

Council of Nicea by Mgr. Philip Hughes

The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils: 325-1870

Chapter 1. The First General Council of Nicaea, 325

It is more than sixteen hundred years since the first of the General Councils of the Church met. This is so long ago that the very names of the places connected with its history have quite disappeared from common knowledge and the atlases. They have about them an air of the fabulous; Nicaea, Bithynia, Nicomedia, and the rest. The very unfamiliarity of the sounds is a reminder that even for the purpose of the slight consideration which is all that these pages allow, a considerable adjustment of the mind is called for. We must, somehow, revive the memory of a world that has wholly passed away, that had disappeared, indeed, well nigh a thousand years already when Columbus and his ships first sighted the coasts of the new continent.

The business that brought the three hundred or so bishops to Nicaea in 325 from all over the Christian world was to find a remedy for the disturbances that had seriously troubled the East for now nearly two years. The cause of these disturbances was a new teaching about the basic mystery of the Christian religion.

Let our expert summarise the position, and say what it was that the new leader, Arius by name, had lately been popularising, through sermons, writings, and popular hymns and songs. "It was the doctrine of Arianism that our Lord was a pure creature, made out of nothing, liable to fall, the Son of God by adoption, not by nature, and called God in Scripture, not as being really such, but only in name. At the same time [Arius] would not have denied that the Son and the Holy Ghost were creatures transcendently near to God, and immeasurably distant from the rest of creation.

"Now, by contrast, how does the teaching of the Fathers who preceded Arius, stand relatively to such a representation of the Christian Creed? Is

it such, or how far is it such, as to bear Arius out in so representing it? This is the first point to inquire about.

"First of all, the teaching of the Fathers was necessarily directed by the form of Baptism, as given by our Lord Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. To become one of His disciples was, according to His own words, to be baptized 'into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'; that is, into the profession, into the service, of a Triad. Such was our Lord's injunction: and ever since, before Arianism and after, down to this day, the initial lesson in religion taught to every Christian, on his being made a Christian, is that he thereby belongs to a certain Three, whatever more, or whether anything more, is revealed to us in Christianity about that Three.

"The doctrine then of a Supreme Triad is the elementary truth of Christianity; and accordingly, as might have been expected, its recognition is a sort of key-note, on which centre the thoughts and language of all theologians, from which they start, with which they end."[1]

Examination of a chain of pre-Arian writers, from every part of Christendom, reveals that "there was during the second and third centuries a profession and teaching concerning the Holy Trinity, not vague and cloudy, but of a certain determinate character," and that this teaching "was contradictory and destructive of the Arian hypothesis." [2] And from all this literature the fact emerges that, from the beginning, "some doctrine or other of a Trinity lies at the very root of the Christian conception of the Supreme Being, and of his worship and service": and that "it is impossible to view historical Christianity apart from the doctrine of the Trinity." [3]

It was round about the year 323 that the Arian crisis developed. The struggle between the advocates of the new theory and the Church authorities who stood by the tradition was to continue thence onward for a good fifty years and more. And now, for the first time in the history of the Church, the State intervened in what was, of itself, a dispute about

belief. A second point to note is that the State, on the whole, sided with the innovators, and was hostile to the defenders of the traditional truth.

The history of those fifty-six years (325-41), that followed the Council of Nicaea and closed with the next General Council (Constantinople I), is part of the history of both these councils. And its complexity defies any summary simplification. If we turn to Newman for a clue to the meaning of it all, he will tell us that this long and stubborn struggle is nothing else than a particular passage in the conflict that never ceases between the Church and the secular power. "The same principle of government which led the emperors to denounce Christianity while they were pagans, led them to dictate to its bishops, when they had become Christians." Such an idea as that "religion should be independent of state authority" was, in the eyes of all these princes, contrary to the nature of things. And not only was this conflict "inevitable," but, Newman continues, it might have been foreseen as probable that the occasion of the conflict would be a controversy within the Church about some fundamental doctrine. Newman's last remarkable words may usefully warn us that in Church History things are not always so simple as we expect.[4]

Even the full history of a General (i.e., world-wide) Council called in such circumstances, the first council of its kind--which had no precedents to guide its procedure, or to instruct the generality about the special value attaching to its decisions--even this would inevitably present difficulties to minds sixteen hundred years later; minds bred in a detailed, centuries-old tradition about the kind of thing General Councils are, and furnished with definite ideas about their nature, procedure, and authority.

