of Peter		
	<p>1.15.1b For while pretending to pursue piety and a more precise understanding of God, certain questions were raised that had not previously been studied. A presbyter of the church at Alexandria in Egypt named Arius was the one who started these ideas.</p> <p>1.15.2 At first, he was an enthusiastic thinker about doctrine, and also supported the innovations of Meletius. Eventually, however, he abandoned the position of Meletius and was ordained a deacon by Peter [300-311], bishop of Alexandria. Later, however, Peter threw him out of the church. For when Peter anathematized those who zealously supported Meletius and rejected the baptisms they had performed, Arius attacked him for these actions and would not remain quiet on the issue. After Peter was martyred, Arius asked forgiveness of Achillas [312-313], and was restored to his office as deacon, and later elevated to the priesthood. Afterwards Alexander [313-328] also thought highly of him.</p>	
c. 318 – Alexander succeeds Peter and debates with Arius		
<p>1.5.1a After bishop Peter of Alexandria was martyred in the time of Diocletian, Achillas was made bishop. When as we mentioned earlier peace was restored, he was in turn succeeded by Alexander.</p>		<p>1.2.8 Alexandria is an immense and populous city, charged with the leadership not only of Egypt, but also of the adjacent countries, the Thebaid and Libya. After Peter, the victorious champion of the faith, had, during the sway of the aforesaid impious tyrants, obtained the crown of martyrdom, the Church in Alexandria was ruled for a short time by Achillas. He was succeeded by Alexander, who</p>

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		proved himself a noble defender of the doctrines of the gospel.
		<p>1.2.9 At that time, Arius, who had been enrolled on the list of priests and entrusted with expounding the Holy Scriptures, was overcome by jealousy when he saw that the highest office in the church had been given to Alexander. Stung by this passion, he looked for opportunities to quarrel and disagree with him.</p> <p>1.2.10 And even when he saw that Alexander was beyond reproach and that it was impossible for him to bring charges against his personal conduct, his envy would still give him no rest. So the enemy of the truth used him as an instrument to stir up and embroil the church in angry waters, convincing him to oppose the apostolic teaching of Alexander</p>
<p>1.5.1b While he was fearlessly carrying out his role in instructing and governing the church, one day in the presence of his priests and the rest of his clergy, he attempted to give too ambitious a theological discussion of the holy Trinity, explaining that there was a unity in the Trinity.</p>		<p>1.2.11a While the Patriarch, in obedience to the Holy Scriptures, taught that the Son is of equal dignity with the Father, and of the same substance with God who begat Him,</p>
<p>1.5.2 Arius, one of the priests under his oversight, possessed considerable logical insight. He concluded that the bishop was subtly teaching the view on this subject that had been taught by the Libyan Sabellius. Since he loved argumentation, Arius took the opposite position to that of the Libyan, and, as he thought, responded forcefully to what the bishop had said by saying, “If the Father had begotten the Son, the one begotten had a beginning to his existence; from this clearly one must conclude that there was a time when the Son did not exist. It then follows necessarily that his substance arose out of nothing.”</p>	<p>1.15.3 As he was an expert in logical argumentation (for it was said that he had no shortage of learning) he fell head first into absurd discourses. For he had the audacity to preach in the church what no one before him had ever proposed—that the Son of God came into being from nothing, that at one point he did not exist, that (since he possessed free will) he was capable of doing both good and evil, that he was made and was a created being, and many other such things which he added as his argumentation developed and became more detailed</p>	<p>1.2.11b Arius, in direct opposition to the truth, affirmed that the Son of God is merely a creature or created being, adding the famous dictum, “There once was a time when He was not;” with other opinions which may be learned from his own writings. He taught these false doctrines perseveringly, not only in the church, but also in general meetings and assemblies; and he even went from house to house, endeavoring to make men the slaves of his error.</p>
	<p>1.15.4 Those who heard these things propounded blamed Alexander for not countering such new teachings which were at odds with the church’s doctrine. But the bishop thought it best to allow each side to discuss such topics freely, so that the argument would be solved through</p>	<p>1.2.12a Alexander was a firm advocate of the apostolic teachings and at first tried to convince him of his errors by appeals and warnings</p>

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	<p>persuasion rather than by force. So he, together with some of his clergy, sat in judgment as he led both sides in a discussion.</p> <p>1.15.5 But as is likely to happen when there is a dispute about wording, each party claimed victory. Arius defended what he had said, but the others stated that the Son is of the same substance and co-eternal with the Father. A second council was convened and the same points debated, but they came to no agreement among themselves. During the debate, Alexander seemed at first to favor one side and then the other.</p>	
318 – Alexander excommunicates Arius and his followers		
<p>1.6.3 When Alexander both saw and heard what was happening, he was moved to anger and convened a council of many bishops and condemned Arius and those who had accepted his position.</p>	<p>1.15.6 Finally, however, he placed himself together with those who affirmed that the Son was of the same substance as and co-eternal with the Father. And he ordered Arius to accept this teaching, and to reject his former opinion. But since he could not be persuaded to do so, and since there were already many bishops and other clergy who considered his statements to be correct, Alexander expelled from the church both him and the clergy who furthered his views.</p> <p>1.15.7 Among his supporters in the parish of Alexandria were the priests Aithalas, Achillas, Carpones, Sarmates, and Arius, and the deacons Euzoius, Macarius, Julius, Menas, and Helladius. Many of the laity likewise sided with them—some because they considered their leaders to be from God, others, as it often happens in similar cases, because they believed them to have been treated unfairly, and unjustly excommunicated.</p>	<p>1.2.12b But when he saw him acting insane and making public declarations of his ungodly ideas, he removed him from the list of priests For he heard the divine law shouting, “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away from you.”</p>
318 – Arius’ teaching spreads		
<p>1.6.1 Having been led to this conclusion by his new line of reasoning, Arius roused many people to debate this. And so from a little spark a large fire was kindled.</p> <p>1.6.2 For the evil begun in the church of Alexandria, ran throughout all Egypt, Libya, and even the Upper Thebaid, and soon spread over the rest of the provinces and cities.</p>	<p>1.15.8 With this being the state of affairs at Alexandria, Arius’s circle of supporters concluded that they needed to seek the support of the bishops of other cities. So they sent delegations to them with written statements of what they believed. The emissaries then requested that, if the bishops truly considered such teachings to be of God, they should openly tell Alexander so that he should treat them harshly.</p>	

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	But if they disagreed, they were to instruct them as to the proper opinions to be held. This respectful procedure was quite profitable for them.	
Many others also accepted the position of Arius, and Eusebius in particular was an ardent defender of it—not the bishop of Caesarea, but the one who had first been bishop of Beruit and later somehow crept in to the bishopric of Nicomedia in Bithynia.	For in this way their teaching became known to everyone, and this question became a matter of debate among bishops everywhere. 1.15.9a Some wrote to Alexander that he should not readmit those who supported Arius unless they renounced their own opinions. Others urged him to do the opposite.	
318 - Alexander writes letters to other Bishops		
He then wrote to the bishops of each city as follows:	1.15.9b Many men who were admired because outwardly they lived godly lives, and because of their persuasive speech came to support the group around Arius; and in particular Eusebius, the one who at that time was the leader of the church of Nicomedia, a man of great learning and respected at the imperial palace. Therefore, Alexander wrote to the bishops of the churches everywhere that they should not have fellowship with them.	1.3.3b It was at this time that Alexander, bishop of Alexandria saw that Arius was enslaved by a lust for power and was gathering those who had been captivated by his blasphemous doctrines, and was holding his own private meetings. So he clearly recounted the blasphemies of Arius in letters to the leaders of the churches. 1.3.4 I will now insert an exact copy of the letter which he wrote to his namesake, for it is clear and instructive about all the charges against him, and so that the accuracy of my history may not be suspected. After that, I will include the letter of Arius, together with the other letters which are necessary for my narrative to be comprehensive. These will both bear witness to the truth of my work and will help clarify the course of events. [Refer to page 42]
1.6.4 Alexander, to our beloved and most honored fellow-ministers of the catholic church everywhere. Greetings in the Lord! 1.6.5 Since the catholic church is one body, and we are commanded in the divine Scriptures to maintain “the bond of unity and peace” [Eph 4:3] , it follows that we should write, and mutually acquaint each another with the things that have happened among each of us, so that “if one member suffers or rejoices, we may either sympathize or rejoice with one other” [1 Cor 12:26] . In our diocese lawless and anti-Christian men have recently arisen, teaching an apostasy which one might reasonably consider		

