On the Councils, or the Faith of the Easterns

Hilary of Poitiers (c. AD 310–367)

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To the most dearly loved and blessed brethren our fellow-bishops of the province of Germania Prima and Germania Secunda, Belgica Prima and Belgica Secunda, Lugdunensis Prima and Lugdunensis Secunda, and the province of Aquitania, and the province of Novempopulana, and to the laity and clergy of Tolosa in the Provincia Narbonensis, and to the bishops of the provinces of Britain, Hilary the servant of Christ, eternal salvation in God our Lord. I had determined, beloved brethren, to send no letter to you concerning the affairs of the Church in consequence of your prolonged silence. For when I had by writing from several cities of the Roman world frequently informed you of the faith and efforts of our religions brethren, the bishops of the East, and bow the Evil One profiting by the discords of the times had with envenomed lips and tongue hissed out his deadly doctrine, I was afraid. I feared lest while so many bishops were involved in the serious danger of disastrous sin or disastrous mistake, you were holding your peace because a defiled and sin-stained conscience tempted you to despair. Ignorance I could not attribute to you; you had been too often warned. I judged therefore that I also ought to observe silence towards you, carefully remembering the Lord's saying, that those who after a first and second entreaty, and in spite of the witness of the Church, neglect to hear, are to be unto us as heathen men and publicans .

2. But when I received the letters that your blessed faith inspired, and understood that their slow arrival and their paucity were due to the remoteness and secrecy of my place of exile, I rejoiced in the Lord that you had continued pure and undefiled by the contagion of any execrable heresy, and that you were united with me in faith and spirit, and so were partakers of that exile into which Saturninus, fearing his own conscience, had thrust me after beguiling the Emperor, and after that you had denied him communion for the whole three years ago until now. I equally rejoiced that the impious and infidel creed which was sent straightway to you from Sirmium was not only not accepted by you, but condemned as soon as reported and notified. I felt that it was now binding on me as a religious duty to write sound and faithful words to you as my fellow-bishops, who communicate with me in Christ. I, who through fear of what might have been could at one time only rejoice with my own conscience that I was free from all these errors, was now bound to express delight

at the purity of our common faith. Praise God for the unshaken stability of your noble hearts, for your firm house built on the foundation of the faithful rock, for the undefiled and unswerving constancy of a will that has proved immaculate! For since the good profession at the Council of Biterrae, where I denounced the ringleaders of this heresy with some of you for my witnesses, it has remained and still continues to remain, pure, unspotted and scrupulous.

3. You awaited the noble triumph of a holy and steadfast perseverance without yielding to the threats, the powers and the assaults of Saturninus: and when all the waves of awakening blasphemy struggled against God, you who still remain with me faithful in Christ did not give way when threatened with the onset of heresy, and now by meeting that onset you have broken all its violence. Yes, brethren, you have conquered, to the abundant joy of those who share your faith: and your unimpaired constancy gained the double glory of keeping a pure conscience and giving an authoritative example. For the fame of your unswerving and unshaken faith has moved certain Eastern bishops, late though it be, to some shame for the heresy fostered and supported in those regions: and when they heard of the godless confession composed at Sirmium, they contradicted its audacious authors by passing certain decrees themselves. And though they withstood them not without in their turn raising some scruples, and inflicting some wounds upon a sensitive piety, yet they withstood them so vigorously as to compel those who at Sirmium yielded to the views of Potamius and Hosius as accepting and confirming those views, to declare their ignorance and error in so doing; in fact they had to condemn in writing their own action. And they subscribed with the express purpose of condemning something else in advance .

4. But your invincible faith keeps the honourable distinction of conscious worth, and content with repudiating crafty, vague, or hesitating action, safely abides in Christ, preserving the profession of its liberty. You abstain from communion with those who oppose their bishops with their blasphemies and keep them in exile, and do not by assenting to any crafty subterfuge bring yourselves under a charge of unrighteous judgment. For since we all suffered deep and grievous pain at the actions of the wicked against God, within our boundaries alone is communion in Christ to be found from the time that the Church began to be harried by disturbances such as the expatriation of bishops, the deposition of priests, the intimidation of the people, the threatening of the faith, and the determination of the meaning of Christ's doctrine by human will and power. Your resolute faith does not pretend to be ignorant of these facts or profess that it can tolerate them, perceiving that by the act of hypocritical assent it would bring itself before the bar of conscience.

5. And although in all your actions, past and present, you bear witness to the uninterrupted independence and security of your faith; yet in particular you prove your warmth and fervour of spirit by the fact that some of you whose letters have succeeded in reaching me have expressed a wish that I, unfit as I am, should notify to you what the Easterns have since said in their confessions of faith. They affectionately laid the additional burden upon me of indicating my sentiments on all their decisions. I know that my skill and learning are

inadequate, for I feel it most difficult to express in words my own belief as I understand it in my heart; far less easy must it be to expound the statements of others.

6. Now I beseech you by the mercy of the Lord, that as I will in this letter according to your desire write to you of divine things and of the witness of a pure conscience to our faith, no one will think to judge me by the beginning of my letter before he has read the conclusion of my argument. For it is unfair before the complete argument has been grasped, to conceive a prejudice on account of initial statements, the reason of which is yet unknown, since it is not with imperfect statements before us that we must make a decision for the sake of investigation, but on the conclusion for the sake of knowledge. I have some fear, not about you, as God is witness of my heart, but about some who in their own esteem are very cautious and prudent but do not understand the blessed apostle's precept not to think of themselves more highly than they ought : for I am afraid that they are unwilling to know all those facts, the complete account of which I will offer at the end, and at the same time they avoid drawing the true conclusion from the aforesaid facts. But whoever takes up these lines to read and examine them has only to be consistently patient with me and with himself and peruse the whole to its completion. Perchance all this assertion of my faith will result in those who conceal their heresy being unable to practise the deception they wish, and in true Catholics attaining the object which they desire.

7. Therefore I comply with your affectionate and urgent wish, and I have set down all the creeds which have been promulgated at different times and places since the holy Council of Nicaea, with my appended explanations of all the phrases and even words employed. If they be thought to contain anything faulty, no one can impute the fault to me: for I am only a reporter, as you wished me to be, and not an author. But if anything is found to be laid down in right and apostolic fashion, no one can doubt that it is no credit to the interpreter but to the originator. In any case I have sent you a faithful account of these transactions: it is for you to determine by the decision your faith inspires whether their spirit is Catholic or heretical.

8. For although it was necessary to reply to your letters, in which you offered me Christian communion with your faith, (and, moreover, certain of your number who were summoned to the Council which seemed pending in Bithynia did refuse with firm consistency of faith to hold communion with any but myself outside Gaul), it also seemed fit to use my episcopal office and authority, when heresy was so rife, in submitting to you by letter some godly and faithful counsel. For the word of God cannot be exiled as our bodies are, or so chained and bound that it cannot be imparted to you in any place. But when I had learnt that synods were to meet in Ancyra and Ariminum, and that one or two bishops from each province in Gaul would assemble there, I thought it especially needful that I, who am confined in the East, should explain and make known to you the grounds of those mutual suspicious which exist between us and the Eastern bishops, though some of you know those grounds; in order that whereas you had condemned and they had anathematized this heresy that spreads from Sirmium, you might nevertheless know with what confession of faith the Eastern bishops

had come to the same result that you had come to, and that I might prevent you, whom I hope to see as shining lights in future Councils, differing, through a mistake about words, even a hair's-breadth from pure Catholic belief, when your interpretation of the apostolic faith is identically the same and you are Catholics at heart.

9. Now it seems to me right and appropriate, before I begin my argument about suspicions and dissensions as to words, to give as complete an account as possible of the decisions of the Eastern bishops adverse to the heresy compiled at Sirmium. Others have published all these transactions very plainly, but much obscurity is caused by a translation from Greek into Latin, and to be absolutely literal is to be sometimes partly unintelligible. 10. You remember that in the Blasphemia, lately written at Sirmium, the object of the authors was to proclaim the Father to be the one and only God of all things, and deny the Son to be God: and while they determined that men should hold their peace about o9moiou/sion and o9moiou/sion, they determined that God the Son should be asserted to be born not of God the Father, but of nothing, as the first creatures were, or of another essence than God, as the later creatures. And further that in saying the Father was greater in honour, dignity, splendour and majesty, they implied that the Son lacked those things which constitute the Father's superiority. Lastly, that while it is affirmed that His birth is unknowable, we were commanded by this Compulsory Ignorance Act not to know that He is of God: just as if it could be commanded or decreed that a man should know what in future he is to be ignorant of, or be ignorant of what he already knows. I have subjoined in full this pestilent and godless blasphemy, though against my will, to facilitate a more complete knowledge of the worth and reason of the replies made on the opposite side by those Easterns who endeavoured to counteract all the wiles of the heretics according to their understanding and comprehension.

A copy of the Blasphemia composed at Sirmium by Osius and Polamius. 11. Since there appeared to be some misunderstanding respecting the faith, all points have been carefully investigated and discussed at Sirmium in the presence of our most reverend brothers and fellow-bishops, Valens, Ursacius and Germinius. It is evident that there is one God, the Father Almighty, according as it is believed throughout the whole world; and His only Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, begotten of Him before the ages. But we cannot and ought not to say that there are two Gods, for the Lord Himself said, I will go unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God . So there is one God over all, as the Apostle hath taught us, Is He God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. And in all other things they agreed thereto, nor would they allow any difference.

But since some or many persons were disturbed by questions concerning substance, called in Greek ou0si/a, that is, to make it understood more exactly, as to o0moou/sion, or what is called o0moiou/sion, there ought to be no mention made of these at all. Nor ought any exposition to be made of them for the reason and consideration that they are not contained

in the divine Scriptures, and that they are above man's understanding, nor can any man declare the birth of the Son, of whom it is written, Who shall declare His generation ? For it is plain that only the Father knows how He begot the Son, and the Son how He was begotten of the Father. There is no question hat the Father is greater. No one can doubt hat the Father is greater than the Son in honour, dignity, splendour, majesty, and in the very name of Father, the Son Himself testifying, He that sent Me is greater than I . And no one is ignorant that it is Catholic doctrine that there are two Persons of Father and Son;

and that the Father is greater, and that the Son is subordinated to the Father, together with all things which the Father has subordinated to Him, and that the Father has no beginning and is invisible, immortal and impassible, but that the Son has been begotten of the Father God of God, Light of Light, and that the generation of this Son, as is aforesaid, no one knows but His Father, And that the Son of God Himself, our Lord and God, as we read took flesh, that is, a body, that is, man of the womb of the Virgin Mary, of the Angel announced. And as all the Scriptures teach, and especially the doctor of the Gentiles himself, He took of Mary the Virgin, man, through whom He suffered. And the whole faith is summed up and secured in this, that the Trinity must always be preserved, as we read in the Gospel, Go ye and baptize all nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . Complete and perfect is the number of the Trinity. How the Paraclete, the Spirit, is through the Son: Who was sent and came according to His promise in order to instruct, teach and sanctify the apostles and all believers.