But we are very far from possessing anything like a full history of this first Council of Nicaea. Of any official record of the day-to-day proceedings--the acta of the council--there is no trace. The earliest historians, from whose accounts our knowledge must derive, were in large measure partisan writers. And of the two writers who were present at the council, the one who was a historian[5] was an ally of the heretics and the

quasi-official panegyrist of the emperor Constantine who called the council; and the other,[6] though he has much indeed to say about the council, does not anywhere profess to be writing a record of its acts.

Nowhere, of course, is our knowledge of the history of these first centuries of the Church anything like so complete as is our knowledge of, let us say, any part of it during the last eight or nine hundred years. In the matter of Nicaea, as in other questions, scholars are still disputing-- and not on religious grounds--whether, for example, certain key documents were really written by the personages whose names they bear. About the details of the history of all these early councils, because of the insufficiency of our information, there is inevitably much confusion, great obscurity. Yet there are compensations for those who study it. "History does not bring clearly upon the canvas the details which were familiar to the ten thousand minds of whose combined movements and fortunes it treats. Such is it from its very nature; nor can the defect ever fully be remedied. This must be admitted . . . still no one can mistake its general teaching in this matter, whether he accept it or stumble at it. Bold outlines, which cannot be disregarded, rise out of the records of the past, when we look to see what it will give up to us: they may be dim, they may be incomplete, but they are definite; there is that which they are not, which they cannot be." [7]

The state, or political society, in which the Arian troubles arose and developed was that which we know as the Roman Empire. This state, for its inhabitants, was one and the same thing as civilisation, and not surprisingly. As the accession of Constantine to the sole rulership, in 324, found the empire, so it had endured for three hundred years and more. History does not record any political achievement even remotely parallel to this. For the empire took in, besides Italy, the whole of Europe west of the Rhine and south of the Danube and also the southern half of the island of Britain. In the east it included the whole of the modern state we call Turkey, with Syria also, Palestine, and Egypt, and the lands on the southern shore of the Mediterranean westward thence to the Atlantic.

Races as varied as the peoples who today inhabit these lands, with just as little to unite them naturally, lived then for some four hundred years under the rule of the emperors, with a minimum of internal disturbance and in almost entire freedom from foreign war. The stresses and strains of the internal life of the empire were, of course, a constant menace to this marvellous unity. The supreme ruler, with whom lay the fullness of legislative power, who was the final judge in all lawsuits, and the head of the national religion, was the ruler because he was the commander in chief of the army: his very title imperator, which we translate "emperor," means just this.[8] And for the imperator, it was one of the chief problems of government to maintain his military prestige with the vast armies. No man could long rule the Roman world who did not first hold the legions true to himself by his own professional worth. All the great rulers who, in the course of these four centuries, developed and adapted and reformed the complex life of the state, its finances, its law, its administration, were in the first place great soldiers, highly successful generals: Trajan, for example, Hadrian, Septimius Severus, Decius, Diocletian.

And Constantine, the first emperor to abandon the pagan religion and to profess himself a Christian, stood out to his own generation primarily as a highly successful soldier, triumphant in a series of contests with rivals for the supreme place. Such wars, fights between rival generals for the imperial throne, were the chief curse of Roman political life, and especially so in what we reckon as the third century, the century in the last quarter of which Constantine himself was born. He would have been a little boy of nine or ten when the great Diocletian became emperor in 284, who, to put an end to these suicidal wars, immediately associated another soldier with himself, as joint emperor, the one to rule the East, the other the West. In 293 Diocletian took this devolution of power a step further. With each emperor there was now associated a kind of assistant emperor, with the title of Caesar, the actual ruler of allotted territories and destined to be, in time, his principal's successor. The soldier chosen in 293 as the first western Caesar was Constantine's father, Constantius, commonly

called Chlorus (the Pale) from his complexion. His territory was the modern countries of Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, and England.