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<p>and label the forerunner of the Antichrist.</p> <p>1.6.6 I wished indeed to treat this matter with silence, that if possible the evil might be confined to its supporters alone, and not spread into other regions and contaminate the ears of innocent people. But Eusebius, now bishop in Nicomedia, thinks that the affairs of the church lay under his control; after abandoning his office at Beirut and coveting the church at Nicomedia without being punished for it, he has now established himself at the head of these apostates, daring even to write letters in all directions in support of them, hoping to drag down some of the ignorant into this shameful and anti-Christian heresy. Thus, since I know what is written in the law, I could no longer keep silent, but I had to inform you of all of these things, so that you would be made aware of which people have fallen into apostasy and also of the terrible threats caused by their heresy, and pay no attention to anything that Eusebius writes to you.</p> <p>1.6.7 For now wishing to use these events to resurrect his old ill-will, which seemed to have been silenced over time, he pretends to write on their behalf, while the facts show that he does this to promote his own cause.</p> <p>1.6.8 These then are those who have become apostates: Arius, Achillas, Aithales, and Carpones, a second Arius, Sarmates, who were all once priests; Euzoïus, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius, and Gaius, who were all once deacons; and with these also Secundus and Theonas, who were once called bishops.</p> <p>1.6.9 The dogmas which, going beyond Scripture, they have invented and asserted, are the following: “God was not always the Father, but there was once when God was not the Father. The Word of God was not always in existence, but came into being from nothing, for ‘the God who is’ made ‘him who did not previously exist’ out of nothing. For this reason, there was once when he did not exist; for the Son is a creature (ktisma) and a created being (poiēma).</p> <p>1.6.10 He is neither like the Father in essence (kat’</p>		

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<p>ousian), nor is he by nature either the Father’s true Word or his true Wisdom, but rather one of the things he made (poiēmatōn) and one of those he begot (genētōn). He is called Word and Wisdom only by analogy, since he himself came into being from the actual (idios) Word of God and the Wisdom which is in God, by which God made all things including him. His nature is mutable and susceptible of change, as are all rational beings. And thus the Word is alien to, other than, and excluded from the essence (ousia) of God;</p> <p>1.6.11 and the Father is invisible to the Son. For the Word neither knows the Father perfectly and accurately, nor can he see him perfectly. For the Son does not even know his own essence as it exists, since he was made for our sake, in order that God could create us through him, as through an instrument, and he would never have existed if God had not wanted to create us.”</p> <p>1.6.12 Someone asked them whether the Word of God could turn to evil, like the devil has. And they were not afraid to answer, “Yes, he could. Since he is begotten, his nature is able to change.”</p> <p>1.6.13 We then, assembled with almost one hundred bishops of Egypt and Libya, have anathematized these things that were said by the group around Arius and those who have shamefully followed along with them.</p> <p>1.6.14 Thus Eusebius’s group has welcomed them and tried to blend falsehood with truth, and impiety with what is sacred. But they will not succeed. For the truth must triumph; and “light has no fellowship with darkness, nor can Christ be harmonized with Belial” [2 Cor 6:14].</p> <p>1.6.15 For who ever heard such things? Or who that hears it now is not astonished and does not plug his ears to stop himself from hearing such filthy expressions? Who that hears John saying, “In the beginning was the Word” [John 1:1], does not condemn those who say, “There was a time when the Word did not exist”? Or who, hearing in the Gospel of “the only-begotten Son” [John 3:16, 18], and that “through him all things were made” [John 1:3,</p>		

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<p>see Rom 11:36], will not hate those who proclaim that the Son is one of the things that were made (poiēmata)?</p> <p>1.6.16 How can he be one of the things which were made through himself? Or how can he be the only-begotten, if he is reckoned among such created things? And how could he come into existence from nothing when the Father has said, “My heart has spewed out a good word (logos)” [Ps 44:2 (LXX), 45:2 in English]; and “I begot you from the womb before the morning star” [Ps 109:3 (LXX), 110:3 English]? Or how can he be unlike the Father in essence (ousia) when he is the perfect image and radiant glory of the Father [Heb 1:3] and says, ‘He that has seen me, has seen the Father” [John 14:9]?</p> <p>1.6.17 Again how if the Son is the Word and Wisdom of God, could there be a time when he did not exist? That is equivalent to their saying that God was once without the Word and without Wisdom. How can one be mutable and susceptible of change who says of himself, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me” [John 10:38; 14:10, 11]; and “I and the Father are one” [John 10:30]; and again through the prophet, “Look at me because I am, and I have not changed” [paraphrase Mal 3:6 (LXX)]?</p> <p>1.6.18 If someone can use this expression of the Father himself, it would be even more fittingly spoken concerning the Word, because he was not changed when he became man, but as the apostle says, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever” [Heb 13:8].</p> <p>1.6.19 So who could persuade them to say that he was made on our account, when Paul wrote that “for him and through him all things exist” [Rom 11:38]?</p> <p>1.6.20 One need not wonder at their blasphemous assertion that the Son does not perfectly know the Father. For once they decided to fight against Christ, they reject also his own voice when he says, “As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father” [John 10:15].</p> <p>1.6.21 But if the Father only partially knows the Son, it is clear that the Son can only partially know the Father. But if it would be improper to say this, and if the Father</p>		

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<p>does perfectly know the Son, it is also clear that just as the Father knows his own Word, so also the Word knows his own Father, whose Word he is.</p> <p>1.6.22 By stating these things and explaining the divine Scriptures, we have often refuted these men, but like chameleons, they changed themselves again, obstinately dragging themselves down to that which was written, “When the ungodly man goes into the depths of evil, he becomes contemptuous” [Prov 18:3 (LXX)].</p> <p>1.6.23 Although many heresies have arisen before these, which going far beyond what ought to be dared fell into complete foolishness, these persons, by attempting in all their discourses to do away with the divinity of the Word, have brought themselves closer to becoming the Antichrist, and have exonerated all former heretics by comparison to themselves. For this reason they have been publicly denounced and anathematized by the church.</p> <p>1.6.24 We are indeed grieved by their destruction, and especially so because they have now turned away from the teachings which they had once learned in the church, although we are not surprised. For Hymenaeus and Philetus fell in the same way, and before them Judas, who had been a follower of the Savior, but later became a betrayer and apostate.</p> <p>1.6.25 Nor should we have been ignorant about these men, for the Lord himself said: “Beware that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, ‘I am Christ,’ and ‘the time is at hand,’ and they will deceive many people. Do not follow them” [Luke 21:8, Matt 24:5].</p> <p>1.6.26 And Paul, having learned these things from the Savior, wrote, “That in the last days some will apostatize from the sound faith, following deceiving spirits, and the teachings of devils, turning away from the truth” [1 Tim 4:1, 2 Tim 4:4]</p> <p>1.6.27 Seeing that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has directed through himself and foretold through the apostle concerning these men, it follows that we, having ourselves</p>		