12. After these many and most impious statements had been made, the Eastern bishops on their side again met together and composed definitions of their confession. Since, however, we have frequently to mention the words essence and substance, we must determine the meaning of essence, lest in discussing facts we prove ignorant of the signification of our words. Essence is a reality which is, or the reality of those things from which it is, and which subsists inasmuch as it is permanent. Now we can speak of the essence, or nature, or genus, or substance of anything. And the strict reason why the word essence is employed is because it is always. But this is identical with substance, because a thing which is, necessarily subsists in itself, and whatever thus subsists possesses unquestionably a permanent genus, nature or substance. When, therefore, we say that essence signifies nature, or genus, or substance, we mean the essence of that thing which permanently exists in the nature, genus, or substance. Now, therefore, let us review the definitions of faith drawn up by the Easterns.

I. "If any one hearing that the Son is the image of the invisible God, says that the image of God is the same as the invisible God, as though refusing to confess that He is truly Son: let him be anathema." 13. Hereby is excluded the assertion of those who wish to represent the relationship of Father and Son as a matter of names, inasmuch as every image is similar in species to that of which it is an image. For no one is himself his own image, but it is necessary that the image should demonstrate him of whom it is an image. So an image is the figured and indistinguishable likeness of one thing equated with another. Therefore the Father is, and the Son is, because the Son is the image of the Father: and he who is an

image, if he is to be truly an image, must have in himself his original's species, nature and essence in virtue of the fact that he is an image.

II. "And if any one hearing the Son say, As the Father hath life in Himself, so also hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself , shall say that He who has received life from the Father, and who also declares, I live by the Father , is the same as He who gave life: let him be anathema." 14. The person of the recipient and of the giver are distinguished so that the same should not be made one and sole. For since he is under anathema who has believed that, when recipient and giver are mentioned one solitary and unique person is implied, we may not suppose that the selfsame person who gave received from Himself. For He who lives and He through whom He lives are not identical, for one lives to Himself, the other declares that He lives through the Author of His life, and no one will declare that He who enjoys life and He through whom His life is caused are personally identical.

III. "And if any one hearing that the Only-begotten Son is like the invisible God, denies that the Son who is the image of the invisible God (whose image is understood to include essence) is Son in essence, as though denying His true Sonship: let him be anathema." 15. It is here insisted that the nature is indistinguishable and entirely similar. For since He is the Only-begotten Son of God and the image of the invisible God, it is necessary that He should be of an essence similar in species and nature. Or what distinction can be made between Father and Son affecting their nature with its similar genus, when the Son subsisting through the nature begotten in Him is invested with the properties of the Father, viz., glory, worth, power, invisibility, essence? And while these prerogatives of divinity are equal we neither understand the one to be less because He is Son, nor the other to be greater because He is Father; since the Son is the image of the Father in species, and not disssimilar in genus; since the similarity of a Son begotten of the substance of His Father does not admit of any diversity of substance, and the Son and image of the invisible God embraces in Himself the whole form of His Father's divinity both in kind and in amount: and this is to be truly Son, to reflect the truth of the Father's forth by the perfect likeness of the nature imaged in Himself.

IV. "And if any one hearing this text, For as the Father hath life in Himself so also He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself ; denies that the Son is like the Father even in essence, though He testifies that it is even as He has said; let him be anathema. For it is plain that since the life which is understood to exist in the Father signifies substance, and the life of the Only-begotten which was begotten of the Father is also understood to mean substance or essence, He there signifies a likeness of essence to essence." 16. With the Son's origin as thus stated is connected the perfect birth of the undivided nature. For what in each is life, that in each is signified by essence. And in the life which is begotten of life, i.e. in the essence which is born of essence, seeing that it is not born unlike (and that because life is of life), He keeps in Himself a nature wholly similar to His original, because there is no diversity in the likeness of the essence that is born and that besets, that is, of the life which is possessed and which has been given. For though God begat Him of Himself, in

likeness to His own nature, He in whom is the unbegotten likeness did not relinquish the property of His natural substance. For He only has what He gave; and as possessing life He gave life to be possessed. And thus what is born of essence, as life of life, is essentially like itself, and the essence of Him who is begotten and of Him who begets admits no diversity or unlikeness.

V. "It any one hearing the words formed or created it and begat me spoken by the same lips , refuses to understand this begat me of likeness of essence, but says that begat me and formed me are the same: as if to deny that the perfect Son of God was here signified as Son under two different expressions, as Wisdom has given Us to piously understand, and asserts that formed me and begat me only imply formation and not sonship: let him be anathema."

17. Those who say that the Son of God is only a creature or formation are opposed on the fact that they say they have read The Lord formed or created me, which seems to imply formation or creation; hot they omit the following sentence, which is the key to the first, and from the first wrest authority for their impious statement that the Son is a creature, because Wisdom has said that she was created. But if she were created, how could she be also born? For all birth, of whatever kind, attains its own nature from the nature that begets it: but creation takes its beginning from the power of the Creator, the Creator being able to form a creature from nothing. So Wisdom, who said that she was created, does in the next sentence say that she was also begotten, using the word creation of the act of the changeless nature of her Parent, which nature, unlike the manner and wont of human parturition, without any detriment or change of self created from itself what it begat. Similarly a Creator has no need of passion or intercourse or parturition. And that which is created out of nothing begins to exist at a definite moment. And He who creates makes His object through His mere power, and creation is the work of might, not the birth of a nature from a nature that besets it. But because the Son of God was not begotten after the manner of corporeal childbearing, but was born perfect God of perfect God; therefore Wisdom says that she was created, excluding in her manner of birth every kind of corporeal process.

18. Moreover, to shew that she possesses a nature that was born and not created, Wisdom has added that she was begotten, that by declaring that she was created and also begotten, she might completely explain her birth. By speaking of creation she implies that the nature of the Father is changeless, and she also shews that the substance of her nature begotten of God the Father is genuine and real. And so her words about creation and generation have explained the perfection of her birth: the former that the Father is changeless, the latter the reality of her own nature. The two things combined become one, and that one is both in perfection: for the Son being born of God without any change in God, is so born of the Father as to be created; and the Father, who is changeless in Himself and the Son's Father by nature, so forms the Son as to beget Him. Therefore the heresy which has dared to aver that the Son of God is a creature is condemned because while the first statement shews the impossible perfection of the divinity, the second, which asserts His natural generation, crushes the impious opinion that He was created out of nothing.

VI. "And if any one grant the Son only a likeness of activity, but rob Him of the likeness of essence which is the corner-stone of our faith, in spite of the fact that the Son Himself reveals His essential likeness with the Father in the words, For as the Father hath life in Himself, so also hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself , as well as His likeness in activity by teaching us that What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise , such a man robs himself of the knowledge of eternal life which is in the Father and the Son, and let him be anathema." 19. The heretics when beset by authoritative passages in Scripture are wont only to grant that the Son is like the Father in might while they deprive Him of similarity of nature. This is foolish and impious, for they do not understand that similar might can only be the result of a similar nature. For a lower nature can never attain to the might of a higher and more powerful nature. What will the men who make these assertions say about the omnipotence of God the Father, if the might of a lower nature is made equal to His own? For they cannot deny that the Son's power is the same, seeing that He has said What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

No, a similarity of nature follows on a similarity of might when He says, As the Father hath life in Himself, so also hath He given to the Son to have lift in Himself. In life is implied nature and essence; this, Christ teaches, has been given Him to have as the Father hath. Therefore similarity of life contains similarity of might: for there cannot be similarity of life where the nature is dissimilar. So it is necessary that similarity of essence follows on similarity of might: for as what the Father does, the Son does also, so the life that the Father has He has given to the Son to have likewise. Therefore we condemn the rash and impious statements of those who confess a similarity of might but have dared to preach a dissimilarity of nature, since it is the chief ground of our hope to confess that in the Father and the Son there is an identical divine substance.

VII. "And if any one professing that he believes that there is a Father and a Son, says that the Father is Father of an essence unlike Himself but of similar activity; for speaking profane and novel words against the essence of the Son and nullifying His true divine Sonship, let him be anathema."

20. By confused and involved expressions the heretics very frequently elude the truth and secure the ears of the unwary by the mere sound of common words, such as the titles Father and Son, which they do not truthfully utter to express a natural and genuine community of essence: for they are aware that God is called the Father of all creation, and remember that all the saints are named sons of God. In like manner they declare that the relationship between the Father and the Son resembles that between the Father and the universe, so that the names Father and Son are rather titular than real. For the names are titular if the Persons have a distinct nature of a different essence, since no reality can be attached to the name of father unless it be based on the nature of his offspring. So the Father cannot be called Father of an alien substance unlike His own, for a perfect birth manifests no diversity between itself and the original substance. Therefore we repudiate all the impious assertions that the Father is Father of a Son begotten of Himself and yet not of His own

nature. We shall not call God Father for having a creature like Him in might and activity, but for begetting a nature of an essence not unlike or alien to Himself: for a natural birth does not admit of any dissimilarity with the Father's nature. Therefore those are anathema who assert that the Father is Father of a nature unlike Himself, so that something other than God is born of God, and who suppose that the essence of the Father degenerated in begetting the Son. For so far as in them lies they destroy the very birthless and changeless essence of the Father by daring to attribute to Him in the birth of His Only-begotten an alteration and degeneration of His natural essence.

VIII. "And if any one understanding that the Son is like in essence to Him whose Son He is admitted to be, says that the Son is the same as the Father, or part of the Father, or that it is through an emanation or any such passion as is necessary for the procreation of corporeal children that the incorporeal Son draws His life from the incorporeal Father: let him be anathema." 21. We have always to beware of the vices of particular perversions, and countenance no opportunity for delusion. For many heretics say that the Son is like the Father in divinity in order to support the theory that in virtue of this similarity the Son is the same Person as the Father: for this undivided similarity appears to countenance a belief in a single monad. For what does not differ in kind seems to retain identity of nature.

22. But birth does not countenance this vain imagination; for such identity without differentiation excludes birth. For what is born has a father who caused its birth. Nor because the divinity of Him who is being born is inseparable from that of Him who begets, are the Begetter and the Begotten the same Person; while on the other hand He who is born and He who begets cannot be unlike. He is therefore anathema who shall proclaim a similarity of nature in the Father and the Son in order to abolish the personal meaning of the word Son: for while through mutual likeness one differs in no respect from the other, yet this very likeness, which does not admit of bare union, confesses both the Father and the Son because the Son is the changeless likeness of the Father. For the Son is not part of the Father so that He who is born and He who begets can be called one Person. Nor is He an emanation so that by a continual flow of a corporeal uninterrupted stream the flow is itself kept in its source, the source being identical with the flow in virtue of the successive and unbroken continuity. But the birth is perfect, and remains alike in nature; not taking its beginning materially from a corporeal conception and bearing, but as an incorporeal Son drawing His existence from an incorporeal Father according to the likeness which belongs to an identical nature.

IX. "And if any one, because the Father is never admitted to be the Son and the Son is never admitted to be the Father, when he says that the Son is other than the Father (because the Father is one Person and the Son another, inasmuch as it is said, There is another that beareth witness of Me, even the father who sent Me), does in anxiety for the distinct personal qualities of the Father and the Son which in the Church must be piously understood to exist, fear that the Son and the Father may sometimes be admitted to be the same Person, and therefore denies that the Son is like in essence to the Father: let him be anathema."

23. It was said unto the apostles of the Lord, Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves . Christ therefore wished there to be in us the nature of different creatures: but in such a sort that the harmlessness of the dove might temper the serpent's wisdom, and the wisdom of the serpent might instruct the harmlessness of the dove, and that so wisdom might be made harmless and harmlessness wise. This precept has been observed in the exposition of this creed. For the former sentence of which we have spoken guarded against the teaching of a unity of person under the cloak of an essential likeness, and against the denial of the Son's birth as the result of an identity of nature, lest we should understand God to be a single monad because one Person does not differ in kind from the other.

