

Council of Nicaea Documents (English) – Part 7

Sources Used

Excerpts from the *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (GCS) and *Athanasius Werke* series are used by permission. Most other texts and translations are in the public domain.

Click [here](#) for a key to the FCC (fourthcentury.com) translators.

This work is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

Anonymous Church History (pseudo-Gelasius) (CPG 6034)

Greek text: *Anonyme Kirchengeschichte (Galezius Cyzicenus, CPG 6034)*, ed.

Günther Christian Hansen. GCS N.F. 9 (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 2002).

English translation by FCC (NJ and RR).

Athanasius, Letter to the Bishops of Africa (CPG 2133)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.8, ed. H.C. Brennecke et al. (Berlin, 2000).

English translation by A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:488-494), updated by FCC (AGC).

On the Nicene Definition (de Decretis) (CPG 2120)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1-2:1-45, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin, 1935).

English translation by J. H. Newman and A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:149-172), updated by FCC (AGC).

On the Synods of Ariminum and Seleucia (de Synodis) (CPG 2128)

Greek text: *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.6-7, ed. H.-G. Opitz (Berlin, 1940).

English translation by J. H. Newman and A. Robertson (NPNF² 4:48-480), updated by FCC (AGC).

Eusebius of Caesarea, Life of Constantine (CPG 3496)

Greek text: *Eusebius Werke 2. Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. E. Schwartz. GCS 9.1 (Leipzig, 1903).

English translation by A.C. McGiffert (NPNF² 1:73-404), updated by FCC (AGC).

Gelasius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 3521)

Greek Text and English translation: *Ecclesiastical History: The Extant Fragments*

With an Appendix containing the Fragments from Dogmatic Writings. GCS, ed. M.

Wallraff, J. Stutz, and N. Marinides. Translated by N. Marinides. (De Gruyter, 2018).

Jerome, Dialogue Against the Luciferians (CPL 608)

Latin Text: *Patrologia Latina* vol. 23, coll. 153-182B. ed. J.P. Migne, (Paris, 1883).

English translation by W.H. Fremantle (NPNF², 6:319-34), updated by FCC (AGC).

Philostorgius, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6032)

Greek Text: *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte.*, ed. J. Bidez. GCS 21 (Leipzig, 1913).

English translation by FCC (AGC).

Rufinus of Aquileia, Ecclesiastical History

Latin text: *Eusebius Werke 2.2. Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. E. Schwartz and T.

Mommsen (Leipzig, 1908).

English translation by FCC (AGC).

Socrates, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6028)

Greek Text: ed. G.C. Hansen. GCS N.F. 1, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1995.

English translation by A.C. Zenos (NPNF² 2:1-178).

Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6030)

Greek Text: G.C. Hansen, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd ed., GCS N.F. 4. (Berlin 1995)

English translation by C. Hartranft (NPNF² 2:179-427).

Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History (CPG 6222)

Greek Text: *Theodoret: Kirchengeschichte.* ed. Parmentier, Léon, GCS N.F. 5.

Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1998.

English translation by B. Jackson (NPNF² 3:33-159).