These details of political reorganisation have a direct connection with our story. The reader knows--who does not?--that one feature of the history of this Roman state was its hostility to the Christian religion. Scarcely a generation went by without some serious persecution. And Diocletian ended his reign with the most dreadful persecution of all (303). This was largely due to the influence of his colleague, the Caesar, Galerius who, in 305, was to succeed him as emperor in the East. And of all the territories, it was Egypt that provided most of the victims in the eight years the terror lasted--Egypt which was to be the principal scene of the Arian troubles and, par excellence, of the Catholic resistance to them. In the West the persecution was, by comparison, mild, and in the domains of Constantius Chlorus there was no persecution at all. This emperor's personal religious history, and his attitude towards the Christian religion, is full of interest. His views were also the views of his son Constantine, and they perhaps provide a clue to the strange and baffling story, not only of the long successful Arian defiance of the decisions of the Council of Nicaea, but of that first Christian emperor's seeming unawareness of the defiance.

Constantine's own character is, of course, an element of the first importance in the history of the council he convoked; and so also is the kind of thing which his "conversion" to Christianity was, some twelve years before the Arian problem arose. At the time of the council he was nearing his fiftieth year, and he had been emperor for almost twenty. History seems to reveal him as intelligent indeed, but passionate and headstrong; a bold campaigner and, as an administrator, "magnificent" in the Aristotelian sense. That is to say, he loved great schemes, supported them always with princely generosity, improvised readily, and delighted to dazzle by the scale of his successes. It was a natural part of the character that he was ambitious, confident of success, and--a less obvious trait--his ambition was linked with a "mystical" belief that he was destined to

succeed, and a sure, if confused, notion that the heavenly powers were on his side. Be it remembered here, once more, that this man was omnipotent in public affairs, as no ruler has been even in the recent revolutions of our own time; for the Roman emperor's omnipotence was universally accepted by his millions of subjects as his right, as something belonging to the very nature of things.

It is less easy to say exactly what Constantine knew or believed about the religion of Christ, twelve years after he had, as emperor, publicly made it his own. Certainly it would be a gross error to consider the business of his mystical dream on the eve of his victory at the Milvian Bridge (312), that made him supreme master of the West, as parallel to what happened to St. Paul on the road to Damascus. His own personal religion at the time was that of his pagan father, the cult suddenly promoted to the supreme place as the official religion about the time that Constantine was born, by the then emperor, Aurelian (269-75). This was the cult of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun), the worship of the divine spirit by whom the whole universe is ruled, the spirit whose symbol is the sun; a symbol in which this spirit in some way specially manifests itself. Under Aurelian this cult was organised with great splendour. The temple of the Sun which he built at Rome must have been one of the wonders of the world. Aurelian's coins bear the inscription The Sun is the Lord of the Roman Empire. The whole cult is penetrated with the idea that there is a single spirit who is supreme, with the idea of an overruling divine monarchy. Moreover, the cult was in harmony with a philosophical religion steadily growing, in the high places of the administration, throughout this same century, the cult of Summus Deus--the God who is supreme.

Constantine's father remained faithful to this cult of Sol Invictus even when his seniors, Diocletian and Maximian, reverted to the old cults of Jupiter and Hercules. And once Constantine--no more than Caesar on his father's death (306)--felt himself really master in the West, Hercules and Jupiter disappeared from his coinage, and Sol Invictus was restored, while

the official panegyrics laud "that divine spirit which governs this whole world." This in 311.