In the next sentence, by harmless and apostolic wisdom we have again taken refuge in that wisdom of the serpent to which we are bidden to be conformed no less than to the harmlessness of the dove, lest perchance through a repudiation of the unity of persons on the ground that the Father is one Person and the Son another, a preaching of the dissimilarity of their natures should again take us unawares, and test on the ground that He who sent and He who was sent are two Persons (for the Sent and the Sender cannot be one Person) they should be considered to have divided and dissimilar natures, though He who is born and He who begets Him cannot be of a different essence. So we preserve in Father and in Son the likeness of an identical nature through an essential birth: yet the similarity of nature does not injure personality by making the Sent and the Sender to be but one. Nor do we do away with the similarity of nature by admitting distinct personal qualities, for it is impossible that the one God should be called Son and Father to Himself. So then the truth as to the birth supports the similarity of essence and the similarity of essence does not undermine the personal reality of the birth. Nor again does a profession of belief in the Begetter and the Begotten exclude a similarity of essence;

for while the Begetter and the Begotten cannot be one Person, He who is born and He who begets cannot be of a different nature.

X. "And if any one admits that God became Father of the Only-begotten Son at any point in times and not that the Only-begotten Son came into existence without passion beyond all times and beyond all human calculation: for contravening the teaching of the Gospel which scorned any interval of times between the being of the Father and the Son and faithfully has instructed us that In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God , let him be anathema." 24. It is a pious saying that the Father is not limited by times: for the true meaning of the name of Father which He bore before times began surpasses comprehension. Although religion teaches us to ascribe to Him this name of Father through which comes the impassible origin of the Son, yet He is not bound in time, for the eternal and infinite God cannot be understood as having become a Father in time, and according to the teaching of the Gospel the Only-begotten God the Word is recognized even in the beginning rather to be with God than to be born.

XI. "And if any one says that the Father is older in times than His Only-begotten Son, and that the Son is younger than the Father: let him be anathema" 25. The essential likeness

conformed to the Father's essence in kind is also taught to be identical in time: lest He who is the image of God, who is the Word, who is God with God in the beginning, who is like the Father, by the insertion of times between Himself and the Father should not have in Himself in perfection that which is both image, and Word, and God. For if He be proclaimed to be younger in time, He has lost the truth of the image and likeness: for that is no longer likeness which is found to be dissimilar in times. For that very fact that God is Father prevents there being any times in which He was not Father: consequently there can be no times in the Son's existence in which He was not Son. Wherefore we must neither call the Father older than the Son nor the Son younger than the Father: for the true meaning of neither name can exist without the other.

XII. "And if any one attributes the timeless substance (i.e. Person) of the Only-begotten Son derived from the Father to the unborn essence of God, as though calling the Father Son: let him be anathema ." 26. The above definition when it denied that the idea of time could be applied to the birth of the Son seemed to have given an occasion for heresy (we saw that it would be monstrous if the Father were limited by time, but that He would be so limited if the Son were subjected to time), so that by the help of this repudiation of time, the Father who is unborn might under the appellation of Son be proclaimed as both Father and Son in a single and unique Person. For in excluding times from the Son's birth it seemed to countenance the opinion that there was no birth, so that He whose birth is not in times might be considered not to have been born at all. Wherefore, lest at the suggestion of this denial of times the heresy of the unity of Persons should insinuate itself, that impiety is condemned which dares to refer the timeless birth to the unique and singular Person of the unborn essence. For it is one thing to be outside times and another to be unborn; the first admits of birth (though outside time), the other, so far as it is, is the one sole author from eternity of its being what it is.

27. We have reviewed, beloved brethren, all the definitions of faith made by the Eastern bishops which they formulated in their assembly against the recently emerging heresy. And we, as far as we have been able, have adapted the wording of our exposition to express their meaning, following their diction rather than desiring to be thought the originators of new phrases. In these words they decree the principles of their conscience and a long maintained doctrine against a new and profane impiety. Those who compiled this heresy at Sirmium, or accepted it after its compilation, they have thereby compelled to confess their ignorance and to sign such decrees. There the Son is the perfect image of the Father: there under the qualities of an identical essence, the Person of the Son is not annihilated and confounded with the Father: there the Son is declared to be image of the Father in virtue of a real likeness, and does not differ in substance from the Father, whose image He is: there on account of the life which the Father has and the life which the Son has received, the Father can have nothing different in substance (this being implied in life) from that which the Son received to have: there the begotten Son is not a creature, but is a Person undistinguished from the Father's nature: there, just as an identical might belongs to the Father and the Son, so their essence admits of no difference:

there the Father by begetting the Son in no wise degenerates from Himself in Him through any difference of nature: there, though the likeness of nature is the same in each, the proper qualities which mark this likeness are repugnant to a confusion of Persons, so that there is not one subsisting Person who is called both Father and Son: there, though it is piously affirmed that there is both a Father who sends and a Son who is sent, yet no distinction in essence is drawn between the Father and the Son, the Sent and the Sender: there the truth of God's Fatherhood is not bound by limits of times: there the Son is not later in time: there beyond all time is a perfect birth which refutes the error that the Son could not be born.

28. Here, beloved brethren, is the entire creed which was published by some Easterns, few in proportion to the whole number of bishops, and which first saw light at the very times when you repelled the introduction of this heresy. The reason for its promulgation was the fact that they were bidden to say nothing of the o0moou/sion. But even in former times, through the urgency of these numerous causes, it was necessary at different occasions to compose other creeds, the character of which will be understood from their wording. For when you are frilly aware of the results, it will be easier for us to bring to a full consummation, such as religion and unity demand, the argument in which we are interested. An exposition of the faith of the Church made at the Council held an the occasion of the Dedication of the church at Antioch by ninety-seven bishops there present, because of suspicions felt as to the orthodoxy of a certain bishop .

29. "We believe in accordance with evangelical and apostolic tradition in one God the Father Almighty, the Creator, Maker and Disposer of all things that are, and from whom are all things. "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, His Only-begotten Son, God through whom are all things, who was begotten of the Father, God of God, whole God of whole God, One of One perfect God of perfect God, King of King, Lord of Lord, the Word, the Wisdom, the Life, true Light, true Way, the Resurrection the Shepherd, the Gate, unable to change or alter, the unvarying image of the essence and might and glory of the Godhead, the first-born of all creation, who always was in the beginning with God, the Word of God, according to what is said in the Gospel, and the Word was God, through whom all things were made, and in whom all things subsist, who in the last days came down from above, and was born of a virgin according to the Scriptures, and was made the Lamb , the Mediator between God and man, the Apostle of our faith, and leader of life. For He said, I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me . Who suffered and rose again for us on the third day, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and is to come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead.

"And in the Holy Ghost, who was given to them that believe, to comfort, sanctify and perfect, even as our Lord Jesus Christ ordained His disciples, saying, Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost , manifestly, that is, of a Father who is truly Father, and clearly of a Son who is truly Son, and a Holy Ghost who is truly a Holy Ghost, these words not being set forth idly and without meaning, but carefully signifying the Person, and order, and glory of each of those who are named,

to teach us that they are three Persons, but in agreement one. 30. "Having therefore held this faith from the beginning, anti being resolved to hold it to the end in the sight of God and Christ, we say anathema to every heretical and perverted sect, and if any man teaches contrary to the wholesome and right faith of the Scriptures, saying that there is or was time, or space, or age before the Son was begotten, let him be anathema. And if any one say that the Son is a formation like one of the things that are formed, or a birth resembling other births, or a creature like the creatures, and not as the divine Scriptures have affirmed in each passage aforesaid, or teaches or proclaims as the Gospel anything else than what we have received: let him be anathema. For all those things which were written in the divine Scriptures by Prophets and by Apostles we believe and follow truly and with fear."

31. Perhaps this creed has not spoken expressly enough of the identical similarity of the Father and the Son, especially in concluding that the names Father, Son and Holy Ghost referred to the Person and order and glory of each of those who are named to teach us that they are three Persons, but in agreement one.

32. But in the first place we must remember that the bishops did not assemble at Antioch to oppose the heresy which has dared to declare that the substance of the Son is unlike that of the Father, but to oppose that which, in spite of the Council of Nicaea, presumed to attribute the three names to the Father. Of this we will treat in its proper place. I recollect that at the beginning of my argument I besought the patience anti forbearance of my readers and hearers until the completion of my letter, lest any one should rashly rise to judge me before he was acquainted with the entire argument. I ask it again. This assembly of the saints wished to strike a blow at that impiety which by a mere counting of names evades the truth as to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; which represents that there is no personal cause for each name, and by a false use of these names makes the triple nomenclature imply only one Person, so that the Father alone could be also called both Holy Ghost and Son. Consequently they declared there were three substances, meaning three subsistent Persons, and not thereby introducing any dissimilarity of essence to separate the substance of Father and Son. For the words to teach us that they are three in substance, but in agreement one, are free from objection, because as the Spirit is also named, and He is the Paraclete, it is more fitting that a unity of agreement should be asserted than a unity of essence based on likeness of substance.

33. Further the whole of the above statement has drawn no distinction whatever between the essence and nature of the Father and the Son. For when it is said, God of God, whole God of whole God, there is no room for doubting that whole God is born of whole God. For the nature of God who is of God admits of no difference, and as whole God of whole God He is in all in which the Father is. One of One excludes the passions of a human birth and conception, so that since He is One of One, He comes from no other source, nor is different nor alien, for He is One of One, perfect God of perfect God. Except in having a cause of its origin His birth does not differ from the birthless nature since the perfection of both Persons is the same. King of King. A power that is expressed by one and the same title allows no

dissimilarity of power. Lord of Lord. In 'Lord' also the lordship is equal: there can be no difference where domination is confessed of both without diversity. But plainest of all is the statement appended after several others unable to change or alter, the unvarying image of the Godhead and essence and might and glory.

For as God of God, whole God of whole God, One of One, perfect God of perfect God, King of King and Lord of Lord, since in all that glory and nature of Godhead in which the Father ever abides, the Son born of Him also subsists; He derives this also from the Father's substance that He is unable to change. For in His birth that nature from which He is born is not changed; but the Son has maintained a changeless essence since His origin is in a changeless nature. For though He is an image, yet the image cannot alter, since in Him was born the image of the Father's essence, and there could not be in Him a change of nature caused by any unlikeness to the Father's essence from which He was begotten. Now when we are taught that He was brought into being as the first of all creation, and He is Himself said to have always been in the beginning with God as God the Word, the fact that He was brought into being shews that He was born, and the fact that He always was, shews that He is not separated from the Father by time. Therefore this Council by dividing the three substances, which it did to exclude a monad God with a threefold title, did not introduce any separation of substance between the Father and the Son.

The whole exposition of faith makes no distinction between Father and Son, the Unborn and the Only-begotten, in time, or name, or essence, or dignity, or domination. But our common conscience demands that we should gain a knowledge of the other creeds of the same Eastern bishops, composed at different times and places, that by the study of many confessions we may understand the sincerity of their faith.