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<p>heard their impiety, have condemned them, as previously stated, and declared them to be outside the catholic church and faith.</p> <p>1.6.28 We have also made it clear to your pious minds, beloved and most honored fellow-servants, that you should not welcome any of these men, if they hurriedly approach you, nor be persuaded to receive any letter in their defense from Eusebius or anyone else.</p> <p>1.6.29 It is proper for us who are Christians, to turn away from all those who speak or reason against Christ, since they are resisting God, and destroyers of souls; nor are we “even to greet such men” so that we never “are made partakers in their sin,” as the blessed John instructed [cf. 2 John 9-11].</p> <p>1.6.30 Give greetings to the brothers with you. Those with me greet you.</p> <p><i>Subscriptions of 17 priests and 24 deacons of Alexandria and 19 priests and 20 deacons of the Mareotis district¹</i></p>		
318 - Followers of Arius become agitated		
	<p>1.15.10 This act increased still more the fervor of each party, and, as might have been expected, the conflict became increasingly agitated. Eusebius and his supporters had often petitioned Alexander, but could not persuade him. Considering themselves insulted, they became indignant and came to an even stronger determination to support the doctrine of Arius. After convening a synod in Bithynia, they wrote to all the bishops, asking them to commune with the Arians as men making a true confession, and to pressure Alexander to commune with them as well.</p>	<p>1.4.62b But Arius could not bear to remain quiet, but he also wrote to those men whom he believed to share his opinions.</p> <p>1.4.63 And Arius himself testifies in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia that the godly Alexander was not lying in what he wrote about him. I will insert here a copy of his letter so that in this way those who are still ignorant can be clearly shown who those people were who shared in Arius’s impiety.</p>
		<p>[The Letter of Arius to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia]</p> <p>1.5.1 To that most beloved man of God, the faithful and orthodox Eusebius, from Arius, unjustly persecuted by</p>

¹ Translation from NPNF2 vol. 2, p. 3-5. adapted by GLT, <http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/urkunde-4b>.

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>father Alexander because of the all-conquering truth which you, Eusebius, also are defending!</p> <p>Since my father Ammonius is going to Nicomedia, it seemed reasonable and proper to greet you through him, remembering at the same time the innate love and affection which you have for the brothers on account of God and his Christ, because the bishop [Alexander] is severely ravaging and persecuting us and moving against us with every evil. Thus he drives us out of every city like godless men, since we will not agree with his public statements: that there was “always a God, always a Son;” “as soon as the Father, so soon the Son [existed];” “with the Father co-exists the Son unbegotten, ever-begotten, begotten without begetting;” “God neither precedes the Son in aspect or in a moment of time;” “always a God, always a Son, the Son being from God himself.”</p> <p>1.5.2 Since Eusebius, your brother in Caesarea, and Theodotus, and Paulinus, and Athanasius, and Gregory, and Aetius and all those in the East say that God pre-exists the Son without a beginning, they have been condemned, except for Philogonius and Hellenicus and Macarius, unlearned heretics some of whom say that the Son was “spewed out”, others that he was an “emanation”, still others that he was “jointly unbegotten.”</p> <p>1.5.3 We are not able to listen to these kinds of impieties, even if the heretics threaten us with ten thousand deaths. But what do we say and think and what have we previously taught and do we presently teach? — that the Son is not unbegotten, nor a part of an unbegotten entity in any way, nor from anything in existence, but that he is subsisting in will and intention before time and before the ages, full <of grace and truth,> God, the only-begotten, unchangeable.</p> <p>1.5.4 Before he was begotten, or created, or defined, or established, he did not exist. For he was not unbegotten. But we are persecuted because we have said the Son has a beginning but God has no beginning. We are persecuted because of that and for saying he came from non-being.</p>

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		<p>But we said this since he is not a portion of God nor of anything in existence. That is why we are persecuted; you know the rest.</p> <p>I pray that you fare well in the Lord, remembering our tribulations, fellow-Lucianist, truly-called Eusebius [i.e. the pious one].²</p> <p>1.5.5 Of those whose names are mentioned in this letter, Eusebius was bishop of Caesarea, Theodotus of Laodicea, Paulinus of Tyre, Athanasius of Anazarbus, Gregorius of Beirut, and Aetius of Lydda. Lydda is now called Diospolis.</p> <p>1.5.6a Arius prided himself on having these men of one mind with himself. He names as his adversaries, Philogonius, bishop of Antioch, Hellanicus, of Tripolis, and Macarius, of Jerusalem. He spread slanders against them because they said that the Son is eternal, existing before all ages, and of equal honor and same substance with the Father.</p>
320 - Palestinian bishops side with Arius		
	<p>1.15.11 When Alexander could not be forced to comply, Arius sent messengers to Paulinas, bishop of Tyre, to Eusebius Pamphilus, who presided over the church of Caesarea in Palestine, and to Patrophilus, bishop of Scythopolis, seeking permission for himself and his adherents, since they had previously held the rank of priests, to gather the people who were with them into a church.</p> <p>1.15.12 For it was the custom in Alexandria, as it still is in the present day, that all the churches should be under one bishop, but that each priest should have his own church building in which to assemble the people. These three bishops, in harmony with others who were assembled in Palestine, granted the petition of Arius, and permitted him to gather the people as before; but they also instructed</p>	<p>1.5.6b When Eusebius received the letter, he too spewed out his own impiety, and wrote to Paulinus, who ruled the church of Tyre, as follows:</p>

² Translation by GLT, <http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/urkunde-1>.