20 May-July 325 – The duration of the council	
Socrates	Anonymous Church History
1.13.12b This council was convened (as we have discovered from the notation of the date prefixed to the record of the council) during the consulate of Paulinus and Julian, on the 20th day of May, in the 636th year from the reign of Alexander the Macedonian. Accordingly, the work of the council was accomplished. It should be noted that after the council the emperor went into the western parts of the empire.	2.37.28 In the sixth month of the sixteenth year of his reign, as this book explained earlier using the ancient accounts, Constantine assembled the holy council of bishops. In his twentieth year they dissolved the council meeting, and each returned to his parish, as we said before.
Athanasius’ Letter to the African Bishops	
Theodoret	
1.8.6b Athanasius, his fellow combatant, the champion of the truth, who succeeded the celebrated Alexander in the episcopate, added the following in a letter addressed to the Africans. ¹	
Athanasius, <i>Letter to the Bishops of Africa</i>	
<p>1 “The letters are sufficient which were written by our beloved fellow minister Damasus, bishop of Great Rome, and the large number of bishops who assembled along with him. Equally so are those of the other councils which were held, both in Gaul and in Italy, concerning the sound faith which Christ gave us, the apostles preached, and the fathers, who met at Nicaea from all this world of ours, have handed down. For a great stir was made at that time about the Arian heresy, in order that they who had fallen into it might be reclaimed, while its inventors might be made manifest. To that council, accordingly, the whole world has long ago agreed, and now, many councils having been held, all men have been put in mind, both in Dalmatia and Dardania, Macedonia, Epirus and Greece, Crete and the other islands, Sicily, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Lycia, and Isauria, all Egypt and the Libyas, and most of the Arabians have come to know it, and marveled at those who signed it, inasmuch as even if there were left among them any bitterness springing up from the root of the Arians (we mean Auxentius, Ursacius, Valens and their fellows), by these letters they have been cut off and isolated. The confession agreed upon at Nicaea was, we say once more, sufficient and enough by itself for the subversion of all irreligious heresy and for the security and furtherance of the doctrine of the church. But since we have heard that certain people wishing to oppose it are attempting to cite a council supposedly held at Ariminum and are eagerly striving that it should prevail rather than the other, we think it worthwhile to write and remind you not to endure anything of the sort, for this is nothing else but a second growth of the Arian heresy. For what else do they wish for, those who reject the council held against it (namely the Nicene), if not that the cause of Arius should prevail? What then do such men deserve but to be called Arians and to share the punishment of the Arians? For they were not afraid of God, who says, ‘Do not remove the eternal boundaries which your fathers placed’ [Prov. 22:28], and ‘He that speaks against father or mother, let him be put to death’ [Exod. 21:17]. They were not in awe of their fathers, who declared that they who hold the opposite of their confession should be anathema.</p> <p>2 For this was why an ecumenical council has been held at Nicaea, 318 bishops assembling to discuss the faith on account of the Arian heresy, namely, in order that local councils should no more be held on the subject of the faith, but that, even if held, they should not remain in force. For what does that council lack, that anyone should seek to innovate? Dear friends, it is full of piety and has filled the whole world with it. Indians have acknowledged it, and all Christians of other barbarous nations. Vain then is the labor of those who have often made attempts against it. For already the men we refer to have held ten or more councils, changing their ground at each, and while taking away some things from earlier decisions, in later ones make changes and additions. And so far they have gained nothing by writing, erasing, and using force, not knowing that ‘every plant that the Heavenly Father has not planted shall be plucked up’ [Matt. 15:13]. But ‘the word of the Lord,’ which came through the ecumenical council at Nicaea, ‘abides forever’ [1 Pet. 1:25]. For if one compares number with number, those who met at Nicaea are more than those at local councils, inasmuch as the whole is greater than the part. But if a man wishes to discern the reason for the council at Nicaea, and that of the large number subsequently held by these men, he will find that while there was a reasonable cause for the former, the others were convened by force, by reason of hatred and contention. For the former council was summoned</p>	

¹ Theodoret cites only a portion of the letter. Other relevant sections from Athanasius’ letter have been added.

because of the Arian heresy, and because of Easter, because those in Syria, Cilicia and Mesopotamia differed from us and kept the feast at the same season as the Jews. But thanks to the Lord, harmony has resulted not only in regard to the faith, but also in regard to the sacred feast. And that was the reason for the council at Nicaea. But the subsequent ones were without number and were all planned in opposition to the ecumenical council...

4 ...If then any cite the council of Ariminum, firstly let them point out the deposition of the above persons and what the bishops wrote, namely that none should seek anything beyond what had been agreed upon by the fathers at Nicaea, nor cite any council save that one. This they suppress, but they make much of what was done by violence in Thrace, thus showing that they are dissemblers of the Arian heresy and aliens from the sound faith. And again, if a man were to examine and compare the great council itself and those held by these people, he would discover the piety of the one and the folly of the others. They who assembled at Nicaea did so not after being deposed, and they confessed that the Son was of the essence of the Father. But the others, after being deposed again and again, and once more at Ariminum itself, ventured to write that it ought not be said that the Son had essence or subsistence. This enables us to see, brothers, that they of Nicaea breathe the spirit of Scripture, in that God says in Exodus, ‘I am that I am’ [Exod. 3:14], and through Jeremiah, ‘Who is in his substance and has seen his word’ [Jer. 23:18], and just below, ‘if they had stood in my subsistence and heard my words’ [Jer. 23:22]. Now subsistence is essence, and means nothing else but very being, which Jeremiah calls existence, in the words, ‘and they heard not the voice of existence’ [Jer. 9:10]. For subsistence, and essence, is existence; for it is, or in other words exists. Perceiving this, Paul also wrote to the Hebrews, ‘who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his subsistence’ [Heb. 1:3]. But the others, who think they know the Scriptures and call themselves wise, and do not choose to speak of subsistence in God (for thus they wrote at Ariminum and at other councils of theirs), were surely with justice deposed, saying as they did, like the fool did in his heart, ‘God is not’ [Ps. 14:1]. And again the fathers taught at Nicaea that the Son and Word is not a creature, nor made, having read ‘all things were made through him’ [John 1:3], and ‘in him were all things created’ and ‘come together’ [Col. 1:16-17]. Meanwhile these men, Arians rather than Christians, in their other councils have ventured to call him a creature, and one of the things that are made, things of which he himself is the creator and maker. For if ‘through him all things were made’ and he too is a creature, he would be the creator of himself. And how can what is being created create, or he that is creating be created?