What Constantine gathered from his famous dream in September 312 was that this supreme divinity was promising him salvation in this military crisis, had despatched a messenger to assure him of it and to tell him how to act, and that this messenger was Christ, the God whom the Christians worshipped, and that the badge his soldiers must wear was the sign of Christ, the cross. He did not, on the morrow of his victory, ask for baptism, nor even to be enrolled as a catechumen. Constantine was never so much as even this. And not until he lay dying, twenty-five years later, was he baptised.

It was, then, an all but uninstructed, if enthusiastic, convert who now, with all the caution of an experienced politician, set his name to the Edict of Milan (313), set up the Christian religion as a thing legally permissible, endowed its chief shrines with regal munificence, showered civic privileges, honours, and jurisdiction on its bishops, and even began the delicate task of introducing Christian ideas into the fabric of the law. It was an all but uninstructed convert who, also, in these next ten years--and in the turbulent province of Africa--plunged boldly into the heat of a religious war, the Donatist Schism, with the instinctive confidence that his mere intervention would settle all problems. Between the truce with the Donatists, 321, and the appearance of Arius in Egypt the interval is short indeed. What had Constantine learned from the Donatist experience? What had it taught him about the kind of thing the divine society was in which he so truly believed? Very little, it would seem.

The great see of Alexandria in Egypt, of which Arius was a priest had for many years before his appearance as a heretic been troubled by schism. One of the suffragan bishops--Meletius by name--had accused his principal of giving way during the persecution; and, declaring all the bishop of Alexandria's acts invalid, had proceeded to consecrate bishops in one place after another, in opposition to him. Nor did Meletius cease

his activities when this particular bishop of Alexandria died. In many places there were soon two sets of Catholic clergy, the traditional line and the "Meletian"; the confusion was great and the contest bitter everywhere, the faithful people as active as their pastors. "It was out of the Meletian schism that Arianism was born and developed," one historian[9] will tell us. Arius had been a "Meletian" in his time, but the new bishop, Alexander, had received him back and had promoted him to an important church. And here his learned eloquence and ascetic life soon gave his novel teaching as wide publicity as he could desire.

The bishop's first act, as the news spread, was to arrange a public disputation. In this Arius was worsted. He next disobeyed the bishop's natural injunction to be silent, and began to look for support outside Egypt. Meanwhile the bishop called a council of the hundred bishops subject to his see; ninety-eight voted to condemn Arius; and his two supporters, along with a handful of other clerics were deposed. Arius fled to Palestine, to an old friend generally regarded as the greatest scholar of the day, Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea. And from Caesarea the two began a vast correspondence to engage the support of bishops expected to be friendly to the cause, as far away as the imperial capital, Nicomedia.

Already there was a bond between Arius and many of those to whom he wrote. They like himself were pupils of the same famous teacher of the last generation, Lucian of Antioch, whose school--and not Alexandria--was the real birthplace of this new theological development. And Arius could address such prelates as "Dear Fellow-Lucianist." Of all those to whom he now wrote, none was so important as a second Eusebius, the bishop of the imperial city itself, and a possible power with the emperor through his friendship with Constantine's sister, the empress Constantia, consort of the eastern emperor, Licinius. The Lucianist bishop of Nicomedia rose to the occasion, "as though upon him the whole fate of the Church depended," the bishop of Alexandria complained. For Eusebius, too, circularised the episcopate generally and summoned a

council of bishops, and they voted that Arius should be reinstated, and wrote to beg this of the bishop of Alexandria.

Arius' bishop, meanwhile, had been active also. We know of seventy letters which he wrote to bishops all over the Christian world; amongst others to whom he wrote was the pope. And since all these episcopal letters were copied and passed round, made up into collections and, as we should say, published, the whole of the East was soon aflame, fighting and rioting in one city after another. Few indeed of these enthusiasts could have understood the discussions of the theologians, but all grasped that what Arius was saying was that Christ was not God. And if this were so, what about the saving death on the Cross? And what was sinful man to hope for when he died? When the bishop of Alexandria stigmatised his rebellious priest as Christomachos (fighter against Christ), he clinched the matter in such a way that all, from the Christian emperor to the meanest dock hand in the port, must be personally interested, and passionately.