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
	him to submit to Alexander, and commanded Arius to strive incessantly to be restored to peace and fellowship with him.	
		<p>[Letter of Eusebius Nic. to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre]</p> <p>1.6.1 To my lord Paulinus, Eusebius sends his greetings in the Lord.</p> <p>The zeal of my lord Eusebius [of Caesarea] in the cause of the truth, and likewise your silence concerning it, has not failed to reach our ears. Accordingly, if, on the one hand, we rejoiced on account of the zeal of my lord Eusebius; on the other we are grieved at you, because the mere silence of man like you appears like a defeat of our cause.</p> <p>1.6.2 Hence, as it is not proper for a wise man to be of a different opinion from others, and to be silent concerning the truth, stir up, I exhort you, within yourself the spirit of wisdom to write, and at length begin what may be profitable to yourself and to others, especially if you consent to write in accordance with Scripture, and tread in the tracks of its words and will.</p> <p>1.6.3 We have never heard that there are two unbegotten beings, nor that one has been divided into two, nor have we learned or believed that the unbegotten has ever undergone any change of a corporeal nature. On the contrary, we affirm that the unbegotten is one. One also is that which exists in truth by him, yet was not made out of his substance, and does not at all participate in the nature or substance of the unbegotten, entirely distinct in nature and in power, and made after perfect likeness both of character and power to the maker. We believe that the mode of His beginning not only cannot be expressed by words but even in thought, and is incomprehensible not only to man, but also to all beings superior to man.</p> <p>1.6.4 These opinions we advance not as having derived them from our own imagination, but as having deduced them from Scripture, whence we learn that the Son was created, established, and begotten with respect to his essence and his unchanging, inexpressible nature, in the</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>likeness of the one for whom he has been made. The Lord himself tells us this: ‘God created me the beginning of his ways; Before the ages he established me; he begat me before all the hills’ [Prov. 8.22-23,25, LXX]</p> <p>1.6.5 If the Son had been from him or of him, as a portion of him, or by an emanation of his substance, it could not be said that the Son was created or established; and of this you, my lord, are certainly not ignorant. For that which is from the unbegotten could not be said to have been created or founded, either by him or by another, since it is unbegotten from the beginning.</p> <p>1.6.6 But if the fact of his being called “the begotten” gives any ground for the belief that, having come into being of the Father’s substance, he also has from the Father likeness of nature, we reply that it is not of the Son alone that the Scriptures have spoken as begotten, but that they also thus speak of those who are entirely dissimilar to God by nature.</p> <p>1.6.7 For of men it is said, ‘I have begotten and brought up sons, and they have rebelled against me;’ [Is. 1:2]; and in another place, ‘You have forsaken God who begat you’ [Deut. 32:18]; and again it is said, ‘Who begat the drops of dew’ [Job 38:28]? This expression does not imply that the dew partakes of the nature of God, but simply that all things were formed according to his will. There is, indeed, nothing which shares his substance, yet every thing which exists has been called into being by his will.</p> <p>1.6.8 For there is God on the one hand, and then there are the things towards [pros] his likeness which will be similar to the Word, and these things which have come into being by [his] free will. All things were made by God by means of the Word. All things are from God. When you have received my letter, and have revised it according to the knowledge and grace given you by God, I beg you will write as soon as possible to my lord Alexander. I feel confident that if you would write to him, you would succeed in bringing him over to your opinion. Salute all the brethren in the Lord. May you, my lord, be preserved</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>by the grace of God, and be led to pray for us.³</p> <p>1.6.9a Thus they wrote to each other, in order to arm each other for battle against the truth.</p>
The Church in the East is divided over Arianism		
<p>1.6.31 After Alexander's had addressed the bishops in every city in this way, the evil only became worse; for those to whom he communicated these things were motivated into disputes about them.</p> <p>1.6.32 While some indeed fully concurred in and subscribed to the sentiments expressed in this letter, others did the reverse. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, was especially moved to opposition, since Alexander had made an allusion to him as evil in his letter.</p> <p>1.6.33 Now at that very time Eusebius possessed great influence, because the emperor was residing at Nicomedia. For a short time before Diocletian's men had built a palace there.</p> <p>1.6.34 For this reason many of the bishops paid attention to what Eusebius said. And he repeatedly wrote to Alexander, that he might desist from his actions on these questions, and accept back again the party of Arius; and he wrote also to the bishops in each city, that they should not agree with Alexander's position.</p>		<p>1.6.9b And thus the blasphemies spread among the churches of Egypt and of the East, and disputes and contentions about the divine teaching arose in every city and village.</p>
<p>1.6.35 In this way confusion reigned everywhere; for one saw not only the church leaders engaged in disputations, but the laity also were divided, some siding with one party, and some with the other. To so disgraceful an extent was this affair carried, that Christianity was laughed at in public, and even in the theatres.</p> <p>1.6.36a Those who were in Alexandria itself sharply disputed about the highest points of doctrine They sent delegations to the bishops of the other provinces while those who were of the opposite faction created a similar disturbance.</p>		<p>1.6.10 The common people looked on, and became judges of what was said on either side, and some applauded one party, and some the other. These were, indeed, worthy of the tears and lamentations shed over tragedies in the theater. For it was not, as in earlier times, when the church was attacked by strangers and by enemies. Now natives of the same country, who slept under the same roof and sat down at the same table, fought against each other not with spears, but with their tongues. And what was still sadder, it was those who were members of one another, and belonged to the "one body" who now</p>

³ Translation from NPNF2 vol. 3, p. 42, adapted by GLT, <http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/urkunde-8/>.