Theodoret

1.8.7 “The bishops convened in council to refute the impious assertions invented by the Arians, that the Son was created out of what was nonexistent, that he is a creature and created being, that there was a period in which he was not, and that he is changeable by nature. In accordance with the holy Scriptures, they agreed to write that the Son is by nature only-begotten of God, Word, Power, and sole Wisdom of the Father; that he is, as John said, ‘the true God’ [John 17:3], and, as Paul has written, ‘the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the person of the Father’ [Heb. 1:3]. The followers of Eusebius, drawn aside by their own vile doctrine, then began to say one to another, ‘Let us agree, because we are also of God.

1.8.8 “There is but one God, by whom are all things,” and “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God.” They also gave particular attention to what is contained in *The Shepherd*: ‘Believe above all that there is one God, who created and fashioned all things, and made them to be out of that which is not.’

1.8.9 But the bishops saw through their evil design and impious fraud, gave a clearer explanation of the words ‘of God,’ and wrote that the Son is of the substance of God. While the creatures, which do not in any

Athanasius, Letter to the Bishops of Africa

The bishops convened in council to refute the impious assertions invented by the Arians, that the Son was created out of what was nonexistent, that he is a creature and created being, that there was a period in which he was not, and that he is changeable by nature. In accordance with the holy Scriptures, they agreed to write that the Son is by nature only-begotten of God, Word, Power, and sole Wisdom of the Father; that he is, as John said, ‘the true God’ [John 17:3], and, as Paul has written, ‘the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the person of the Father’ [Heb. 1:3]. The followers of Eusebius, drawn aside by their own vile doctrine, then began to say one to another, ‘Let us agree, because we are also of God. “There is but one God, by whom are all things,” and “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God.”’ They also gave particular attention to what is contained in *The Shepherd*: ‘Believe above all that there is one God, who created and fashioned all things, and made them to be out of that which is not.’² But the bishops saw through their evil design and impious fraud, gave a clearer explanation of the words ‘of God,’ and wrote that the Son is of the substance of God. While the creatures, which do not in any way derive their existence of or from themselves, are said to be of God, only the Son is said to be of the substance of the Father. This is unique to the only-begotten Son, the true Word of the Father. This is the

² *Shepherd of Hermas*, 26.1

way derive their existence of or from themselves, are said to be of God, only the Son is said to be of the substance of the Father.

1.8.10 This is unique to the only-begotten Son, the true Word of the Father. This is the reason why the bishops wrote that he is of the substance of the Father. But when the Arians, who seemed few in number, were again interrogated by the bishops to see if they admitted ‘that the Son is not a creature, but power, and sole wisdom, and eternal unchangeable image of the Father, and that he is very God,’ the Eusebians were noticed nodding to each other, saying, ‘These things apply to us as well. For it is said that we are “the image and glory of God” [1 Cor. 11:7], and “We are always alive” [2 Cor. 4:11].

1.8.11 There are, also, they said, many powers, ‘for it is written, “All the power of God went out of the land of Egypt” [Exod. 12:41]. The worm and the locust are said to be “a great power” [Joel 2:25]. And elsewhere it is written, “The God of powers is with us, our helper is the God of Jacob” [Ps. 46:7]. To which may be added that we are God’s own not naturally, but because the Son called us “brothers.” The declaration that Christ is “the true God” does not distress us, for the one who came into being is true.’

