

0265-0339 – Eusebius Caesariensis – Epistula ad Caesarienses

Epistola Eusebii

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Epistola Eusebii.

Introduction.

The letter which follows, addressed by Eusebius of Cæsarea to his flock, upon the conclusion of the great Synod, is appended by Athanasius to his defense of the Definition of Nicæa (*de Decretis*), written about a.d. 350. It is, however, inserted here in the present edition, partly in accordance with the chronological principle of arrangement, but principally because it forms the fittest introduction to the series of treatises which follow. Along with the account of Eustathius in Theodoret *H. E.* i. 8, and that given by Eusebius, in his life of Constantine (vol. I. pp. 521–526 of this series), it forms one of our most important authorities for the proceedings at Nicæa, and the only account we have dating from the actual year of the Council. It is especially important as containing the draft Creed submitted to the Council by Eusebius, and the revised form of it eventually adopted. The former, which contained (in the *first paragraph* of §3, from ‘We believe’ down to ‘One Holy Ghost’) the traditional Creed of the Church of Cæsarea, which Eusebius had professed at his baptism, was laid by him before the Council, and approved: but at the Emperor’s suggestion the single word ὁμοούσιον was inserted (not by ‘the majority’ as distinct from the Emperor, as stated by Swainson, *Creeds*, p. 65). This modification opened the door for others, which eventually resulted in the Creed given in §4. It is not altogether easy to reconcile this account with that given by Athanasius himself (below *de Decr.* 19, 20, *Ad Afr.* 5), according to which the Council were led to insist on the insertion of the ὁμοούσιον by the evasions with which the Arian bishops met every other test that was propounded, signalling to each other by nods winks and gestures, as each Scriptural attribute of the Son was enumerated, that this also could be accepted in an Arian sense. Probably (see Prolegg. ch. ii. §3 (1) note 5) the discussions thus described came first (cp. Sozom. i. 17): then Eusebius of Nicomedia presented the document which was indignantly torn up: then came the Confession of Eusebius of Cæsarea, which was adopted as the basis of the Creed finally issued. In any case the Emperor’s suggestion of the insertion of ὁμοούσιον must have been prompted by others, most likely by Hosius (*Hist. Ar.* 42, Cf. Hort, *Two Dissertations*, p. 58. Gwatkin, *Studies*, pp. 44, 45, puts the scene described by Athanasius during the debate upon the final adoption of the Creed).

The translation which follows, with the notes and Excursus A, is the unaltered work of Newman (*Library of the Fathers*, vol. 8, pp. 59–72), except that the word ‘essence’ (for οὐσία), as throughout this volume, has been substituted for ‘substance,’ and the translation of γενητός by ‘generate’ altered wherever it occurs, as explained in the preface. Additions by the editor of this volume are here as elsewhere included in square brackets.



Council of Nicæa.

*Letter of Eusebius of Cæsarea to the people of his Diocese*⁴¹³.

1. What was transacted concerning ecclesiastical faith at the Great Council assembled at Nicæa, you have probably learned, Beloved, from other sources, rumour being wont to precede the accurate account of what is doing. But lest in such reports the circumstances of the case have been misrepresented, we have been obliged to transmit to you, first, the formula of faith presented by ourselves, and next, the second, which [the Fathers] put forth with some additions to our words. Our own paper, then, which was read in the presence of our most pious⁴¹⁴ Emperor, and declared to be good and unexceptionable, ran thus:—

2. “As we have received from the Bishops who preceded us, and in our first catechisings, and when we received the Holy Laver, and as we have learned from the divine Scriptures, and as we believed and taught in the presbytery, and in the Episcopate itself, so believing also at the time present, we report to you our faith, and it is this⁴¹⁵.”—

⁴¹³ This Letter is also found in Socr. *H. E.* i. 8. Theod. *H. E.* i. Gelas. *Hist. Nic.* ii. 34. p. 442. Niceph. *Hist.* viii. 22.

