

Anonymous Church History (CPG 6034)

[often falsely attributed to Gelasius of Cyzicus]

Translated by Nathanael Jensen and Robert Read from the text of G. C. Hansen¹ Copyright 2017

Dialogue with a philosopher at the Council of Nicaea

Book 2.14.1 – 2.25.2

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,'¹ 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.

2.14.6 The phrase, 'Let us make,' expresses the steadfastness² and immutability of the Father and the Son's divine nature. The image of God is simple and not composite, being fire by nature."³

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'⁴ 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 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 Eupychius:* "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.’¹

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 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,'² prophesying about the Jews, 'For³ 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].⁴ 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 as both autonomous and the creator of man. (I am speaking about the healing of the man blind from birth, which he accomplished as the Son of God.⁵

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.⁶

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 [οἰκονομία] 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].¹ 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.’

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.’²

2.17.8 A little later it says, ‘But the omniscient knows it; he found it by his insight.’³ 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.’⁴

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”’ [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.’⁵ In the Secret Words of Moses,⁶ 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 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.⁷

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,⁸ says through Solomon, ‘The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for his works,’ and so on.

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.’¹ 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.

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,¹ taking on a body for the body.² God the Word took the body on like a cloud so that he would not consume the created beings of the world,³ 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 [οικονομία].

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’:

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. *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.’¹

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 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 Ariomaniacs¹ 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.”

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.¹ 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].²

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.

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,³ 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 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 beginning⁴ 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.