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
took up arms against one another.		
The background of the Meletian Schism		
<p>1.6.36b The Meletians, who a little while earlier had separated themselves from the church, now mingled themselves with the Arians. We must now describe who these Meletians were.</p> <p>1.6.37 Peter [300-311], the bishop of Alexandria who suffered martyrdom in the time of Diocletian, deposed a certain Meletius [307], bishop of one of the cities in Egypt, for he had been charged with many things, in particular having denied the faith and sacrificed during the persecution.</p> <p>1.6.38 Although stripped of his office, he still had many followers and became the leader of the heretics which throughout Egypt to this day are named after him 'Meletians'. And as he had no good excuse for separating from the Church, he pretended that he had simply been wronged and loaded Peter with slanderous abuses.</p> <p>1.6.39 Now Peter died the death of a martyr during the persecution, and so Meletius transferred the abuse first to Achillas [312-313], who succeeded Peter as bishop, and afterwards again to Alexander [313-328], the successor of Achillas.</p>		<p>1.9.1a Not long before the Arian controversy, Meletius had been ordained bishop; but he was then convicted of certain crimes by the most holy Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who also received the crown of martyrdom. Although deposed by Peter, Meletius did not accept his deposition but filled the Thebaid and the nearby parts of Egypt with tumult and disturbances, and rebelled against the preeminence of Alexandria.</p>
Meletians and his followers join forces against Alexander		
<p>1.6.40 Things were in this state of affairs when the issues surrounding Arius arose. So Meletius with his adherents took the side of Arius, conspiring with him against the bishop.</p> <p>All those who regarded the opinion of Arius as untenable considered Alexander's decision against him to be just, and they thought that those who favored Arius's views were rightly condemned. Meanwhile Eusebius of Nicomedia and his partisans, as well as those other who favored the positions of Arius, demanded by letter that the sentence of excommunication which had been pronounced against Arius should be rescinded, and that those who had been excluded should be readmitted into the Church; for</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>they did not consider their teaching evil.</p> <p>1.6.41 Thus letters from both opposing parties were sent to the bishop of Alexandria; and Arius made a collection of those which were favorable to himself while Alexander did the same with those which were hostile. This therefore provided an timely opportunity for the sects which are now prevalent to defend themselves: the Arians, the Eunomians, and those who take their name from Macedonius; for each was using these letters in support of their own heresy.</p>		
324 - Alexander of Alexandria writes to Alexander of Byzantium		
		<p>[The Letter of Alexander to Alexander of Byzantium]</p> <p>1.4.1 “Alexander sends greetings in the Lord to his most honorable and likeminded brother Alexander.</p> <p>Among untrustworthy men, the greedy and ambitious ones have always plotted to harm the most important dioceses. Such people have many different excuses for attacking the religion of the church. The devil works in them and stirs them up to set aside all godliness for the pleasure they fancy most, and to trample on the fear of God’s judgment.</p> <p>1.4.2 I thought it was urgent to explain to your piety what I have suffered in these matters. You need to be on your guard against such people in case one of them dares to enter your diocese as well. These cheats are skilled in deception, so beware lest they use deceitfully-designed letters and thus are able to snatch away people whose faith is simple-minded and pure.</p> <p>1.4.3 Recently, Arius and Achillas have formed a conspiracy. They imitated the ambition of Colluthus, though they are much worse than he was. He brought charges against them, but at least he found a motive for his own malicious course of action. After they saw him use Christ as a business to profit himself, they refused to remain under the authority of the church. Instead, they built robbers’ dens for themselves [cf. Matt. 21:13] and now hold meetings in them constantly, where day and</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>night they slander Christ and his church.</p> <p>1.4.4 They hate every sacred apostolic doctrine and like the Jews have organized a gang to fight against Christ. They deny the divinity of our Savior; they say that he is on the same level as everyone else. After they have picked out every passage about the plan of salvation and about how he humbled himself for our sake [cf. Phil 2:8], they use those very passages to piece together their own wicked message. At the same time they avoid the passages about his eternal divinity and the indescribable glory he shares with the Father.</p> <p>1.4.5 They do whatever they can to maintain the ungodly doctrine about Christ believed by the Greeks and the Jews because they want their approval. They diligently do all of the things that outsiders ridicule about us while they daily incite persecutions and encourage rebellion against us. They accuse us before the courts with the testimony of immoral women whom they have deceived [cf. 1 Timothy 5:11-13] and at the same time they disgrace Christianity by allowing their own young women to wander shamefully on every street. In essence, they have had the audacity to tear apart the seamless garment of Christ, which even the soldiers did not dare to divide [cf. John 19:23-24].</p> <p>1.4.6 Because of the way they operate, they were able to keep their ungodly attacks unnoticed for a long time. But when they finally came to our attention, we unanimously drove them out of the church that worships the divine Christ.</p> <p>1.4.7 They ran everywhere, forming plots against us. They even addressed our fellow ministers, who believed the same things we did, under the pretense of wanting peace and unity—they were actually trying to sweep some of them into their own disease. They ask them to write wordy letters so that they can read aloud the contents to those whom they have already fooled. This is how they avoid losing their approval; they are rooted in their disrespect of God by acting as if the bishops agree and share their views.</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>1.4.8 They do not even acknowledge the evil things they have done and practiced. We expelled them for those things, but they just keep sharing them in secret or trying to cover them up with lies or fake writings.</p> <p>1.4.9 Once they have covered up their destructive teaching with persuasive and down-to-earth explanations, they are able to rope in people who do not know the truth about them. At the same time they never miss an opportunity to misrepresent every single thing about our religion. Because of this, some agree with their letters and add their signatures to demonstrate that the church should receive them. That our fellow pastors dare to do this is appalling to me! They not only compromise the apostolic rule but also light the fire of this devilish work against Christ under themselves.</p> <p>1.4.10 Because of this I could not help myself—I had to tell you about the unbelief of such people. They say, “There was [a period] when the Son of God did not exist,” and “The one who did not exist in the beginning came into being, and when at some point that one came into being, he became like any other man.”</p> <p>1.4.11 “For God created everything out of nothing,” they say, including the Son of God as a creation along with all the other rational and irrational creatures. Of necessity they continue by saying that his nature is changeable, able to do either good or evil. Their claim that ‘he was created out of nothing’ overthrows the sacred Scriptures that say that he is eternal and that the Word is by nature unchangeable. The Scriptures also declare that the Wisdom of the Word, which is Christ, is divine. But these cursed lowlifes say, “We, too, are able to become just like him, sons of God.”</p> <p>1.4.12 For it is written [they say], “I have created and raised children [Isaiah 1:2 (LXX)].” So we bring up the second half of that verse, “and they have rebelled against me,” and point out that this is inconsistent with the unchangeable nature of the Savior. At this point they throw away any respectability they might have had and argue</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>that God chose Christ above all others because he knew beforehand and foresaw that Christ would not rebel against him.</p> <p>1.4.13 They also explain that just because he was chosen does not mean that he was created better than the other sons of God (they say that no man is a son of God by nature or has a special relationship with him). Instead they claim that he was chosen because even though his nature was changeable, he was careful enough and worked hard enough to keep himself from becoming inferior.</p> <p>1.4.14 As if Paul and Peter would have been “sons” at the same level if they had worked as hard! To establish this teaching they butcher the Scriptures by quoting what is said in the Psalms about Christ, “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.” [Ps 45:7, (44:8 LXX), Heb. 1:9].</p> <p>1.4.15 John the Evangelist specifically taught that the Son of God was not created out of nothing and that there never was a time when he did not exist. He wrote, “the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.” This divine teacher showed that the Father and the Son cannot be separated from each other when he said, “the Son is in the bosom of the Father” [John 1:18].</p> <p>1.4.16 The same John makes sure <i>not</i> to include the Word of God among the things created from nothing. He says, “all things were made through him.” He also shows that he is a unique person when he says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...All things were made by him, and not a single thing was made without him” [John 1:1-3].</p> <p>1.4.17 If everything was made by him, how did everything come into being through him at a time when he did not exist? Could the Word, the creating power, really have the same nature as the things it created? No. He existed in the beginning, and everything was made by him, and he made everything out of nothing.</p> <p>1.4.18 The things created from nothing are nothing like</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>“the one who is”. That section of Scripture shows that there is no separation between the Father and the Son; the thought of separation does not even cross the hearers’ mind. The fact is the world was created out of nothing. That means that its nature has a later, fresh beginning, and the Father gave it its beginning through the Son.</p> <p>1.4.19 The blessed John knew that created beings could not understand the “was” that describes the Word of God. So he did not try to explain the Word’s generation or creation and he resisted putting a name to the Maker and to the created things. Not that the Son of God is unbegotten—only the Father is unbegotten—it is just that the indescribable character of the only-begotten God is beyond even the brightest of the Evangelists’ understanding, maybe even the angels too!. For this reason, I maintain that the people who are trying to reason out this subject are ungodly. They go against the proverb, “Do not seek what is too difficult for you or look into things too high for you” [Sir. 3:21].</p> <p>1.4.20 The knowledge of many other much less complicated things is still beyond the capacity of the human mind. As Paul said, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him” [1 Cor. 2:9]. God also said to Abraham that he was not able to count the stars. Similarly it is said, “Who shall number the grains of sand by the sea-shore, or the drops of rain?” [Sir. 1:2]</p> <p>1.4.21 So then, how could anyone but a lunatic try to figure out the nature of the Word of God? The prophetic Spirit addressed this when he said, “Who can speak of his generation?” [Isa. 53:8] And so it was out of kindness for all of those who were pillars in the world that our Savior was eager to free them from trying to grasp this knowledge. He told them that it was beyond their natural comprehension and to leave the knowledge of this divine mystery to the Father. He said, “No man knows the Son but the Father, and no man knows the Father except the</p>