⁴¹⁴ And so *infr.* “most pious,” §4. “most wise and most religious,” *ibid.* “most religious,” §8. §10. Eusebius observes in his *Vit. Const.* the same tone concerning Constantine, and assigns to him the same office in determining the faith (being as yet unbaptized). E.g. “When there were differences between persons of different countries, as if some common bishop appointed by God, he convened Councils of God’s ministers; and not disdaining to be present and to sit amid their conferences,” &c. i. 44. When he came into the Nicene Council, “it was,” says Eusebius, “as some heavenly Angel of God,” iii. 10. alluding to the brilliancy of the imperial purple. He confesses, however, he did not sit down until the Bishops bade him. Again at the same Council, “with pleasant eyes looking serenity itself into them all, collecting himself, and in a quiet and gentle voice” he made an oration to the Fathers upon peace. Constantine had been an instrument in conferring such vast benefits, humanly speaking, on the Christian Body, that it is not wonderful that other writers of the day besides Eusebius should praise him. Hilary speaks of him as “of sacred memory,” *Fragm.* v. *init.* Athanasius calls him “most pious,” *Apol. contr. Arian.* 9; “of blessed memory,” *ad Ep. Æg.* 18. 19. Epiphanius “most religious and of ever-blessed memory,” *Har.* 70. 9. Posterity, as was natural, was still more grateful.

⁴¹⁵ “The children of the Church have received from their holy Fathers, that is, the holy Apostles, to guard the faith; and withal to deliver and preach it to their own children...Cease not, faithful and orthodox men, thus to speak, and to teach the like from the divine Scriptures, and to walk, and to catechise, to the confirmation of yourselves and those who hear you; namely, that holy faith of the Catholic Church, as the holy and only Virgin of God received its custody from the holy Apostles of the Lord; and thus, in the case of each of those who are under catechising, who are to approach the Holy Laver, ye ought not only to preach faith to your children in the Lord, but also to teach them expressly, as your common mother teaches, to say: ‘We believe in One God,’” &c. Epiph. *Ancor.* 119 *fin.*, who thereupon proceeds to give at length the [so-called] Constantinopolitan Creed. And so

3. “We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Son Only-begotten, first-born of every creature, before all the ages, begotten from the Father, by Whom also all things were made; Who for our salvation was made flesh, and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the quick and dead. And we believe also in One Holy Ghost:”

“believing each of these to be and to exist, the Father truly Father, and the Son truly Son, and the Holy Ghost truly Holy Ghost, as also our Lord, sending forth His disciples for the preaching, said, “Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost⁴¹⁶.” Concerning Whom we confidently affirm that so we hold, and so we think, and so we have held aforetime, and we maintain this faith unto the death, anathematizing every godless heresy. That this we have ever thought from our heart and soul, from the time we recollect ourselves, and now think and say in truth, before God Almighty and our Lord Jesus Christ do we witness, being able by proofs to shew and to convince you, that, even in times past, such has been our belief and preaching.”

4. On this faith being publicly put forth by us, no room for contradiction appeared; but our most pious Emperor, before any one else, testified that it comprised most orthodox statements. He confessed moreover that such were his own sentiments, and he advised all present to agree to it, and to subscribe its articles and to assent to them, with the insertion of the single word, One-in-essence, which moreover he interpreted as not in the sense of the affections of bodies, nor as if the Son subsisted from the Father in the way of division, or any severance; for that the immaterial, and intellectual, and incorporeal nature could not be the subject of any corporeal affection, but that it became us to conceive of such things in a divine and ineffable manner. And such were the theological remarks of our most wise and most religious Emperor; but they, with a view⁴¹⁷ to the addition of One in essence, drew up the following formula:—

The Faith dictated in the Council.

“We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible:”—

Athan. speaks of the orthodox faith, as “issuing from Apostolical teaching and the Fathers’ traditions, and confirmed by New and Old Testament.” *Letter* 60. 6. init. Cyril Hier. too as “declared by the Church and established from all Scripture.” *Cat.* v. 12. “Let us guard with vigilance what we have *received*...What then have we received from the *Scriptures* but altogether this? that God made the world by the Word,” &c., &c. Procl. *ad Armen.* p. 612. “That God, the Word, after the union remained such as He was, &c., so clearly hath divine Scripture, and moreover the doctors of the Churches, and the lights of the world taught us.” Theodor. *Dial.* 3 init. “That it is the tradition of the Fathers is not the whole of our case; for they too followed the meaning of Scripture, starting from the testimonies, which just now we laid before you from Scripture.” Basil *de Sp.* §16. vid. also a remarkable passage in *de Synod.* §6 fin. infra.

⁴¹⁶ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁴¹⁷ [Or, ‘taking the addition as their pretext.’]

“And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Only-begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, One in essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and cometh to judge quick and dead.”