1.8.12 This was the corrupt opinion of the Arians. But at that time the bishops, when they discovered their deceitfulness, collected from Scripture those passages which say of Christ that he is the glory, the fountain, the stream, and the express image of the person, and they quoted the following words: ‘In your light we shall see light’ [Ps. 36:9], and likewise, ‘I and the Father are one’ [John 10:30].

1.8.13 Then, with still greater clearness, they briefly declared that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father; for this, indeed, is the meaning of the passages which have been quoted.

1.8.14 The complaint of the Arians, that these precise words are not to be found in Scripture, is proved groundless by their own practice, for their own impious assertions are not taken from Scripture (for it is not written that the Son comes from what was not, and that there was a time when he was not), and yet they complain about being condemned by expressions which, though not actually in Scripture, are in accordance with true religion. They themselves, on the other hand, as though they had found their words on a dunghill, uttered things that truly came from worldly thinking. The bishops, on the other hand, did not find their expressions for themselves, but received their testimony from the fathers and wrote accordingly.

1.8.15 Indeed, there were bishops of old, nearly one hundred and thirty years ago, both of the great city of Rome and of our own city, who condemned those who asserted that the Son is a creature and that he is not *homoousios* with the Father. Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, was acquainted with these facts. He at one time favored the Arian heresy, but later signed the confession of faith of the Council of Nicaea.

1.8.16 He wrote to the people of his diocese, maintaining that the word *homoousios* was used by illustrious bishops and learned writers as a term for expressing the divinity of the Father and of the Son.”

reason why the bishops wrote that he is of the substance of the Father. But when the Arians, who seemed few in number, were again interrogated by the bishops to see if they admitted ‘that the Son is not a creature, but power, and sole wisdom, and eternal unchangeable image of the Father, and that he is very God,’ the Eusebians were noticed nodding to each other, saying, ‘These things apply to us as well. For it is said that we are “the image and glory of God,” [1 Cor. 11:7] and “We are always alive” [2 Cor. 4:11]. There are also, they said, many powers, ‘for it is written, “All the power of God went out of the land of Egypt” [Exod. 12:41]. The worm and the locust are said to be “a great power” [Joel 2:25]. And elsewhere it is written, “The God of powers is with us, our helper is the God of Jacob” [Ps. 46:7]. To which may be added that we are God’s own not naturally, but because the Son called us “brothers.” The declaration that Christ is “the true God” does not distress us, for the one who came into being is true.’

6 This was the corrupt opinion of the Arians. But at that time the bishops, when they discovered their deceitfulness, collected from Scripture those passages which say of Christ that he is the glory, the fountain, the stream, and the express image of the person, and they quoted the following words: ‘In your light we shall see light’ [Ps. 36:9], and likewise, ‘I and the Father are one’ [John 10:30]. Then, with still greater clearness, they briefly declared that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father; for this, indeed, is the meaning of the passages which have been quoted. The complaint of the Arians, that these precise words are not to be found in Scripture, is proved groundless by their own practice, for their own impious assertions are not taken from Scripture (for it is not written that the Son comes from what was not, and that there was a time when he was not), and yet they complain about being condemned by expressions which, though not actually in Scripture, are in accordance with true religion. They themselves, on the other hand, as though they had found their words on a dunghill, uttered things that truly came from worldly thinking. The bishops, on the other hand, did not find their expressions for themselves, but received their testimony from the fathers and wrote accordingly. Indeed, there were bishops of old, nearly one hundred and thirty years ago, both of the great city of Rome and of our own city, who condemned those who asserted that the Son is a creature and that he is not *homoousios* with the Father. Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, was acquainted with these facts. He at one time favored the Arian heresy, but later signed the confession of faith of the Council of Nicaea. He wrote to the people of his diocese, maintaining that the word *homoousios* was used by illustrious bishops and learned writers as a term for expressing the divinity of the Father and of the Son.