The Creed according to the Council of the East. 34. "We, the holy synod met in Sardica from different provinces of the East, namely, Thebais, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, Coele Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, Galatia, Bithynia and Hellespont, from Asia, namely, the two provinces of Phrygia, Pisidia, the islands of the Cyclades, Pamphylia, Caria, Lydia, from Europe, namely, Thrace, Haemimontus , Moesia, and the two provinces of Pannonia, have set forth this creed. "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator and Maker of all things, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named: "And we believe in His Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who before all ages was begotten of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, through whom were made all things which are in heaven and earth, visible and invisible: who is the Word and Wisdom and Might and Life and true Light: and who in the last days for our sake was incarnate, and Was born of the holy Virgin, who was crucified and dead and buried, And rose from the dead on the third day, And was received into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father, And shall come to judge the quick and the dead and to give to every man according to his works: Whose kingdom remaineth without end for ever and ever. For He sitteth on the right hand of the Father not only in this age, but also in the age to come.

"We believe also in the Holy Ghost, that is, the Paraclete, whom according to His promise He sent to His apostles after His return into the heavens to teach them and to bring all things to their remembrance, through whom also the souls of them that believe sincerely in Him are sanctified. "But those who say that the Son of God is sprung from things non-existent or from another substance and not from God, and that there was a time or age when He was not, the holy Catholic Church holds them as aliens. Likewise also those who say that there are three Gods, or that Christ is not God and that before the ages He was neither Christ nor Son of God, or that He Himself is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, or that the Son is incapable of birth; or that the Father begat the Son without purpose or will: the holy Catholic Church anathematizes."

35. In the exposition of this creed, concise but complete definitions have been employed. For in condemning those who said that the Son sprang from things non-existent, it attributed to Him a source which had no beginning but continues perpetually. And lest this source from which He drew His permanent birth should be understood to be any other substance than that of God, it also declares to be blasphemers those who said that the Son was born of some other substance and not of God. And so since He does not draw His subsistence from nothing, or spring from any other source than God, it cannot be doubted that He was born with those qualities which are God's; since the Only-begotten essence of the Son is generated neither from things which are non-existent nor from any other substance than the birthless and eternal substance of the Father. But the creed also rejects intervals of times or ages: on the assumption that He who does not differ in nature cannot be separable by time.

36. On every side, where anxiety might be felt, approach is barred to the arguments of heretics lest it should be declared that there is any difference in the Son. For those are anathematized who say that there are three Gods: because according to God's true nature His substance does not admit a number of applications of the title, except as it is given to individual men and angels in recognition of their merit, though the substance of their nature and that of God is different. In that sense there are consequently many gods. Furthermore in the nature of God, God is one, yet in such a way that the Son also is God, because in Him there is not a different nature: and since He is God of God, both must be God, and since there is no difference of kind between them there is no distinction in their essence. A number of titular Gods is rejected; because there is no diversity in the quality of the divine nature. Since therefore he is anathema who says there are many Gods and he is anathema who denies that the Son is God; it is fully shewn that the fact that each has one and the same name arises from the real character of the similar substance in each: since in confessing the Unborn God the Father, and the Only-begotten God the Son, with no dissimilarity of essence between them, each is called God, yet God must be believed and be declared to be one. So by the diligent and watchful care of the bishops the creed guards the similarity of the nature begotten and the nature begetting, confirming it by the application of one name.

37. Yet to prevent the declaration of one God seeming to affirm that God is a solitary monad without offspring of His own, it immediately condemns the rash suggestion that because God is one, therefore God the Father is one and solitary, having in Himself the name of Father and of Son: since in the Father who begets and the Son who comes to birth one God must be declared to exist on account of the substance of their nature being similar in each. The faith of the saints knows nothing of the Son being incapable of birth: because the nature of the Son only draws its existence from birth. But the nature of the birth is in Him so perfect that He who was born of the substance of God is born also of His purpose and will. For from His will and purpose, not from the process of a corporeal nature, springs the absolute perfection of the essence of God born from the essence of God. It follows that we should now consider that creed which was compiled not long ago when Photinus was deposed from the episcopate.A copy of the creed composed at Sirmium by the Easterns to offense Photinus.

38. ”We believe in one God the Father Almighty, the Creator and Maker, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and in earth is named. ”And in His only Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the Father before all ages, God of God, Light of Light through whom all things were made in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible. Who is the Word and Wisdom and Might and Life and true Light: who in the last days for our sake took a body, And was born of the holy Virgin, And was crucified, And was dead and buried: who also rose from the dead on the third day, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father, And shall come at the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom continueth without end and remaineth for perpetual ages. For He shall be sitting at the right hand of the Father not only in this age, but also in the age to come.

”And in the Holy Ghost, that is, the Paraclete, whom according to His promise He sent to the apostles after He ascended into heaven to teach them and to remind them of all things, through whom also are sanctified the souls of those who believe sincerely in Him. I. ”But those who say that the Son is sprung from things non-existent, or from another substance and not from God, and that there was a time or age when He was not, the holy Catholic Church regards as aliens. II. ”If any man says that the Father and the Son are two Gods: let him be anathema. III. ”And if any man says that God is one, but does not confess that Christ, God the Son of God, ministered to the Father in the creation of all things: let him be anathema. IV. ”And if any man dares to say that the Unborn God, or a part of Him, was born of Mary: let him be anathema.

V. ”And if any man say that the Son born of Mary was, before born of Mary, Son only according to foreknowledge or predestination, and denies that He was born of the Father before the ages and was with God, and that all things were made through Him: let him be anathema. VI. ”If any man says that the substance of God is expanded and contracted: let him be anathema. VII. ”If any man says that the expanded substance of God makes the Son; or names Son His supposed expanded substance: let him be anathema. VIII. ”If any man says that the Son of God is the internal or uttered Word of God: let him be anathema. IX. ”If any man says that the man alone born of Mary is the Son: let him be anathema. X. ”If any

man though saying that God and Man was born of Mary, understands thereby the Unborn God: let him be anathema.

XI. "If any man hearing The Word was made Flesh thinks that the Word was transformed into Flesh, or says that He suffered change in taking Flesh: let him be anathema. XII. "If any man hearing that the only Son of God was crucified, says that His divinity suffered corruption, or pain, or change, or diminution, or destruction: let him be anathema. XIII. "If any man says Let us make man was not spoken by the Father to the Son, but by God to Himself: let him be anathema. XIV. "If any man says that the Son did not appear to Abraham, but the Unborn God, or a part of Him: let him be anathema. XV. "If any man says that the Son did not wrestle with Jacob as a man, but the Unborn God, or a part of Him: let him be anathema. XVI. "If any man does not understand The Lord rained from the Lord to be spoken of the Father and the Son, but that the Father rained from Himself: let him be anathema. For the Lord the Son rained from the Lord the Father.

XVII. "If any man says that the Lord and the Lord, the Father and the Son are two Gods. because of the aforesaid words: let him be anathema. For we do not make the Son the equal or peer of the Father, but understand the Son to be subject. For He did not come down to Sodom without the Father's will, nor rain from Himself but from the Lord, to wit by the Father's authority; nor does He sit at the Father's right hand by His own authority, but He hears the Father saying. Sit thou on My, right hand . XVIII. "If any man says that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are one Person: let him be anathema. XIX. "If any man speaking of the Holy Ghost the Paraclete says that He is the Unborn God: let him be anathema. XX. "If any man denies that, as the Lord has taught us, the Paraclete is different from the Son; for He said, And the Father shall send you another Comforter, whom I shall ask : let him be anathema.

XXI. "If any man says that the Holy Spirit is a part of the Father or of the Son: let him be anathema. XXII. "If any man says that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are three Gods: let him be anathema. XXIII. "If any man after the example of the Jews understands as said for the destruction of the Eternal Only-begotten God the words, I am the first God, and I am the last God, and beside Me there is no God , which were spoken for the destruction of idols and them that are no gods: let him be anathema. XXIV. "If any man says that the Son was made by the will of God, like any object in creation: let him be anathema. XXV. "If any man says that the Son was born against the will of the Father: let him be anathema. For the Father was not forced against His own will, or induced by any necessity of nature to beget the Son: but as soon as He willed, before time and without passion He begat Him of Himself and shewed Him forth.

XXVI. "If any man says that the Son is incapable of birth and without beginning, saying as though there were two incapable of birth and unborn and without beginning, and makes two Gods: let him be anathema. For the Head, which is the beginning of all things, is the Son; but the Head or beginning of Christ is God: for so to One who is without beginning and is the beginning of all things, we refer the whole world through Christ. XXVII. "Once more

we strengthen the understanding of Christianity by saying, If any man denies that Christ who is God and Son of God, personally existed before time began and aided the Father in the perfecting of all things; but says that only from the time that He was born of Mary did He gain the name of Christ and Son and a beginning of His deity: let him be anathema."

39. The necessity of the moment urged the Council to set forth a wider and broader exposition of the creed including many intricate questions, because the heresy which Photinus was reviving was sapping our Catholic home by many secret mines. Their purpose was to oppose every form of stealthy subtle heresy by a corresponding form of pure and unsullied faith, and to have as many complete explanations of the faith as there were instances of peculiar faithlessness. Immediately after the universal and unquestioned statement of the Christian mysteries, the explanation of the faith against the heretics begins as follows. I. "But those who say that the Son is sprung from things non-existent, or from another substance and not from God, and that there was a time or age when He was not, the holy Catholic Church regards as aliens." 40. What ambiguity is there here? What is omitted that the consciousness of a sincere faith could suggest? He does not spring from things non-existent: therefore His origin has existence. There is no other substance extant to be His origin, but that of God: therefore nothing else can be born in Him but all that is God; because His existence is not from nothing, and He draws subsistence from no other source. He does not differ in time: therefore the Son like the Father is eternal. And so the Unborn Father and the Only-begotten Son share all the same qualities. They are equal in years, and that very similarity between the sole-existing paternal essence and its offspring prevents distinction in any quality.

II. "If any man says that the Father and the Son are two Gods: let him be anathema. III." And if any man says that God is one, but does not confess that Christ who is God and eternal Son of God ministered to the Father in the creation of all things: let him be anathema." 41. The very statement of the name as our religion states it gives us a clear insight into the fact. For since it is condemned to say that the Father and the Son are two Gods, and it is also accursed to deny that the Son is God, any opinion as to the substance of the one being different from that of the other in asserting two Gods is excluded. For there is no other essence, except that of God the Father, from which God the Son of God was born before time. For since we are compelled to confess God the Father, and roundly declare that Christ the Son of God is God, and between these two truths lies the impious confession of two Gods: They must on the ground of their identity of nature and name be one in the kind of their essence if the name of their essence is necessarily one.

IV. "If any one dares to say that the Unborn God, or a part of Him, was born of Mary: let him be anathema." 42. The fact of the essence declared to be one in the Father and the Son having one name on account of their similarity of nature seemed to offer an opportunity to heretics to declare that the Unborn God, or a part of Him, was born of Mary. The danger was met by the wholesome resolution that he who declared this should be anathema. For the unity of the name which religion employs and which is based on the exact similarity

of their natural essence, has not repudiated the Person of the begotten essence so as to represent, trader cover of the unity of name, that the substance of God is singular and undifferentiated because we predicate one name for the essence of each, that is, predicate one God, on account of the exactly similar substance of the undivided nature in each Person.