During these first months of agitation Constantine had, however, other matters to occupy him, and, to begin with, the agitation was none of his business. At the moment when the great movement began, none of the lands affected came under his jurisdiction. But in that same year, 323, war broke out between himself and his eastern colleague, his brother-in-law, Licinius. In July 324 Constantine, invader of Licinius territory, defeated him heavily at Adrianople, and in September he gained a second victory at Chrysopolis.[10] Later Licinius was put to death. When the victor entered his new capital in the ensuing weeks, there was in his household a Spanish prelate who had dwelt with Constantine for some years now, Hosius, bishop of Cordova. It was to him that Constantine, with the new Arian crisis confronting him, now turned.

Arius, by now, had returned to Alexandria, fortified with the vote of the council at Nicomedia and of a second (more peremptory) council at Caesarea, to demand the decreed reinstatement. His arrival, and the campaign of propaganda now launched, set the whole city ablaze. And

Constantine despatched Hosius to make a personal investigation of the affair. When he returned to make his report, Alexander and Arius soon followed. The crisis next moved to the third great city of the empire, Antioch. The bishop there had recently died, and when the fifty-six bishops subject to Antioch came in from Palestine, Arabia, Syria, and elsewhere to elect a successor (January 325, probably), they took the opportunity to notice the Arian development. All but unanimously (53-3) they condemned the new teaching, and excommunicated--provisionally--the three dissidents. One of these was the bishop of Caesarea.

And now, sometime in the early spring of 325, it was decided to summon a council representative of all the bishops in the world. Who was it that first put out this grandiose, if simple, plan? We do not know. Within a matter of months--not indeed simultaneously, but with impressive nearness in time--councils had been held at Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea, Nicomedia, in which a good half of the bishops of the East must have taken part, i.e., a good proportion of the vastly more numerous half of the entire episcopate. Whoever it was to whom the idea of a council of the Christian universe first occurred, it was Constantine who decided it should be held, and who chose the place and sent out the invitations to the bishops, offering to all free passage in the imperial transportation service.

The council opened, in the imperial summer palace at Nicaea,[11] May 20, 325, with something over three hundred bishops present, the vast bulk of them from the Greek-speaking lands where the trouble was raging, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor. But there were bishops also from Persia and the Caucasus, from the lands between the Danube and the Aegean, and from Greece. There was one from Africa and one from Spain, one from Gaul and one from Italy, and since the great age of the Bishop of Rome forbade his making the journey he was represented by two of his priests.

Eusebius of Caesarea who has described the great moments of the council was evidently moved, as we too may be, by his recollection of the scene

when, the bishops all assembled in the great hall of the palace, some of them lame and blind from the tortures undergone in the persecutions, the Christian master of the whole Roman world entered, robed in scarlet and gold, and before taking his place at the throne, bade them be seated. Constantine came with a minimum of pomp, and in his brief address he did no more than welcome the bishops, exhort them to peaceful conference, and admit that the spectacle of "sedition" within the Church caused him more anxiety than any battle.

The little we know of the actual history of the council is soon told. The theology of Arius was condemned unanimously--though he is said to have had twenty-two supporters among the bishops. But if it was a simple matter for the episcopate to testify to its belief that the Divine Word was truly God, it was less easy to agree about the best way to phrase a declaration of this faith, i.e., to construct a statement to which no subtlety could give a heretical Arian meaning also. One section of the bishops was anxious that no terms should be used which were not already used in Scripture. But the Scriptures had not been written for the purpose of confuting philosophically minded heretics. It was now necessary to say that the accepted Scripture meant just "this" and not "that" as well. And if this were to be accomplished, the technique must be adopted of coining a special word for the purpose.