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		<p>Son” [Matt. 11:27]. I think the Father was talking about this when he said, “My mystery is for me” [Isa. 24:16 (a reading in some LXX mss.)].</p> <p>1.4.22 But the words “out of nothing” make it clear that it is insane to imagine that the Son of God came into being out of nothing, and that he has a certain starting point in time. The foolish are of course unable to see the stupidity of their own sayings. Their phrase, “He was not” must either have reference to time or to some interval in eternity.</p> <p>1.4.23 If it is true that everything was made by him, then every age, time, and interval of time—even that time “when he was not”—was made by him. So is it not incredible that they say that there was a time when the one who created time, ages, and seasons (and they are so confused that they include the time when he “was not” in that list) did not exist? It is not only ignorant, but it also goes against all reason, to claim that a person who creates something can come into being after the thing that he created!</p> <p>1.4.24 They say that there is an interval when the Son was not yet begotten of the Father. According to them, this interval was before the wisdom of God existed, by whom all things were created. But this contradicts the passage that says he is the “firstborn over all creation” [Col. 1:15].</p> <p>1.4.25 Paul agrees with this with his usual loud voice by saying about him, “whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe” [Heb. 1:2], and, “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things” [Col 1:16-17].</p> <p>1.4.26 So their hypothesis that the Son was created “out of nothing” is clearly ungodly. The Father has to always be a Father. He is always the Father of a Son who is there—he is the reason that he is called Father. The Son has to always be present with him so that the Father is always</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>complete and not lacking anything good. That’s why he could not have begotten his only Son in time, or from any interval of time, or out of nothing.</p> <p>1.4.27 Why is it unholy to say, “There was a time when the wisdom of God did not exist”? That Wisdom itself says, “I was brought up at his side; I was daily his delight [Prov. 8:30]” Would it not be unholy to say that at one time the power of God did not exist, or his Word, or anything else that describes the Son and characterizes the Father at the same time? To say that the brightness of the Father’s glory [cf. Heb 1:3] “once did not exist” destroys the original light too, because the brightness comes from it. If the image of God did not always exist, then it is clear that God, in whose image the Son is, also did not always exist.</p> <p>1.4.28 No, if the full expression of God’s character did not exist, then everything else about him [i.e., the Son] that also characterized God must not exist either. That fact shows that the sonship of our Savior has nothing in common with the sonship of anyone else.</p> <p>1.4.29 It has been shown that the nature of the Son’s existence cannot be explained by any human language. The excellence of his nature is infinitely beyond the nature everything that he has created. In the same way his sonship, which by nature shares the Father’s divinity, is unspeakably better than the sonship of the people God has chosen to adopt as sons. He is by nature unchangeable, perfect, and does not need anything. On the other hand, humans are able to change and need help from him.</p> <p>1.4.30 What can be added to improve the wisdom of God [1 Cor. 1:24-25]? What can Truth personified add to itself? How can God the Word, the Life and the True Light [John 1:4, 9; 14:6], possibly be improved? Is it not unnatural to think that wisdom can be prone to foolishness? That the power of God can be united with weakness? That reason can be dimmed by unreasonableness or that darkness can be mixed with the true light? Does not the apostle address this directly by</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>saying, “What fellowship does light have with darkness? And what harmony does Christ have with Belial?” [2 Cor 6:14-15] Does not Solomon say that “the way of a snake on a rock” [Prov. 30:19] is too wonderful for the human mind to understand—the rock here, according to St. Paul, is Christ [1 Cor. 10:4]. He gave his creations, angels and humans, the blessing to be able to keep working on being virtuous and being obedient to his commands so that they will not sin.</p> <p>1.4.31 Because of this our Lord, who is by nature the Son of the Father, is worshiped by all. Some have put off the spirit of slavery [Phil 2:11] and have received the spirit of adoption [Rom 8:15] by bravely working and making progress in virtue. They have become sons by adoption through the kindness of the one who is the Son of God by nature.</p> <p>1.4.32 Paul explained his true, unique, natural, and special sonship, when he said by inspiration “he did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us”, who are by nature not his sons [Rom 8:32].</p> <p>1.4.33 To distinguish him from those who are not “his own”, God called him “his own son.” It is also written in the Gospel, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” [Matt. 3:17], and in the Psalms the Savior says, “The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son’” [Ps 2:7]. He points out that he is a natural son to show that there are no other natural sons except him.</p> <p>1.4.34 The words, “I have begotten you from the womb before dawn” [Ps. 109:3 (LXX), 110:3 English] plainly show that his natural sonship and paternal birth is his because of his unique nature. He did not receive it by being particularly diligent or working hard to progress morally. Because of this, the only-begotten Son is not able to lose his sonship. Rational people who are adopted by God are not his natural sons, but have been adopted because of their good character and by the grace of God. These types of sons can fall away. This is written in the passage, “The sons of God saw the daughters of men, and</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>took them as wives” [Gen 6:2-3] etc...</p> <p>1.4.35 In addition, God said through Isaiah, “I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me” [Isa. 1:2]. Since I have much more to say, my friend, I will stop at this; for I do not want to wear you out by my excessive teaching. You are “taught by God” [1 Thess. 4:9] and are aware that this recent teaching, which is against the religion of the church, is the same as that of Ebion and Artemas. It rivals the heresy of Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, who was excommunicated by a council of all the bishops.</p> <p>1.4.36 Lucian, his successor, removed himself from fellowship with these three bishops for years. And now, out of nowhere, there are men among us who have sucked up the dregs of this ungodliness. All of them secretly come from the same root: Arius and Achillas and their gang of evildoers.</p> <p>1.4.37 Three bishops of Syria (I do not know how they got appointed) are fanning the flames by agreeing with them. I leave their judgment in your hands. They fill their heads with everything that has anything to do with Christ’s suffering, humiliation, emptying of himself, and so-called poverty [Phil. 2:7-8]. They present such passages to disprove his eternal existence and divinity while at the same time forgetting all those passages that prove his glory and nobility and presence with the Father, for example, “I and the Father are one” [John 10:30].</p> <p>1.4.38 Note what the Lord says. He does not proclaim himself to be the Father or say that the two natures are one. He states that the Son of the Father accurately presents the likeness of the Father. He says that his nature took the exact likeness of his Father in every way, and that his image is indistinguishable from the father’s; he is like an exact imprint of the original.</p> <p>1.4.39 That is why the Lord answered so plainly when Philip asked to see the Father. Phillip said to him, “Show us the Father;” and the Lord replied, “He who has seen me has seen the Father,” [John 14:8-9] as if the Father is seen</p>