V. "If any man say that the Son existed before Mary only according to foreknowledge or predestination, and denies that He was born of the Father before the ages and with God, and that all things were made through Him: let him be anathema." 43. While denying that the God of us all, the Son of God, existed before He was born in bodily form, some assert that He existed according to foreknowledge and predestination, and not according to the essence of a personally subsistent nature: that is, because the Father predestined the Son to have existence some day by being born of the Virgin, He was announced to us by the Father's foreknowledge rather than born and existent before the ages in the substance of the divine nature, and that all things which He Himself spake in the prophets concerning the mysteries of His incarnation and passion were simply said concerning Him by the Father according to His foreknowledge. Consequently this perverse doctrine is condemned, so that we know that the Only-begotten Son of God was born of the Father before all worlds, and formed the worlds and all creation, and that He was not merely predestined to be born.

VI. "If any man says that the substance of God is expanded and contracted: let him be anathema." 44. To contract and expand are bodily affections: but God who is a Spirit and breathes where He listeth, does not expand or contract Himself through any change of substance. Remaining free and outside the bond of any bodily nature, He supplies out of Himself what He wills, when He wills, and where He wills. Therefore it is impious to ascribe any change of substance to such an unfettered Power. VII. "If any man says that the expanded substance of God makes the Son, or names Son His expanded substance: let him be anathema." 45. The above opinion, although meant to teach the immutability of God, yet prepared the way for the following heresy. Some have ventured to say that the Unborn God by expansion of His substance extended Himself as far as the holy Virgin, in order that this extension produced by the increase of His nature and assuming manhood might be called Son. They denied that the Son who is perfect God born before time began was the same as He who was afterwards born as Man. Therefore the Catholic Faith condemns all denial of the immutability of the Father and of the birth of the Son.

VIII. "If any man says that the Son is the internal or uttered Word of God: let him be anathema." 46. Heretics, destroying as far as in them lies the Son of God, confess Him to be only the word, going forth as an utterance from the speaker's lips and the unembodied sound of an impersonal voice: so that God the Father has as Son a word resembling any word we utter in virtue of our inborn power of speaking. Therefore this dangerous deceit is condemned, which asserts that God the Word. who was in the beginning with God, is only the word of a voice sometimes internal and sometimes expressed. IX. "If any man says that the man alone born of Mary is the Son: let him be anathema." We cannot declare that the Son of God is born of Mary without declaring Him to be both Man and God. But lest

the declaration that He is both God and Man should give occasion to deceit, the Council immediately adds,

X. "If any man though saying that God and Man was born of Mary, understands thereby the Unborn God: let him be anathema" 47. Thus is preserved both the name and power of the divine substance. For since he is anathema who says that the Son of God by Mary is man and not God; and he falls under the same condemnation who says that the Unborn God became man: God made Man is not denied to be God but denied to be the Unborn God, the Father being distinguished from the Son not under the head of nature or by diversity of substance, but only by such pre-eminence as His birthless nature gives. XI. "If any man hearing The Word was made Flesh thinks that the Word was transformed into Flesh, or says that He suffered change in taking Flesh: let him be anathema." 48. This preserves the dignity of the Godhead: so that in the fact that the Word was made Flesh, the Word, in becoming Flesh, has not lost through being Flesh what constituted the Word, nor has become transformed into Flesh, so as to cease to be the Word; but the Word was made Flesh in order that the Flesh might begin to be what the Word is. Else whence came to His Flesh miraculous power in working, glory on the Mount, knowledge of the thoughts of human hearts, calmness in His passion, life in His death? God knowing no change, when made Flesh lost nothing of the prerogatives of His substance.

XII. "If any man hearing that the only Son of God was crucified, says that His divinity suffered corruption or pain or change or diminution or destruction: let him be anathema." 49. It is clearly shewn why the Word, though He was made Flesh, was nevertheless not transformed into Flesh. Though these kinds of suffering affect the infirmity of the flesh, yet ú God the Word when made Flesh could not change under suffering. Suffering and change are not identical. Suffering of every kind causes all flesh to change through sensitiveness and endurance of pain. But the Word that was made Flesh, although He made Himself subject to suffering, was nevertheless unchanged by the liability to suffer. For He was able to suffer, and yet the Word was not possible. Possibility denotes a nature that is weak; but suffering in itself is the endurance of pains inflicted, and since the Godhead is immutable and yet the Word was made Flesh, such pains found in Him a material which they could affect though the Person of the Word had no infirmity or possibility. And so when He suffered His Nature remained immutable because like His Father, His Person is of an impossible essence, though it is born .

XIII. "If any man says Let us make man was not spoken by the Father to the Son, but by God to Himself: let him be anathema. XIV. "If any man says that the Son did not appear to Abraham , but the Unborn God, or a part of Him: let him be anathema. XV. "If any man says that the Son did not wrestle with Jacob as a man , but the Unborn God, or a part of Him: let him be anathema. XVI: "If any man does not understand The Lord rained from the Lord to be spoken of the Father and the Son, but says that the Father rained from Himself: let him be anathema. For the Lord the Son rained from the Lord the Father." 50. These points had to be inserted into the creed because Photinus, against whom the synod was

held, denied them. They were inserted lest any one should dare to assert that the Son of God did not exist before the Son of the Virgin, and should attach to the Unborn God with the foolish perversity of an insane heresy all the above passages which refer to the Son of God, and while applying them to the Father, deny the Person of the Son. The clearness of these statements absolves us from the necessity of interpreting them.

XVII. "If any man says that the Lord and the Lord, the Father and the Son, are two Gods because of the aforesaid words: let him be anathema. For we do not make the Son the equal or peer of the Father, but understand the Son to be subject. For He did not come down to Sodom without the Father's will, nor rain from Himself but from the Lord, to wit, by the Father's authority; nor does He sit at the Father's right hand by His own authority, but because He hears the Father saying, Sit Thou on My right hand ."

51. The foregoing and the following statements utterly remove any ground for suspecting that this definition asserts a diversity of different deities in the Lord and the Lord. No comparison is made because it was seen to be impious to say that there are two Gods: not that they refrain from making the Son equal and peer of the Father in order to deny that He is God. For, since he is anathema who denies that Christ is God, it is not on that score that it is profane to speak of two equal Gods. God is One on account of the true character of His natural essence and because from the Unborn God the Father, who is the one God, the Only-begotten God the Son is born, and draws His divine Being only from God; and since the essence of Him who is begotten is exactly similar to the essence of Him who begot Him, there must be one name for the exactly similar nature. That the Son is not on a level with the Father and is not equal to Him is chiefly shewn in the fact that He was subjected to Him to render obedience, in that the Lord rained from the Lord and that the Father did not, as Photinus and Sabellius say, rain from Himself, as the Lord from the Lord; in that He then sat down at the right hand of God when it was told Him to seat Himself;

in that He is sent, in that He receives, in that He submits in all things to the will of Him who sent Him. But the subordination of filial love is not a diminution of essence, nor does pious duty cause a degeneration of nature, since in spite of the fact that both the Unborn Father is God and the Only-begotten Son of God is God, God is nevertheless One, and the subjection and dignity of the Son are both taught in that by being called Son He is made subject to that name which because it implies that God is His Father is yet a name which denotes His nature. Having a name which belongs to Him whose Son He is, He is subject to the Father both in service and name; yet in such a way that the subordination of His name bears witness to the true character of His natural and exactly similar essence.

XVIII. "If any man says that the Father and the Son are one Person: let him be anathema."
52. Sheer perversity calls for no contradiction: and yet the mad frenzy of certain men has been so violent as to dare to predicate one Person with two names. XIX. "If any man speaking of the Holy Ghost the Paraclete say that He is the Unborn God: let him be anathema."
53. The further clause makes liable to anathema the predicating Unborn God of the Paraclete. For it is most impious to say that He who was sent by the Son for our consolation

is the Unborn God. XX. "If any man deny that, as the Lord has taught us, the Paraclete is different from the Son; for He said, And the Further shall send you another Comforter, whom I shall ask: let him be anathema." 54. We remember that the Paraclete was sent by the Son, and at the beginning the creed explained this. But since through the virtue of His nature, which is exactly similar, the Son has frequently called His own works the works of the Father, saying, I do the works of My Father : so when He intended to send the Paraclete, as He often promised, He said sometimes that He was to be sent from the Father, in that He was piously wont to refer all that He did to the Father. And from this the heretics often seize an opportunity of saying that the Son Himself is the Paraclete: while by the fact that He promised to pray that another Comforter should be sent from the Father, He shews the difference between Him who is sent and Him who asked.

XXI. "If any man says that the Holy Spirit is a part of the Father or of the Son: let him be anathema." 55. The insane frenzy of the heretics, and not any genuine difficulty, rendered it necessary that this should be written. For since the name of Holy Spirit has its own signification, and the Holy Spirit the Paraclete has the office and rank peculiar to His Person, and since the Father and the Son are everywhere declared to be immutable: how could the Holy Spirit be asserted to be a part either of the Father or of the Son? But since this folly is often affirmed amid other follies by godless men, it was needful that the pious should condemn it. XXII. "If any man says that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are three Gods: let him be anathema." 56. Since it is contrary to religion to say that there are two Gods, because we remember and declare that nowhere has it been affirmed that there is more than one God: how much more worthy of condemnation is it to name three Gods in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Nevertheless, since heretics say this, Catholics rightly condemn it.

XXIII. "If any man, after the example of the Jews, understand as said for the destruction of the Eternal Only-begotten God, the words, I am the first God, and I am the last God, and beside Me there is no God , which were spoken for the destruction of idols and them that are no gods: let him be anathema." 57. Though we condemn a plurality of gods and declare that God is only one, we cannot deny that the Son of God is God. Nay, the true character of His nature causes the name that is denied to a plurality to be the privilege of His essence. The words, Beside Me there is no God, cannot rob the Son of His divinity: because beside Him who is of God there is no other God. And these words of God the Father cannot annul the divinity of Him who was born of Himself with an essence in no way different from His own nature. The Jews interpret this passage as proving the bare unity of God, because they are ignorant of the Only-begotten God. But we, while we deny that there are two Gods, abhor the idea of a diversity of natural essence in the Father and the Son. The words, Beside Me there is no God, take away an impious belief in false gods. In confessing that God is One, and also saying that the Son is God, our use of the same name affirms that there is no difference of substance between the two Persons.

XXIV. "If any man says that the Son was made by the will of God, like any object in creation: let him be anathema." 58. To all creatures the will of God has given substance: but a perfect birth gave to the Son a nature from a substance that is impossible and itself unborn. All created things are such as God willed them to be: but the Son who is born of God has such a personality as God has. God's nature did not produce a nature unlike itself: but the Son begotten of God's substance has derived the essence of His nature by virtue of His origin, not from an act of will after the manner of creatures. XXV. "If any man says that the Son was born against the will of the Father: let him be anathema. For the Father was not forced against His own will, or induced against His will by any necessity of nature, to beget Ills Son; but as soon as He willed, before time and without passion He begat Him of Himself and shewed Him forth."

59. Since it was taught that the Son did not, like all other things, owe His existence to God's will, lest He should be thought to derive His essence only at His Father's will and not in virtue of His own nature, an opportunity seemed thereby to be given to heretics to attribute to God the Father a necessity of begetting the Son from Himself, as though He had brought forth the Son by a law of nature in spite of Himself. But such liability to be acted upon does not exist in God the Father in the ineffable and perfect birth of the Son it was neither mere will that begat Him nor was the Father's essence changed or forced at the bidding of a natural law. Nor was any substance sought for to beget Him, nor is the nature of the Begetter changed in the Begotten, nor is the Father's unique name affected by time. Before all time the Father, out of the essence of His nature, with a desire that was subject to no passion, gave to the Son a birth that conveyed the essence of His nature.