The statement as the council finally passed it--the creed of the council of Nicaea--states: "We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, born of the Father, the sole-begotten; that is to say, of the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; born, not made, consubstantial with the Father [in the Greek original, homo-ousion toi patri], through whom all things were made, which are in heaven and on earth . . ."[11a] The word homo-ousion is the special non-Scriptural word which the council adopted to characterise the true, traditional belief, a word it was impossible to square with any kind of Arian theory, a test word that would always make it clear that any Arian

theory was incompatible with the Christian tradition, and which would serve the practical purpose of preventing any further infiltration of these enemies of Christ within the Church, and defeat any endeavour to change the belief from within.

Who it was that proposed to the council this precise word, we do not know. An Arian historian says it was the bishop of Alexandria and Hosius of Cordova. St. Athanasius, who was present at the council, says it was Hosius. What seems clearer is that the bishops, solidly determined that the heresy should be rooted out, were yet by no means happy about the means chosen. The word homoousion was known to them already. Since long before the time of Arius and Lucian it had a bad history in the East, as will be explained. But Constantine definitely declared himself in favour of the uniquely useful instrument, and the council accepted it, each bishop rising in his place and giving his vote. Two bishops only refused their assent. With Arius, and a few priest supporters, they were promptly sent into exile by the emperor's command.

The bishops then passed to other problems. In the first place the twenty-year-old Meletian schism. Its leaders had appealed to Constantine, and the emperor left it to the council to judge. The bishops supported their brother of Alexandria, but offered the schismatics very easy terms, restoring Meletius himself to his see of Lycopolis. But he was not, ever again, to confer Holy Orders, and all those whom he had unlawfully ordained were to be reordained before again officiating. Moreover they were to be subject henceforward to the true, i.e., Catholic, bishop of the place. Those whom Meletius had made bishops might be elected to sees in the future, as vacancies arose--always with the consent of the bishop of Alexandria, the traditional head of this extensive episcopate.

A second practical problem, that had teased the eastern churches for generations, was now finally solved, viz., how the date of the Easter feast should be calculated. "All our good brothers of the East[12] who until now have been used to keep Easter at the Jewish Passover, will henceforward

keep it at the same time as the Romans and you," so the bishops of Egypt announced in a letter to their people.

Finally the bishops promulgated twenty laws--canons--for general observance. Like the solution proposed for the Meletians they are notable for a new mildness of tone, a quality more Roman than Oriental, it may be said. They are, in great part, a repetition of measures enacted eleven years earlier in the Latin council held at Arles, in Gaul.[13] Five canons deal with those who fell away in the recent persecution. If any such have since been admitted to ordination they are to be deposed. Those who apostatised freely--that is, without the compulsion of fear--are to do twelve years' penance before being admitted to Holy Communion. If, before the penance is completed, they fall sick and are in danger of death they may receive Holy Viaticum. Should they then recover they are to take place with the highest class of the penitents--those who are allowed to hear mass, though not to receive Holy Communion. Catechumens who fell away-- i.e., Christians not yet baptised--are to do three years' penance and then resume their place as catechumens. Finally, the Christians who, having once left the army, had re-enlisted in the army of the persecutor, the lately destroyed emperor Licinius, are to do thirteen years' penance, or less if the bishop is satisfied of the reality of their repentance, but always three years' penance at least.

There are two canons about the readmission of heretical schismatics. First of all there are the remnants of the schism begun in Rome by the antipope Novatian, some seventy-five years before the council. Novatian was one of that fairly numerous class for whom the rulers of the Church deal far too mildly with repentant sinners. He ended by denying that the Church had the power to absolve those who fell away in times of persecution; and his followers, self-styled "the Pure," extended this disability to all sins of idolatry, sex sins, and murder. They also regarded second marriage as a sex sin. At this time there were many Novatians in Asia Minor, and the council offered generous terms to those who wished to be reconciled,

recognising the orders of their clergy, and the dignity of their bishops, but exacting written declarations that they will regard as fellow Catholics those who have contracted a second marriage and those doing penance for apostasy.