Athanasius, Letter to the Bishops of Africa	
<p>11 ... For this council of Nicaea is in truth a proscription of every heresy. It also upsets those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit and call him a creature. For the fathers, after speaking of faith in the Son, immediately added, ‘And we believe in the Holy Spirit,’ in order that by confessing perfectly and fully the faith in the Holy Trinity they might make known the exact form of the faith of Christ and the teaching of the catholic church. For it is made clear both among you and among all, and no Christian can have a doubtful mind on the point, that our faith is not in the creature, but in one God, Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son, and in one Holy Spirit, one God, known in the holy and perfect Trinity. Because we are baptized into the Trinity and united in this Deity, we believe that we have also inherited the kingdom of the heavens in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom be glory and power to the Father for ever and ever. Amen.”</p>	
Theodoret	
<p>1.8.17 So these men concealed their madness because they feared the majority and gave their assent to the decisions of the council, thus drawing upon themselves the condemnation of the prophet, for the God of all cries out against them, “These people honor me with their lips, but in their hearts they are far from me” [Matt. 15:8].</p> <p>1.8.18 Theonas and Secundus, however, did not want to take this course and were excommunicated by unanimous agreement as men who lifted the Arian blasphemy above evangelical doctrine. The bishops then returned to the council and drew up twenty laws to regulate the discipline of the Church.</p>	
The decisions of the Council are transmitted throughout the world	
Gelasius	Anonymous Church History
	<p>2.37.31 I must add here only the following, which in my mind is not merely incidental but really quite relevant: the names of the bishops whom all the bishops jointly dispatched to the provinces throughout the world, who sent out letters from the council and the praiseworthy emperor to all the holy churches of God under heaven detailing the decisions of the council, to the glory of God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.</p>
<p>F14 (p. 117) Hosius, bishop of Corduba, for the holy churches of God in Rome, Spain, all Italy, and the other provinces beyond me up to the ocean, through the Roman priests Vito and Vincent accompanying him. Alexander of Alexandria, with Athanasius, then archdeacon, for the churches in all Egypt, Libya, the Pentapolis, and the neighboring regions up to the provinces of India. Macarius of Jerusalem, with Eusebius Pamphili, bishop of Caesarea, for the churches in Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia. Eustathius of great Antioch, for the churches in Coele Syria, all Mesopotamia, and both Cilicias. John the Persian, for the churches in all Persia and Greater India. Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, which is the ornament of our Lord’s church, for the churches in Cappadocia itself, Galatia, Diospontus, Paphlagonia, Pontus Polemoniacus, and Lesser and Greater Armenia. Theonas of Cyzicus, for the churches in Asia, the Hellespont, Lydia, and Caria, through his subordinate bishops Eutychiu of Smyrna and Marinus of Troas. Alexander of Thessalonica, through his subordinates, for the churches in Macedonia Prima and Secunda along with Greece, all of Europe, both Scythias, and all the churches in Illyricum, Thessaly, and Achaea.</p>	<p>2.38.1 Hosius, bishop of Corduba, for the holy churches of God in Rome, Spain, all Italy, and the other provinces beyond me up to the ocean, through the Roman priests Vito and Vincent accompanying him.</p> <p>2.38.2 Alexander of Alexandria, with Athanasius, then archdeacon, for the churches in all Egypt, Libya, the Pentapolis, and the neighboring regions up to the provinces of India.</p> <p>2.38.3 Macarius of Jerusalem, with Eusebius Pamphilus, bishop of Caesarea, for the churches in Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia.</p> <p>2.38.4 Eustathius of great Antioch, for the churches in Coele Syria, all Mesopotamia, and both Cilicias.</p> <p>2.38.5 John the Persian, for the churches in all Persia and Greater India.</p> <p>2.38.6 Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, which is the ornament of our Lord’s church, for the churches in Cappadocia itself, Galatia, Diospontus, Paphlagonia, Pontus Polemoniacus, and Lesser and Greater Armenia.</p> <p>2.38.7 Theonas of Cyzicus, for the churches in Asia, the Hellespont, Lydia, and Caria, through his subordinate bishops Eutychiu of Smyrna and Marinus of Troas.</p>