XXVI. "If any man says that the Son is incapable of birth and without beginning, speaking as though there were two incapable of birth and unborn and without beginning, and makes two Gods: let him be anathema. For the Head, which is the beginning of all things, is the Son; but the Head or beginning of Christ is God: for so to One who is without beginning and is the beginning of all things, we refer the whole world through Christ." 60. To declare the Son to be incapable of birth is the height of impiety. God would no longer be One: for the nature of the one Unborn God demands that we should confess that God is one. Since therefore God is one, there cannot be two incapable of birth: because God is one (although both the Father is God and the Son of God is God) for the very reason that incapability of birth is the only quality that can belong to one Person only. The Son is God for the very reason that He derives His birth from that essence which cannot be born. Therefore our holy faith rejects the idea that the Son is incapable of birth in order to predicate one God incapable of birth and consequently one God, and in order to embrace the Only-begotten nature, begotten from the unborn essence, in the one name of the Unborn God. For the Head of all things is the Son: but the Head of the Son is God. And to one God through this stepping-stone and by this confession all things are referred, since the whole world takes its beginning from Him to whom God Himself is the beginning.

XXVII. "Once more we strengthen the understanding of Christianity by saying, If any man denies that Christ, who is God and the Son of God, existed before time began and aided the Father in the perfecting of all things; but says that only from the time that He was born of Mary did He gain the name of Christ and Son and a beginning of His deity: let him be anathema." 61. A condemnation of that heresy on account of which the Synod was held necessarily concluded with an explanation of the whole faith that was being opposed. This heresy falsely stated that the beginning of the Son of God dated from His birth of Mary. According to evangelical and apostolic doctrine the corner-stone of our faith is that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and Son of God, cannot be separated from the Father in title or power or difference of substance or interval of time.

62. You perceive that the truth has been sought by many paths through the advice and opinions of different bishops, and the ground of their views has been set forth by the separate declarations inscribed in this creed. Every separate point of heretical assertion has been successfully refuted. The infinite and boundless God cannot be made comprehensible by a few words of human speech. Brevity often misleads both learner and teacher, and a concentrated discourse either causes a subject not to be understood, or spoils the meaning of an argument where a thing is hinted at, and is not proved by full demonstration. The bishops fully understood this, anti therefore have used for the purpose of teaching many definitions and a profusion of words that the ordinary understanding might find no difficulty, but that their hearers might be saturated with the truth thus differently expressed, and that in treating of divine things these adequate and manifold definitions might leave no room for danger or obscurity.

63. You must not be surprised, dear brethren, that so many creeds have recently been written. The frenzy of heretics makes it necessary. The danger of the Eastern Churches is so great that it is rare to find either priest or layman that belongs to this faith, of the orthodoxy of which you may judge. Certain individuals have acted so wrongly as to support the side of evil, and the strength of the wicked has been increased by the exile of some of the bishops, the cause of which you are acquainted with. I am not speaking about distant events or writing down incidents of which I know nothing: I have heard and seen the faults which we now have to combat. They are not laymen but bishops who are guilty. Except the bishop Eleusius and his few comrades, the greater part of the ten provinces of Asia, in which I am now staying, really know not God. Would that they knew nothing about Him, for their ignorance would meet with a readier pardon than their detraction. These faithful bishops do not keep silence in their pain. They seek for the unity of that faith of which others have long since robbed them. The necessity of a united exposition of that faith was first felt when Hosius forgot his former deeds and words, and a fresh yet festering heresy broke out at Sirmium. Of Hosius I say nothing, I leave his conduct in the background lest man's judgment should forget what once he was.

But everywhere there are scandals, schisms and treacheries. Hence some of those who had formerly written one creed were compelled to sign another. I make no complaint against

these long-suffering Eastern bishops, it was enough that they gave at least a compulsory assent to the faith after they had once been willing to blaspheme. I think it a subject of congratulation that a single penitent should be found among such obstinate, blaspheming and heretical bishops. But, brethren, you enjoy happiness and glory in the Lord, who meanwhile retain and conscientiously confess the whole apostolic faith, and have hitherto been ignorant of written creeds. You have not needed the letter, for you abounded in the spirit. You required not the office of a hand to write what you believed in your hearts and professed unto salvation. It was unnecessary for you to read as bishops what you held when new-born converts. But necessity has introduced the custom of ex-pounding creeds and signing expositions. Where the conscience is in danger we must use the letter. Nor is it wrong to write what it is wholesome to confess.

64. Kept always from guile by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we confess and write of our own will that there are not two Gods but one God; nor do we therefore deny that the Son of God is also God; for He is God of God. We deny that there are two incapable of birth, because God is one through the prerogative of being incapable of birth; nor does it follow that the Unbegotten is not God, for His source is the Unborn substance. There is not one subsistent Person, but a similar substance in both Persons. There is not one name of God applied to dissimilar natures, but a wholly similar essence belonging to one name and nature. One is not superior to the other on account of the kind of His substance, but one is subject to the other because born of the other. The Father is greater because He is Father, the Son is not the less because He is Son. The difference is one of the meaning of a name anti not of a nature. We confess that the Father is not affected by time, but do not deny that the Son is equally eternal. We assert that the Father is in the Son because the Son has nothing in Himself unlike the Father: we confess that the Son is in the Father because the existence of the Son is not from any other source. We recognize that their nature is mutual and similar because equal: we do not think them to be one Person because they are one: we declare that they are through the similarity of an identical nature one, in such a way that they nevertheless are not one Person.

65. I have expounded, beloved brethren, my belief in our common faith so far as our wonted human speech permitted and the Lord, whom I have ever besought, as He is my witness, has given me power. If I have said too little, nay, if I have said almost nothing, I ask you to remember that it is not belief but words that are lacking. Perhaps I shall thereby prove that my human nature, though not my will, is weak: and I pardon my human nature if it cannot speak as it would of God, for it is enough for its salvation to have believed the things of God.
66. Since your faith and mine, so far as I am conscious, is in no danger before God, and I have shewn you, as you wished, the creeds that have been set forth by the Eastern bishops (though I repeat that they were few in number, for, considering how numerous the Eastern Churches are, that faith is held by few), I have also declared my own convictions about divine things, according to the doctrine of the apostles. it remains for you to investigate without suspicion the points that mislead the unguarded temper of our simple minds, for there is now no opportunity left of hearing. And although I shall no longer fear that sentence will

not be passed upon me in accordance with the whole exposition of the creed, I ask you to allow me to express a wish that I may not have the sentence passed until the exposition is actually completed.

67. Many of us, beloved brethren, declare the substance of the Father and the Son to be one in such a spirit that I consider the statement to be quite as much wrong as right. The expression contains both a conscientious conviction and the opportunity for delusion. If we assert the one substance, understanding it to mean the likeness of natural qualities and such a likeness as includes not only the species but the genus, we assert it in a truly religious spirit, provided we believe that the one substance signifies such a similitude of qualities that the unity is not the unity of a monad but of equals. By equality I mean exact similarity so that the likeness may be called an equality, provided that the equality imply unity because it implies an equal pair, and that the unity which implies an equal pair be not wrested to mean a single Person. Therefore the one substance will be asserted piously if it does not abolish the subsistent personality or divide the one substance into two, for their substance by the true character of the Son's birth and by their natural likeness is so free from difference that it is called one.

68. But if we attribute one substance to the Father and the Son to teach that there is a solitary personal existence although denoted by two titles: then though we confess the Son with our lips we do not keep Him in our hearts, since in confessing one substance we then really say that the Father and the Son constitute one undifferentiated Person. Nay, there immediately arises an opportunity for the erroneous belief that the Father is divided, and that He cut off a portion of Himself to be His Son. That is what the heretics mean when they say the substance is one: and the terminology of our good confession so gratifies them that it aids heresy when the word o0moou/sioj is left by itself, undefined and ambiguous. There is also a third error. When the Father and the Son are said to be of one substance this is thought to imply a prior substance, which the two equal Persons both possess. Consequently the word implies three things, one original substance and two Persons, who are as it were fellow-heirs of this one substance. For as two fellow-heirs are two, and the heritage of which they are fellow-heirs is anterior to them, so the two equal Persons might appear to be sharers in one anterior substance. The assertion of the one substance of the Father and the Son signifies either that there is one Person who has two titles, or one divided substance that has made two imperfect substances, or that there is a third prior substance which has been usurped and assumed by two and which is called one because it was one before it was severed into two. Where then is there room for the Son's birth? Where is the Father or the Son, if these names are explained not by the birth of the divine nature but a severing or sharing of one anterior substance?

69. Therefore amid the numerous dangers which threaten the faith, brevity of words must be employed sparingly, lest what is piously meant be thought to be impiously expressed, and a word be judged guilty of occasioning heresy when it has been used in conscientious and unsuspecting innocence. A Catholic about to state that the substance of the Father and

the Son is one, must not begin at that point: nor hold this word all important as though true faith did not exist where the word was not used. He will be safe in asserting the one substance if he has first said that the Father is unbegotten, that the Son is born, that He draws His personal subsistence from the Father, that He is like the Father in might, honour and nature, that He is subject to the Father as to the Author of His being, that He did not commit robbery by making Himself equal with God, in whose form He remained, that He was obedient unto death. He did not spring from nothing, but was born. He is not incapable of birth but equally eternal. He is not the Father, but the Son begotten of Him. He is not any portion of God, but is whole God. He is not Himself the source but the image; the image of God born of God to be God. He is not a creature but is God. Not another God in the kind of His substance, but the one God in virtue of the essence of His exactly similar substance. God is not one in Person but in nature, for the Born and the Begetter have nothing different or unlike. After saying all this, he does not err in declaring one substance of the Father and the Son. Nay, if he now denies the one substance he sins.

70. Therefore let no one think that our words were meant to deny the one substance. We are giving the very reason why it should not be denied. Let no one think that the word ought to be used by itself and unexplained. Otherwise the word o0moou/sioj is not used in a religious spirit. I will not endure to hear that Christ was born of Mary unless I also hear, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God . I will not hear Christ was hungry, unless I hear that after His fast of forty days He said, Man doth not live by bread alone . I will not hear He thirsted unless I also hear Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst . I will not hear Christ suffered unless I hear, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified . I will not hear He died unless I hear He rose again. Let us bring forward no isolated point of the divine mysteries to rouse the suspicions of our hearers and give an occasion to the blasphemers. We must first preach the birth and subordination of the Son and the likeness of His nature, and then we may preach in godly fashion that the Father and the Son are of one substance. I do not personally understand why we ought to preach before everything else, as the most valuable and important of doctrines and in itself sufficient, a truth which cannot be piously preached before other truths, although it is impious to deny it after them.