To a second class of schismatics the same generosity was shown. These were the sect that descended from the notorious bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, deposed in 268 by a council of bishops, for various crimes and for his heretical teaching that there is no distinction between the three persons of the Holy Trinity. But these "Paulinians," so to call them, are to be rebaptised. Those who had functioned as clergy may be reordained if the Catholic bishop to whom they are now subject thinks fit.

On various aspects of clerical life there are as many as ten canons. No one is to be ordained who has had himself castrated, nor anyone only recently converted to the faith. "Yesterday a catechumen, today a bishop," says St. Jerome; "in the evening at the circus and next morning at the altar; just lately a patron of comedians, now busy consecrating virgins." It is the canon itself which speaks of ordination, and episcopal consecration, following immediately on baptism. Bishops are not to ordain another bishop's subject without his consent. No clerics--bishops, priests, or deacons--are to move from one diocese to another. Clerics are forbidden to take interest for money loans, and for this offence they must be deposed.

Finally there are two canons regarding three famous sees: Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem. The council confirms the ancient custom that gives the bishop of Alexandria jurisdiction over the bishops of the civil provinces of Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis. And likewise the ancient privileges of the see of Antioch and of [the chief sees] of the other provinces. Jerusalem is a city apart, the Holy City par excellence, and although its bishop remains as much as ever the subject of the metropolitan bishop at Caesarea, he is allowed what canon 7 calls a precedence of honour, without a hint to say in what this consists.

All this variety of business was rapidly despatched, for the council held its final session barely four weeks after it opened, June 19, 325.

As the date all but coincided with the celebrations that marked the twentieth year of Constantine's reign, the emperor entertained the prelates at a banquet in full imperial style, and as they passed before the guards, presenting arms in salute, they asked themselves, says Eusebius, if the Kingdom of Heaven on earth had not finally come to pass.

Save for the letter of the bishops of Egypt, mentioned already, and two letters of the emperor, the one general, announcing the new rule about Easter, the other telling the people of Egypt that the bishops had confirmed the traditional belief and that Arius was the tool of the devil, we know nought of what might be called "the promulgation" of the council's decisions. But the breakup of the great gathering was by no means followed by the silence that accompanies peace perfectly attained. The real troubles had not yet begun.

NOTES

1. Newman, Causes of the Rise and Successes of Arianism (February 1872) in Tracts, Theological and Ecclesiastical, pp. 103-4.
2. Ibid., 116. For Newman's "examination," 103-11.
3. Ibid., 112.
4. Ibid., 96, 97 for the passages quoted.
5. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (?265-338).
6. St. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (328-73); born ?295.
7. Newman, The Development of Christian Doctrine, 1st ed., 1845, pp. 7, 5; with one sentence ("Still no one," etc.) from *ibid.*, rev. ed., p. 7.
- 8 A standard Latin dictionary will give as a first basic equivalent, "commander in chief."
9. J. Lebreton, S.J., Histoire de Eglise, edited by A. Fliche and Msgr. V. Martin (henceforward referred to as F. and M.), vol. 2, p. 343.
10. The modern Scutari, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus.

11. A city 60 to 70 miles from Constantinople, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, at the head of Lake Iznik. It was about 25 miles south from the then capital, Nicomedia.

11a. Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, no. 54, prints the Greek text; Barry, *Readings in Church History*, p. 85, gives a translation.

12. The word has here a special meaning as the name of the (civil) diocese of which Antioch was the chief city, Oriens: the modern Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Syria, the coast of Turkey thence north and west for a good 200 miles with a vast territory in the interior that went beyond the Euphrates.

13. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils* (1937), prints the text and a translation. This note serves for all the councils down to the Fifth Lateran of 1512-17. Barry, no 16, gives a translation.