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		<p>through him like through a mirror. He is a spotless and living reflection of his Father.</p> <p>1.4.40 The saints say the same thing in the Psalms, “In your light we shall see light” [Ps. 36:9]. Because of this “he who honors the Son, honors the Father” [John 5:23]. Similarly, every ungodly word that people dare to say against the Son is also spoken against the Father [John 15:23].</p> <p>1.4.41 Friends, who could be surprised at each of the deceitful reports I’m about to list—reports against me and against our most pious people. They not only set themselves against the divinity of the Son, but they also ungratefully try to insult us. They think that it is beneath them to be compared with anyone who is older; they refuse to appear to be on the same level as teachers that we have associated with since childhood. They will not admit that any of our fellow ministers could have even a little intelligence. They say that they are the only ones who are wise and understanding and the discoverers of doctrines. They say that these truths have been revealed only to them, and that these truths have never even crossed the mind of any other person under the sun.</p> <p>1.4.42 What wicked arrogance! What immeasurable madness! Such false pride combined with satanic thoughts! These things have hardened their evil hearts.</p> <p>1.4.43 They are not ashamed that they are ignoring the God-inspired clarity of the ancient scriptures. The united piety of each of our fellow ministers does not even make them lose their nerve. Not even a demon puts up with wickedness like this—even they keep from blaspheming against the Son of God.</p> <p>1.4.44 So I at least have done the best that I can to ask pointed questions to those who throw uneducated mud on Christ and try to misrepresent what we teach about him. They just make up fairy tales! When we reject their evil and unscriptural blasphemy that Christ came from nothing, they say that we teach that there are two unbegotten beings. These uneducated people can only think of two</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>options: Either you believe that he came out of nothing, or you believe that there are two unbegotten beings. They are ignorant newcomers when it comes to theology; they do not realize how big the difference is between the unbegotten Father and everything that he created out of nothing, either rational or irrational.</p> <p>1.4.45 They do not understand the only begotten nature of him who is the Word of God. The Father created the universe out of nothing through him, and the Father is the one who begets him. The Lord himself proved this when he said, “Everyone that loves the Father also loves the Son who is begotten of him” [1 John 5:1].</p> <p>1.4.46 We believe the same thing that the apostolic church believes: There is one unbegotten Father. Nothing caused him to exist, he is unchanging and unchangeable, his being always stays just the way it is, and he does not get better or worse. He gave the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. He is the Lord of the patriarchs and apostles and of all the saints.</p> <p>We also believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, not begotten out of nothing, but out of the Father. He is not begotten like things in the world are, like cutting a piece off something or emitting something, as Sabellius and Valentinus taught. He is begotten in an inexpressible and unexplainable way, as we quoted above, “Who can speak of his generation?” [Isa. 53:8] No human mind is able to understand the nature of his substance or the Father's. Rational people simply do not have the ability to understand in what way he was begotten of the Father.</p> <p>1.4.47 But people led by the Spirit of truth do not need to take these things from me. What the Savior said long ago still echoes in our ears, “No one knows who the Father is but the Son, and no one knows who the Son is but the Father” [Matt 11:27]. We have learned that the Son is unchanging and unchangeable; he lacks nothing and is complete, like the Father except that he is unbegotten. He is the exact image and figure of his Father.</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>1.4.48 It is clear that the image is filled with everything that makes up the greater likeness, as the Lord himself taught when he said, “My Father is greater than I” [John 14:28]. In agreement with this we believe that the Son was always “of the Father”. He is the radiance of his glory and the exact stamp of the Father’s substance. But no one should take the word “always” to mean that the Son is unbegotten, as some ignorant people have been led to believe. To say “he was always...”, and “before all ages”, is not the same thing as saying he is unbegotten.</p> <p>1.4.49 As it is, human understanding could never coin a term that explains what it means to be unbegotten; none of these terms represent the unbegotten well (I think you share this opinion, and I am positive that your view is orthodox).</p> <p>1.4.50 All of these terms make it sound like a period of time. They are not able to express the full sense of the divinity and the antiquity of the only begotten Son. They were used by holy men who did what they could to make the mystery clearer. And even they asked for patience from those who listened to them by attaching a reasonable qualification: what they said was limited by their understanding.</p> <p>1.4.51 If men expect anything better than that to come from human lips, then they must think that what is “known in part” has already been “done away with” for them [cf. 1 Cor 13:8-12]. It is clear that the “was” and “always” and “before all ages” fall short of that hope. Whatever these words mean, it is not the same as “unbegotten.”</p> <p>1.4.52 At any rate, we have to guard the Father’s unique status as the Unbegotten One because it is never said that anything caused him to exist. It is also necessary to guard the Son’s particular honor, since his generation from the Father has no starting point. We will continue worshiping him as we have been, piously and respectfully referring to him with the terms “was”, and “ever,” and “before all ages.” We do not reject his divinity but instead credit to him his perfect likeness to his Father in every way. At the</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>same time, we credit to the Father his unique glory: that only he is “the Unbegotten One.” The Savior himself says, “My Father is greater than I am” [John 14:28].</p> <p>1.4.53 The Sacred Scriptures teach us this pious teaching about the Father and Son. In addition, they teach us and we confess that there is one Holy Ghost who inspired the saints of the Old Testament and the holy teachers of the New Testament. We confess the one and only apostolic Catholic Church which does not decay but lasts forever. Even if the whole world went to war against it, it would still be victorious over all of the wicked attacks of the heterodox. Have courage! Our Master prepared us for this with his words, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” [John 16:33].</p> <p>1.4.54 Besides this we acknowledge the resurrection from the dead, of which our Lord Jesus was the first-fruits [1 Cor. 15:20]. He truly had a real body, not just the appearance of a body; he was born of Mary the mother of God; when the time had fully come he lived among humans for the forgiveness of their sins; he was crucified and buried—none of this decreased his divinity in any way; he rose from the dead, was taken up to heaven, and he sat down at the “right hand of the Majesty” [Heb. 9:26].</p> <p>1.4.55 In this letter I have only partially mentioned these things. As I said before, it would be tiresome to talk about each point even briefly since you are pious and diligent enough that you know them. These things we teach, these things we preach. These are the doctrines of the apostolic Church—we are ready to die for them and we pay no mind to those who would force us to give them up. We will never turn away from the hope that we have in them, even if they try to force us by torture.</p> <p>1.4.56 Both the people who oppose Arius and Achillas and also those who fight against the truth with them have been driven from the church. They have all become hostile to our godly doctrine, just like the blessed Paul said, “If</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, let him be cursed (<i>anathema</i>),” even if he pretends to be an angel from heaven [Gal 1:8-9].</p> <p>1.4.57 So, since they have been condemned by the brothers, no one should receive them or anything that they say or write. They are all lying babblers who are unable to speak the truth.</p> <p>1.4.58 They travel around to different cities, pretending to come in friendship and in the name of peace. They are running around for no other reason than to give and receive fake letters that defend and flatter themselves. By doing this they deceive a few “weak women who are loaded down with sins” [2 Tim. 3:6].</p> <p>1.4.59 My beloved and likeminded brothers, reject these people! They dared to do these things against Christ, they publicly mocked Christianity, and they keep trying to give false information before the courts. During this time of peace, they have tried to stir up persecution against us. They have broken down the inexpressible mystery of how Christ is begotten. Work together and be courageous against their insanity just like our fellow ministers, who are filled with anger and wrote a letter to me against them and also signed our letter condemning them. I have sent these letters to you through my son Apion, the deacon. They have the signatures of everyone in Egypt and Thebaid, Libya, the Pentapolis, Syria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Asia, Cappadocia, and the surrounding areas. I hope you will follow their example when you receive it.</p> <p>1.4.60 I have tried many times to win back those who have been led astray, and I have found the best solution is for us to show that we fellow-ministers are united. If we do this we will quickly bring the lay people who have been deceived back to repentance. So greet each other in the brotherhood that you have. I pray that you will be strengthened in the Lord, my friends, and that I can enjoy the support of your hearts being filled with the love of Christ.</p> <p>1.4.61 Here are the names of those who have been</p>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
		<p>condemned as heretics: Among the presbyters, Arius; among the deacons, Achillas, Euzoius, Aethales, Lucius, Sarmatas, Julius, Menas, another Arius, and Helladius.”⁴</p> <p>1.4.62a Alexander wrote similar letters to Philogonius, leader of the church of Antioch, to Eustathius who was faithfully at the helm of the church of the Beroeans, and to all those who stood up for the doctrines of the Apostles.</p>
Constantine sends Hosius East to unite the Church concerning Arianism and Easter		
	1.16.1a After there had been many councils held in Egypt, and the dispute had still continued to escalate in violence,	
1.7.1a When the emperor was informed of these disorders, he was very deeply grieved.	1.16.1b ...word of the conflict reached the palace, and Constantine was greatly troubled; for just at this period, when the religion was beginning to be more generally spread, many were deterred from embracing Christianity by the difference in doctrines.	1.7.1 When the all-wise emperor had heard about these things....
1.17b He regarded them as a personal misfortune and immediately exerted himself in extinguishing the inferno which had been kindled. So he sent a letter to Alexander and Arius by a trustworthy person named Hosius, the bishop of Cordova, in Spain. The emperor was greatly endeared to this man and held him in the highest esteem.	1.16.5 The emperor eagerly tried to remove both these causes of dissension from the church; and thinking he might be able to remove the evil before it grew to greater proportions, he sent one who was honored for his faith, his virtuous life, and most approved in those former times for his confessions about this doctrine, to reconcile those who were divided on account of doctrine in Egypt, and those who in the East differed about the Passover. This man was Hosius, bishop of Cordova.	1.7.1b ...he tried, as a first step, to stop them at their source. He therefore dispatched to Alexandria a messenger famous for his sharp mind, giving him letters in the attempt to extinguish the dispute, and expecting to reconcile the disputants.
<p>1.8.2 Moreover another earlier source of local unrest continued to exist there and to trouble the churches, —the dispute in regard to Easter, which only was carried on in the regions of the East. This arose because some wished to celebrate the festival more according to the Jewish tradition; while others preferred to commemorate it in the way Christians did it throughout the world.</p> <p>1.8.3 This difference about the festival, however, did not</p>	1.16.4b Constantine was also deeply troubled at the diversity of opinion which prevailed concerning the celebration of Easter. For some of the cities in the East differed on this subject, even though it did not prevent them from communing with each another. They celebrated the festival more in line with the manner of the Jews, and, as was natural by this difference, this detracted from the splendor of the festival celebration.	