71. Beloved brethren, we must not deny that there is one substance of the Father and the Son, but we must not declare it without giving our reasons. The one substance must be derived from the true character of the begotten nature, not from any division, any confusion of Persons, any sharing of an anterior substance. It may be right to assert the one substance, it may be right to keep silence about it. You believe in the birth and you believe in the likeness. Why should the word cause mutual suspicions, when we view the fact in the same way? Let us believe and say that there is one substance, but in virtue of the true character of the nature and not to imply a blasphemous unity of Persons. Let the oneness be due to the fact that there are similar Persons and not a solitary Person. 72. But perhaps the word similarity may not seem fully appropriate. If so, I ask how I can express the equality of one Person with the other except by such a word? Or is to be like not tile same thing as to be

equal? If I say the divine nature is one I am suspected of meaning that it is undifferentiated: if I say the Persons are similar, I mean that I compare what is exactly like. I ask what position equal holds between like and one? I enquire whether it means similarity rather than singularity. Equality does not exist between things unlike, nor does similarity exist in one. What is the difference between those that are similar and those that are equal? Can one equal be distinguished from the other? So those who are equal are not unlike. If then those who are unlike are not equals, what can those who are like be but equals?

73. Therefore, beloved brethren, in declaring that the Son is like in all things to the Father, we declare nothing else than that He is equal. Likeness means perfect equality, and this fact we may gather from the Holy Scriptures, And Adam lived two hundred and thirty years, and begat a son according to his own image and according to his own likeness; and called his name Seth . I ask what was the nature of his likeness and image which Adam begot in Seth? Remove bodily infirmities, remove the first stage of conception, remove birth-pangs, and every kind of human need. I ask whether this likeness which exists in Seth differs in nature from the author of his being, or whether there was in each an essence of a different kind, so that Seth had not at his birth the natural essence of Adam? Nay, he had a likeness to Adam, even though we deny it, for his nature was not different. This likeness of nature in Seth was not due to a nature of a different kind, since Seth was begotten from only one father, so we see that a likeness of nature renders things equal because this likeness betokens an exactly similar essence. Therefore every son by virtue of his natural birth is the equal of his father, in that he has a natural likeness to him.

And with regard to the nature of the Father and the Son the blessed John teaches the very likeness which Moses says existed between Seth and Adam, a likeness which is this equality of nature. He says, Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His father, making Himself equal with God . Why do we allow minds that are dulled with the weight of sin to interfere with the doctrines and sayings of such holy men, and impiously match our rash though sluggish senses against their impregnable assertions? According to Moses, Seth is the likeness of Adam, according to John, the Son is equal to the Father, yet we seek to find a third impossible something between the Father and the Son. He is like the Father, He is the Son of the Father, He is born of Him: this fact alone justices the assertion that they are one.

74. I am aware, dear brethren, that there are some who confess the likeness, but deny the equality. Let them speak as they will, and insert the poison of their blasphemy into ignorant ears. If they say that there is a difference between likeness and equality, I ask whence equality can be obtained? If the Son is like the Father in essence, might, glory and eternity, I ask why they decline to say He is equal? In the above creed an anathema was pronounced on any man who should say that the Father was Father of an essence unlike Himself. Therefore if He gave to Him whom He begat without effect upon Himself a nature which was neither another nor a different nature, He cannot have given Him any other than His own. Likeness then is the sharing of what is one's own, the sharing of one's own

is equality, and equality admits of no difference . Those things which do not differ at all are one. So the Father and the Son are one, not by unity of Person but by equality of nature.

75. Although general conviction and divine authority sanction no difference between likeness and equality, since both Moses and John would lead us to believe the Son is like the Father and also His equal, yet let us consider whether the Lord, when the Jews were angry with Him for calling God His Father and thus making Himself equal with God, did Himself teach that He was equal with God. He says, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do . He shewed that the Father originates by saying Can do nothing of Himself, He calls attention to His own obedience by adding, but what He seeth the Father do. There is no difference of might, He says He can do nothing that He does not see because it is His nature and not His sight that gives Him power. But His obedience consists in His being able only when He sees. And so by the fact that He has power when He sees, He shews that He does not gain power by seeing but claims power on the authority of seeing. The natural might does not differ in Father and Son, the Son's equality of power with the Father not being due to any increase or advance of the Son's nature but to the Father's example. In short that honour which the Son's subjection retained for the Father belongs equally to the Son on the strength of His nature.

He has Himself added, What things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise . Surely then the likeness implies equality. Certainly it does, even though we deny it: for these also doeth the Son likewise. Are not things done likewise the same? Or do not the same things admit equality? Is there any other difference between likeness and equality, when things that are done likewise are understood to be made the same? Unless perchance any one will deny that the same things are equal, or deny that similar things are equal, for things that are done in like manner are not only declared to be equal but to be the same things.

76. Therefore, brethren, likeness of nature can be attacked by no cavil, and the Son cannot be said to lack the true qualities of the Father's nature because He is like Him. No real likeness exists where there is no equality of nature, and equality of nurture cannot exist unless it imply unity, not unity of person but of kind. It is right to believe, religious to feel, and wholesome to confess, that we do not deny that the substance of the Father and the Son is one because it is similar, and that it is similar because they are one.77. Beloved, after explaining in a faithful and godly manner the meaning of the phrases one substance, in Greeko0moou/sion, and similar substance or o0moiou/sion, and shewing very completely the faults which may arise from a deceitful brevity or dangerous simplicity of language, it only remains for me to address myself to the holy bishops of the East. We have no longer any mutual suspicions about our faith, and those which before now have been due to mere misunderstanding are being cleared away. They will pardon me if I proceed to speak somewhat freely with them on the basis of our common faith.

78. Ye who have begun to be eager for apostolic and evangelical doctrine, kindled by the fire of faith amid the thick darkness of a night of heresy, with how great a hope of recalling

the true faith have you inspired us by consistently checking the bold attack of infidelity! In former days it was only in obscure corners that our Lord Jesus Christ was denied to be the Son of God according to His nature, and was asserted to have no share in the Father's essence, but like the creatures to have received His origin from things that were not. But the heresy now bursts forth backed by civil authority, and what it once muttered in secret it has of late boasted of in open triumph. Whereas in former times it has tried by secret mines to creep into the Catholic Church, it has now put forth every power of this world in the fawning. manners of a false religion. For the perversity of these men has been so audacious that when they dared not preach this doctrine publicly themselves, they beguiled the Emperor to give them hearing. For they did beguile an ignorant sovereign so successfully that though he was busy with war he expounded their infidel creed, and before he was regenerate by baptism imposed a form of faith upon the churches. Opposing bishops they drove into exile. They drove me also to wish for exile, by trying to force me to commit blasphemy.

May I always be an exile, if only the truth begins to be preached again! I thank God that the Emperor, through your warnings, acknowledged his ignorance, and through these your definitions of faith came to recognize an error which was not his own but that of his advisers. He freed himself from the reproach of impiety in the eyes of God and men, when he respectfully received your embassy, and after you had won from him a confession of his ignorance, shewed his knowledge of the hypocrisy of the men whose influence brought him under this reproach.

79. These are deceivers, I both fear and believe they are deceivers, beloved brethren; for they have ever deceived. This very document is marked by hypocrisy. They excuse themselves for having desired silence as to o0moou/sion and o0moiou/sion on the ground that they taught that the meaning of the words was identical. Rustic bishops, I trow, and untutored in the significance of o0moou/sion: as though there had never been any Council about the matter, or any dispute. But suppose they did not know what o0moou/sion was, or were really unaware that o0moou/sion meant of a like essence. Granted that they were ignorant of this, why did they wish to be ignorant of the generation of the Son? If it cannot be expressed in words, is it therefore unknowable? But if we cannot know how He was born, can we refuse to know even this, that God the Son being born not of another substance but of God, has not an essence differing from the Father's? Have they not read that the Son is to be honoured even as the Father, that they prefer the Father in honour? Were they ignorant that the Father is seen in the Son, that they make the Son differ in dignity, splendour and majesty? Is this due to ignorance that the Son, like all other things, is made subject to the Father, and while thus subjected is not distinguished from them?

A distinction does exist, for the subjection of the Son is filial reverence, the subjection of all other things is the weakness of things created. They knew that He suffered, but when, may I ask, did they come to know that He jointly suffered? They avoid the words o0moou/sion and o0moiou/sion, because they are not in Scripture: I enquire whence they gathered that the Son jointly suffered? Can they mean that there were two Persons who suffered? This

is what the word leads us to believe. What of those words, Jesus Christ the Son of God? Is Jesus Christ one, and the Son of God another? If the Son of God is not one and the same inwardly and outwardly, it ignorance on such a point is permissible, then believe that they were ignorant of the meaning of o0moou/sion. But if on these points ignorance leads to blasphemy and yet cannot find even a false excuse, I fear that they lied in professing ignorance of the word o0moiou/sion. I do not greatly complain of the pardon you extended them; it is reverent to reserve for God His own prerogatives, and mistakes of ignorance are but human. But the two bishops, Ursacius and Valens, must pardon me for not believing that at their age and with their experience they were really ignorant. It is very difficult not to think they are lying, seeing that it is only by a falsehood that they can clear themselves on another score. But God rather grant that I am mistaken than that they really knew.

For I had rather be judged in the wrong than that your faith should be contaminated by communion with the guilt of heresy.

80. Now I beseech you, holy brethren, to listen to my anxieties with indulgence. The Lord is my witness that in no matter do I wish to criticise the definitions of your faith, which you brought to Sirmium. But forgive me if I do not understand certain points; I will comfort myself with the recollection that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets . Perhaps I am not presumptuous in gathering from this that I too may understand something that another does not know. Not that I have dared to hint that you are ignorant of anything according to the measure of knowledge: but for the unity of the Catholic faith suffer me to be as anxious as yourselves.

81. Your letter on the meaning of o0moou/sionand o0moiou/sion, which Valens, Ursacius and Germinius demanded should be read at Sirmium, I understand to have been on certain points no less cautious than outspoken. And with regard to o0moou/sion and o0moiou/sion your proof has left no difficulty untouched. As to the latter, which implies the similarity of essence, our opinions are the same. But in dealing with the o0moou/sion, or the one essence, you declared that it ought to be rejected because the use of this word led to the idea that there was a prior substance which two Persons had divided between themselves. I see the flaw in that way of taking it. Any such sense is profane, and must be rejected by the Church's common decision. The second reason that you added was that our fathers, when Paul of Samosata was pronounced a heretic, also rejected the word o0moou/sion, on the ground that by attributing this title to God he had taught that He was single and undifferentiated, and at once Father and to Himself. Wherefore the Church still regards it as most profane to exclude the different personal qualities, and, under the mask of the aforesaid expressions, to revive the error of confounding the Persons and denying the personal distinctions in the Godhead. Thirdly you mentioned this reason for disapproving of the o0moou/sion that in the Council of Nicaea our fathers were compelled to adopt the word on account of those who said the Son was a creature: although it ought not to be accepted, because it is not to be found in Scripture. Your saying this causes me some astonishment. For if the word o0moou/sion

must be repudiated on account of its novelty, I am afraid that the word o0moiou/sion which is equally absent in Scripture, is some danger.

82. But I am not needlessly critical on this point. For I had rather use an expression that is new than commit sin by rejecting it. So, then, we will pass by this question of innovation, and see whether the real question is not reduced to something which all our fellow-Christians unanimously condemn. What man in his senses will ever declare that there is a third substance, which is common to both the Father and the Son? And who that has been reborn in Christ and confessed both the Son and the Father will follow him of Samosata in confessing that Christ is Himself to Himself both Father and Son? So in condemning the blasphemies of the heretics we hold the same opinion, and such an interpretation of o0moou/sion we not only reject but hate. The question of an erroneous interpretation is at an end, when we agree in condemning the error.