<p>Nunechius of Laodicea, for the churches in Phrygia Prima and Secunda. Protogenes, the admirable bishop of Sardica, for the churches in Dacia, Calabria, Dardania, and the neighboring regions. Caecilian of Carthage, for the holy churches of God in all the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and both Mauritanias. Pistus of Marcianopolis, for the churches in Mysia, the provinces of Athens and Gaul, and their neighboring cities. Alexander of Constantinople, then still a priest but later granted the bishopric of the local church, together with Paul, then still a lector, Alexander’s secretary, for the churches on all the islands of the Cyclades. All these holy apostolic men delivered the decisions of the holy great ecumenical council of Nicaea to all the holy churches of God under heaven and brought them to all parts of the world, as this book has just shown.</p>	<p>2.38.8 Alexander of Thessalonica, through his subordinates, for the churches in Macedonia Prima and Secunda along with Greece, all of Europe, both Scythias, and all the churches in Illyricum, Thessaly, and Achaea.</p> <p>2.38.9 Nunechius of Laodicea, for the churches in Phrygia Prima and Secunda.</p> <p>2.38.10 Protogenes, the admirable bishop of Sardica, for the churches in Dacia, Calabria, Dardania, and the neighboring regions.</p> <p>2.38.11 Caecilian of Carthage, for the holy churches of God in all the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and both Mauritanias.</p> <p>2.38.12 Pistus of Marcianopolis, for the churches in Mysia, the provinces of Athens and Gaul, and their neighboring cities.</p> <p>2.38.13 Alexander of Constantinople, then still a priest but later granted the bishopric of the local church, together with Paul, then still a lector, Alexander’s secretary, for the churches on all the islands of the Cyclades.</p> <p>2.38.14 All these holy apostolic men delivered the decisions of the holy great ecumenical Synod of Nicaea to all the holy churches of God under heaven and brought them to all parts of the world, as this book has just shown.</p>
---	--

Eustathius’ account of the Nicene Council

Theodoret

1.7.18 Eustathius, the famous bishop of Antioch, who has been already mentioned, when explaining the text in the Proverbs, “The Lord created me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” [Prov. 8:22], wrote against them, and refuted their blasphemy:

1.8.1 “I will now walk through in further detail how these different events occurred. What happened then? When a general council was summoned at Nicaea, about two hundred and seventy bishops were convened. There were, however, so many assembled that I cannot state their exact number, nor have I taken any great trouble to find out. When they began to investigate the nature of the faith, the formulation of Eusebius was brought forward, which contained undisguised evidence of his blasphemy.

1.8.2 Its public reading gave great grief to the audience because of its departure from the faith, while it inflicted incurable shame on the writer.

1.8.3 After the Eusebian gang had been clearly convicted and the impious writing had been torn up in the sight of all, some among them worked together, under the pretense of preserving peace, to silence all the ablest speakers. The Ariomaniacs, afraid that they would be ejected from the church by a council of so many bishops, sprang forward to anathematize and condemn the doctrines which had been condemned and unanimously signed the confession of faith.

1.8.4 Thus they retained possession of their episcopal seats through the most shameful deception, even though they should have been dismissed. They continue, sometimes secretly, and sometimes openly, to patronize the condemned doctrines, plotting against the truth with various arguments. Wholly committed to sowing these wicked weeds, they shrink from the scrutiny of the intelligent, avoid the observant, and attack the preachers of godliness.

1.8.5 But we do not believe that these atheists can in this way ever overcome the Deity. For though they ‘gird themselves’ they ‘shall be broken in pieces’ [Isaiah 8:9], according to the solemn prophecy of Isaiah.”

1.8.6a These are the words of the great Eustathius.

The reliability of Eusebius

Socrates

1.8.24 In his own words, that is the testimony of these things which Eusebius has left us in writing, and we have not randomly put it in here. Treating what he has said as an authority, we have introduced it here for the legitimacy of this history. We also have this aim in mind: If anyone condemns the faith confessed at this council of Nicaea as false, we will be unaffected by it and not believe Sabinus the Macedonian, who calls all those who came together there ignoramuses and simpletons.

1.8.25 For this Sabinus, who was bishop of the Macedonians at Heraclea in Thrace and made a collection of the decrees published by various councils of bishops, has treated those who assembled in Nicaea with contempt and derision. He does not understand that when he does so he is charging Eusebius himself with ignorance, who, when under examination, made an identical confession. And in fact some things he has willfully passed over, others he has corrupted, and he has put a construction favorable to his own views on everything.

1.8.26 On the one hand, he commends Eusebius Pamphilus as a trustworthy witness and praises the emperor as capable at stating Christian doctrines. On the other hand, he still brands the faith which was declared at Nicaea as something given out by people who had no knowledge of the matter. In this way he willingly condemns the words of a man whom he himself pronounces to be a wise and true witness.

1.8.27 For Eusebius says that of the ministers of God who were present at the Nicene council, some were eminent for the word of wisdom and others for the strictness of their lives, and that the emperor himself, who was present and leading everyone into a consensus, established unity of judgment and agreement of opinion among them.

1.8.28a Of Sabinus, however, we will make further mention as occasion may require.