⁴ Translation from NPNF2 vol. 3, p. 35-41, first adapted by AJW, revised by JAB, <http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/urkunde-14>

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
cause any separation in their fellowship, although this disagreement produced a gloomier celebration.		
324 - Constantine's letter to Alexander and Arius		
<p>1.7.2a It will not be out of place to introduce here a portion of this letter, the whole of which is given in Eusebius's <i>Life of Constantine</i>.</p>	<p>1.16.2 The emperor openly charged Arius and Alexander with having originated this disturbance. He wrote to rebuke them for having made a controversy public which it was in their power to have buried, and for having contentiously stirred up an issue which ought never to have been brought up, or upon which, at least, their opinions ought to have been presented quietly. He told them that they ought not to have separated from others on account of their differences of opinion on certain points of doctrine.</p> <p>1.16.3 For when it comes to God's divine plans men ought of necessity to hold to one and the same belief; but precision on such questions, especially if they could not come to a common understanding, must be kept private as reason dictates. He exhorted them to put away all loose talk about such points, and to be of one mind; for he had been not a little grieved, and on this account he had given up his intention of visiting the cities of the East.</p> <p>1.16.4a He wrote in this way to Alexander and to Arius, reproving and exhorting them both.</p>	
<p>1.7.2b The Victorious and Great Emperor Constantine to Alexander and to Arius.</p> <p>1.7.3 I am informed that the present controversy between you originated as follows. You, Alexander, inquired of your priests what each thought about a certain passage written in the Law of God, but rather it was on a passage about some vain question; and you, Arius, rashly expressed a view of the matter which should never have come to mind, or when it did enter your mind, you should immediately have given it a quiet burial. Because this dispute thus flared up among you, it has resulted in the refusal of communion, the separation of God's most holy people into two factions, and a division in the harmony of the common body.</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>1.7.4 Therefore, let each of you show consideration for the other by listening to the impartial exhortation of your fellow-servant. And what counsel does he give? That from the beginning it was neither appropriate to ask such a question, nor to answer it when it had been asked.</p> <p>1.7.5 For there is no law that demands the investigation of such subjects, but they result for the idle and useless talk of leisure. And even if they should take place in order to exercise our natural faculties, we ought yet confine them to our own contemplation and not incautiously expound them in public assemblies, nor thoughtlessly to trust them to everyone's ears. Indeed how few people are capable either of adequately explaining, or even accurately understanding the significance of matters so vast and profound! And even if anyone should be thought able to properly accomplish this, how large a portion of the people would he convince? Or who can grapple with the subtleties of such investigations without danger of lapsing into error?</p> <p>1.7.6 On such topics, therefore it is fitting that we bridle our talkativeness, lest either because our weak natures make us incompetent to explain the subject proposed, or because the slow minds of our hearers make them unable to understand clearly what we are trying to teach; either one or the other of these failures will necessarily result in blasphemy or schism.</p> <p>1.7.7 Therefore, let both the unguarded question of the one and the careless answer of the other, procure equal pardon from each one of you. You have kindled no reason for dispute which bears upon any of the most important precepts contained in the Law; nor have you introduced any new heresy relating to the worship of God; but you both hold one and the same judgment on those points which have been agreed on for fellowship.</p> <p>1.7.8 Moreover, while you are thus contending with each other over some small and even extremely minute points, it is unsuitable for you to have charge over so many people of God, when you are divided in your opinions: and not only is it unbecoming, but it is also believed to be</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>altogether impermissible. I will now use a humbler example to remind you of your duty.</p> <p>1.7.9 You are well aware that even the philosophers themselves are united under one teaching, even though they often still differ from each other on some parts of their theories. For even if they part company on the highest manifestations of knowledge, they still come to agreement again in order to maintain the unity of their body. Now, if this happens among them, how much more just is it for you, who have been appointed as servants of the Most High God, to be of one mind with one another in a religious affair of this kind.</p> <p>1.7.10 But let us examine with closer consideration, and deeper attention, what we have already stated. Is it proper that, because of your insignificant and vain dispute about words, brothers should be set against brothers; and that our honored gatherings should be rent by unholy quarrels, all because of our rows with one another over things so unimportant and in no way essential? These quarrels are worthy of the common masses and more consistent with infantile thoughtlessness than suitable to the intelligence of priests and wise men. Let us willingly turn aside from the temptations of the devil.</p> <p>1.7.11 The great God and Savior of us all has stretched out a common light to everyone. Under his providence, allow me, his servant, to bring this effort of mine to a successful end, so that by my exhortation, service, and earnest admonition, I might lead you, his people, back to the unity of fellowship.</p> <p>1.7.12 For since, as I have said, there is but one faith among you, and one understanding of the true religion among you, and since the precept of the law, in all its parts, combines all in one purpose of soul, do not let this diversity of opinion, which has raised up dissension among you, by any means cause discord and schism; for it does not affect the power of the law as a whole.</p> <p>1.7.13 Now, I say these things, not so as to compel you all to see exactly alike on this very insignificant subject of</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>controversy, whatever its real nature may be. For the dignity of your gatherings can be preserved unaffected, and the same fellowship with all be retained, even though there should exist among you some dissimilarity of sentiment on unimportant matters. For, of course, we do not all desire the same thing in every respect; nor does one unvarying nature, or standard of judgment live inside each of us.</p> <p>1.7.14 Therefore, in regard to the divine plan, let there be one faith, one sentiment, and one judgment concerning the Godhead: but as for those minute investigations which you enter into among yourselves, even if you should not share the same conclusions about them, they should remain a matter of your own mental reflections, kept in the secret recesses of your mind.</p> <p>1.7.15 Let then an inexpressible and special bond of common friendship, with faith in the truth, reverence for God, and a devout observance of his law, remain unshaken among you. Resume your mutual friendship and grace; restore to the entire populace their customary embraces;</p> <p>1.7.16 and You yourselves, prify as it were your own souls, and again grant recognition to one another. For often friendship becomes even sweeter when the reconciliation takes place after the removal of the causes of animosity.</p> <p>1.7.17 In this way restore tranquil days and peaceful nights to me, so that some pleasure in the pure light may be preserved for me also, and a cheerful serenity for the rest of my life. Otherwise, I will be forced to groan with constant tears, and I will not be able to pass the rest of my earthly existence in peace.</p> <p>1.7.18 For while the people of God (I speak of my fellow-servants) are cut off from one another by such an unreasonable and wicked spirit of contention, how is it possible for me to maintain my usual equanimity? But in order that you might have some idea of how great my grief is about this unfortunate conflict, listen to what I am about to say.</p> <p>1.7.19 On my recent arrival at the city of Nicomedia, it</p>		

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
<p>was my intention immediately after to proceed into the East: but while I was hastening toward you, and had advanced a considerable distance on my way, I got news about this affair and this totally changed my plans. For I could not bear to see with my own eyes a condition of things such as I could scarcely bear to hear about.</p> <p>1.7.20 Therefore, by your reconciliation, open again to me the road to the East which you have blocked by your conflicts with one another. Allow me soon to gaze upon both you and all the rest of the people rejoicing together. And, expressing my thanks to the Divine Being for the widespread harmony and freedom of all parties, through the cordial agreement of your views.</p> <p>1.8.1 Such admirable and wise counsel did the emperor's letter contain. But the evil had become too strong both for the encouragements of the emperor, and for the authority of the one who carried his letter: for neither Alexander nor Arius were softened by this appeal; but there was disorder, strife and tumult among all the people.</p>		
325 - Constantine summons a council at Nicaea		
<p>1.8.4 Because the emperor saw how both of these problems troubled the church, he organized a General Council, summoning all the bishops by letter to meet him at Nicaea in Bithynia. In response, the bishops assembled out of the various provinces and cities; This is what Eusebius Pamphilus writes about them, word for word, in his third book of the life of Constantine:</p>	<p>1.17.1 However it became apparent that, contrary to the emperor's hopes, the affair continued to expand and the contention was too great for reconciliation, so that his emissary sent to make peace returned without having accomplished his mission. Then Constantine convened a synod at Nicaea, in Bithynia, and wrote to the most eminent men of the churches in every country, directing them to be there on an appointed day.</p>	<p>1.7.2 But when his hopes had been frustrated, the emperor proceeded to summon the celebrated council of Nicaea, pledging his word that the bishops and their officials should be furnished with asses, mules, and horses for their journey at the public expense. When all those who were capable of enduring the fatigue of the journey had arrived at Nicaea, he went there himself, with both the wish of seeing the multitude of bishops, and the burning desire to maintain unity among them. He immediately arranged that they should be generously supplied with all they needed.</p>