83. But when I at last turn to speak on the third point, I pray you to let there be no conflict of suspicions where there is peace at heart. Do not think I would advance anything hurtful to the progress of unity. For it is absurd to fear cavil about a word when the fact expressed by the word presents no difficulty. Who objects to the fact that the Council of Nicaea adopted the word o0moou/sion5 He who does so, must necessarily like its rejection by the Arians. The Arians rejected the word, that God the Son might not be asserted to be born of the substance of God the Father, but formed out of nothing, like the creatures. This is no new thing that I speak of. The perfidy of the Arians is to be found in many of their letters and is its own witness. If the godlessness of the negation then gave a godly meaning to the assertion, I ask why we should now criticise a word which was then rightly adopted because it was wrongly denied? If it was rightly adopted, why after supporting the right should that which extinguished the wrong be called to account? Having been used as the instrument of evil it came to be the instrument of good .

84. Let us see, therefore, what the Council of Nicaea intended by saying o0moou/sion, that is, of one substance: not certainly to hatch the heresy which arises from an erroneous interpretation of o0moou/sion. I do not think the Council says that the Father and the Son divided and shared a previously existing substance to make it their own. It will not be adverse to religion to insert in our argument the creed which was then composed to preserve religion. "We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible: "And in one our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the Father, Only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, born not made, of one substance with the Father (which in Greek they call o0moou/sion); By whom all things were made which are in heaven and in earth, Who for our salvation came down, And was incarnate, And was made man, And suffered, And rose again the third day, And ascended into heaven, And shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"And in the Holy Ghost. "But those who say, There was when He was not, And before He was born He was not, And that He was made of things that existed not, or of another substance and essence, saying that God was able to change and alter, to these the Catholic Church says

anathema." Here the Holy Council of religious men introduces no prior substance divided between two Persons, but the Son born of the substance of the Father. Do we, too, deny or confess anything else? And after other explanations of our common faith, it says, Born not made, of one substance with the Father (which in Greek they call o0moou/sion). What occasion is there here for an erroneous interpretation? The Son is declared to be born of the substance of the Father, not made: lest while the word born implies His divinity, the word made should imply He is a creature. For the same reason we have of one substance, not to teach that there is one solitary divine Person, but that the Son is born of the substance of God and subsists from no other source, nor in any diversity caused by a difference of substance. Surely again this is our faith, that He subsists from no other source, and He is not unlike the Father. Is not the meaning here of the word o0moou/sion) that the Son is produced of the Father's nature, the essence of the Son having no other origin, and that both, therefore, have one unvarying essence? As the Son's essence has no other origin, we may rightly believe that both are of one essence, since the Son could be born with no substance but that derived from the Father's nature which was its source.

85. But perhaps on the opposite side it will be said that it ought to meet with disapproval, because an erroneous interpretation is generally put upon it. If such is our fear, we ought to erase the words of the Apostle, There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus , because Photinus uses this to support his heresy, and refuse to read it because he interprets it mischievously. And the fire or the sponge should annihilate the Epistle to the Philippians, lest Marcion should read again in it, And was found in fashion as a man , and say Christ's body was only a phantasm and not a body. Away with the Gospel of John, lest Sabellius learn from it, I and the Father are one . Nor must those who now affirm the Son to be a creature find it written, The Father is greater than I . Nor must those who wish to declare that the Son is unlike the Father read: But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not tire angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father . We must dispense, too, with the books of Moses, lest the darkness be thought coeval with God who dwells in the unborn light, since in Genesis the day began to be after the night;

lest the years of Methuselah extend later than the date of the deluge, and consequently more than eight souls were saved lest God hearing the cry of Sodom when the measure of its sins was full should come down as though ignorant of the cry to see if the measure of its sins was full according to the cry, and be found to be ignorant of what He knew; lest any one of those who buried Moses should have known his sepulchre when he was buried; lest these passages, as the heretics think, should prove that the contradictions of the law make it its own enemy. So as they do not understand them, we ought not to read them. And though I should not have said it myself unless forced by the argument, we must, if it seems fit, abolish all the divine and holy Gospels with their message of our salvation, lest their statements be found inconsistent; lest we should read that the Lord who was to send the Holy Spirit was Himself born of the Holy Spirit; lest He who was to threaten death by the sword to those who should take the sword, should before His passion command that a sword

should be brought; lest He who was about to descend into hell should say that He would be in paradise with the thief;

lest finally the Apostles should be found at fault, in that when commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they baptized in the name of Jesus only. I speak to ton, brethren, to you, who are no longer nourished with milk, but with meat, and are strong . Shall we, because the wise men of the world have not understood these things, and they are foolish unto them, be wise as the world is wise and believe these things foolish? Because they are hidden from the godless, shall we refuse to shine with the truth of a doctrine which we understand? We prejudice the cause of divine doctrines when we think that they ought not to exist, because some do not regard them as holy. If so, we must not glory in the cross of Christ, because it is a stumbling-block to the world; and we must not preach death in connection with the living God, lest the godless argue that God is dead.

86. Some misunderstand o0moou/sion; does that prevent me from understanding it? The Samosatene was wrong in using the word o0moou/sion; does that make the Arians right in denying it? Eighty bishops once rejected it; but three hundred and eighteen recently accepted it. And for my own part I think the number sacred, for with such a number Abraham overcame the wicked kings, and was blessed by Him who is a type of the eternal priesthood. The former disapproved of it to oppose a heretic: the latter surely approved of it to oppose a heretic. The authority of the fathers is weighty, is the sanctity of their successors trivial? If their opinions were contradictory, we ought to decide which is the better: but if both their approval and disapproval established the same fact, why do we carp at such good decisions? 87. But perhaps you will reply, 'Some of those who were then present at Nicaea have now decreed that we ought to keep silence about the word o0moou/sion.' Against my will I must answer: Do not the very same men rule that we must keep silence about the word o0moiou/sion? I beseech you that there may be found no one of them but Hosius, that old man who loves a peaceful grave too well, who shall be found to think that we ought to keep silence about both. Amid the fury of the heretics into what straits shall we fall at last, if while we do not accept both, we keep neither? For there seems to be no impiety in saying that since neither is found in Scripture, we ought to confess neither or both.

88. Holy brethren, I understand by o0moou/sion God of God, not of an essence that is unlike, not divided but born, and that the Son has a birth which is unique, of the substance of the unborn God, that He is begotten yet co-eternal and wholly like the Father. I believed this before I knew the word o0moou/sion but it greatly helped my belief. Why do you condemn my faith when I express it by o0moou/sion while you cannot disapprove it when expressed by o0moiou/sion? For you condemn my faith, or rather your own, when you condemn its verbal equivalent. Do others misunderstand it? Let us join in condemning the misunderstanding, but not deprive our faith of its security. Do you think we must subscribe to the Samosatene Council to prevent any one from using o0moou/sion in the sense of Paul of Samosata? Then let us also subscribe to the Council of Nicaea, so that the Arians may not impugn the word.

Have we to fear that o0moiou/sion does not imply the same belief as o0moou/sion? Let us decree that there is no difference between being of one or of a similar substance. The word o0moou/sion can be understood in a wrong sense Let us prove that it can be understood in a very good sense. We hold one and the same sacred truth. I beseech you that we should agree that this truth, which is one and the same, should be regarded as sacred. Forgive me, brethren, as I have so often asked you to do. You are not Arians: why should you be thought to be Arians by denying the o0moou/sion?

89. But you say: 'The ambiguity of the word o0moou/sion troubles and offends me.' I pray you hear me again and be not offended. I am troubled by the inadequacy of the word o0moiou/sion. Many deceptions come from similarity. I distrust vessels plated with gold, for I may be deceived by the metal underneath: and yet that which is seen resembles gold. I distrust anything that looks like milk, lest that which is offered to me be milk but not sheep's milk: for cow's milk certainly looks like it. Sheep's milk cannot be really like sheep's milk unless drawn from a sheep. True likeness belongs to a true natural connection. But when the true natural connection exists, the o0moou/sion is implied. It is a likeness according to essence when one piece of metal is like another and not plated, if milk which is of the same colour as other milk is not different in taste. Nothing can be like gold but gold, or like milk that did not belong to that species. I have often been deceived by the colour of wine: and yet by tasting the liquor have recognized that it was of another kind. I have seen meat look like other meat, but afterwards the flavour has revealed the difference to me. Yes, I fear those resemblances which are not due to a unity of nature.

90. I am afraid, brethren, of the brood of heresies which are successively produced in the East: and I have already read what I tell you I fear. There was nothing whatever suspicious in the document which some of you, with the assent of certain Orientals, took on your embassy to Sirmium to be there subscribed. But some misunderstanding has arisen in reference to certain statements at the beginning which I believe you, my holy brethren, Basil, Eustathius, and Eleusius, omitted to mention lest they should give offence. If it was right to draw them up, it was wrong to bury them in silence. But if they are now unmentioned because they were wrong we must beware lest they should be repeated at some future time. Out of consideration for you I have hitherto said nothing about this: yet you know as well as I do that this creed was not identical with the creed of Ancyra. I am not talking gossip: I possess a copy of the creed, and I did not get it from laymen, it was given me by bishops.

91. I pray you, brethren, remove all suspicion and leave no occasion for it. To approve of o0moiou/sion, we need not disapprove of o0moou/sion. Let us think of the many holy prelates now at rest: what judgment will the Lord pronounce upon us if we now say anathema to them? What will be our case if we push the matter so far as to deny that they were bishops and so deny that we are ourselves bishops? We were ordained by them and are their successors. Let us renounce our episcopate, if we took its office from men under anathema. Brethren, forgive my anguish: it is an impious act that you are attempting. I cannot endure to hear the man anathematized who says o0moou/sion and says it in the right sense. No

fault can be found with a word which does no harm to the meaning of' religion. I do not know the word o0moiou/sion, or understand it, unless it confesses a similarity of essence. I call the God of heaven and earth to witness, that when I had heard neither word, my belief was always such that I should have interpreted o0moiou/sion by o0moou/sion. That is, I believed that nothing could be similar according to nature unless it was of the same nature. Though long ago regenerate in baptism, and for some time a bishop, I never heard of the Nicene creed until I was going into exile, but the Gospels and Epistles suggested to me the meaning of o0moou/sion and o0moiou/sion. Our desire is sacred.

Let us not condemn the fathers, let us not encourage heretics, lest while we drive one heresy away, we nurture another. After the Council of Nicaea our fathers interpreted the due meaning of o0moou/sion with scrupulous care; the books are extant, the facts are fresh in men's minds: if anything has to be added to the interpretation, let us consult together. Between us we can thoroughly establish the faith, so that what has been well settled need not be disturbed, and what has been misunderstood may be removed.

92. Beloved brethren, I have passed beyond the bounds of courtesy, and forgetting my modesty I have been compelled by my affection for you to write thus of many abstruse matters which until this our age were unattempted and left in silence. I have spoken what I myself believed, conscious that I owed it as my soldier's service to the Church to send to you in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel by these letters the voice of the office which I hold in Christ. It is yours to discuss, to provide and to act, that the inviolable fidelity in which you stand you may still keep with conscientious hearts, and that you may continue to hold what you hold now. Remember my exile in your holy prayers. I do not know, now that I have thus expounded the faith, whether it would be as sweet to return unto you again in the Lord Jesus Christ as it would be full of peace to die. That our God and Lord may keep you pure and undefiled unto the day of His appearing is my desire, dearest brethren.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.