“And in the Holy Ghost.”

“And those who say, ‘Once He was not,’ and ‘Before His generation He was not,’ and ‘He came to be from nothing,’ or those who pretend that the Son of God is ‘Of other subsistence or essence⁴¹⁸,’ or ‘created’ or ‘alterable,’ or ‘mutable,’ the Catholic Church anathematizes.”

5. On their dictating this formula, we did not let it pass without inquiry in what sense they introduced “of the essence of the Father,” and “one in essence with the Father.” Accordingly questions and explanations took place, and the meaning of the words underwent the scrutiny of reason. And they professed, that the phrase “of the essence” was indicative of the Son’s being indeed from the Father, yet without being as if a part of Him. And with this understanding we thought good to assent to the sense of such religious doctrine, teaching, as it did, that the Son was from the Father, not however a part of His essence⁴¹⁹. On this account we assented to the sense ourselves, without declining even the term “One in essence,” peace being the object which we set before us, and steadfastness in the orthodox view.

⁴¹⁸ The only clauses of the Creed which admit of any question in their explanation, are the “He was not before His generation,” and “of other subsistence or essence.” Of these the former shall be reserved for a later part of the volume; the latter is treated of in a note at the end of this Treatise [see Excursus A.].

⁴¹⁹ Eusebius does not commit himself to any positive sense in which the formula “of the essence” is to be interpreted, but only says what it does not mean. His comment on it is “of the Father, but not as a part;” where, what is not negative, instead of being an explanation, is but a recurrence to the original words of Scripture, of which ἐξ οὐσίας itself is the explanation; a curious inversion. Indeed it is very doubtful whether he admitted the ἐξ οὐσίας at all. He says, that the Son is not like the radiance of light so far as this, that the radiance is an inseparable accident of substance, whereas the Son is by the Father’s will, κατὰ γνώμην καὶ προαίρεσιν, *Demonstr. Ev.* iv. 3. And though he insists on our Lord being *alone*, ἐκ θεοῦ, yet he means in the sense which Athan. refutes, *supr.* §6, viz. that He alone was created immediately from God, *vid.* next note 6. It is true that he plainly condemns with the Nicene Creed the ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων of the Arians, “out of nothing,” but an evasion was at hand here also; for he not only adds, according to Arian custom, “as others” (*vid.* note following) but he has a theory that no being whatever is out of nothing, for non-existence cannot be the cause of existence. God, he says, “proposed His own will and power as ‘a sort of matter and substance’ of the production and constitution of the universe, so that it is not reasonably said, that any thing is out of nothing. For what is from nothing cannot be at all. How indeed can nothing be to any thing a cause of being? but all that is, takes its being *from One* who only is, and was, who also said ‘I am that I am.’” *Demonstr. Ev.* iv. 1. Again, speaking of our Lord, “He who was from nothing would not truly be Son of God, ‘as neither is any other of things generate.’” *Eccl. Theol.* i. 9 fin. [see, however, D.C.B. ii. p. 347].

6. In the same way we also admitted “begotten, not made;” since the Council alleged that “made” was an appellative common to the other creatures which came to be through the Son, to whom the Son had no likeness. Wherefore, say they, He was not a work resembling the things which through Him came to be⁴²⁰, but was of an essence which is too high for the level of any work; and which the Divine oracles teach to have been generated from the Father⁴²¹, the mode of generation being inscrutable and incalculable to every originated nature.

7. And so too on examination there are grounds for saying that the Son is “one in essence” with the Father; not in the way of bodies, nor like mortal beings, for He is not such by division of essence, or by severance, no, nor by any affection, or alteration, or changing of the Father’s essence and



⁴²⁰ Eusebius distinctly asserts, *Dem. Ev.* iv. 2, that our Lord is a creature. “This offspring,” he says, “did He first produce Himself from Himself as a foundation of those things which should succeed, the perfect handy-work, δημιουργημα, of the Perfect, and the wise structure, αρχιτεκτόνημα, of the Wise,” &c. Accordingly his avowal in the text is but the ordinary Arian evasion of “an offspring, not as the offsprings.” E.g. “It is not without peril to say recklessly that the Son is originate out of nothing ‘similarly to the other things originate.’” *Dem. Ev.* v. 1. vid. also *Eccl. Theol.* i. 9. iii. 2. And he considers our Lord the only Son by a divine provision similar to that by which there is only one sun in the firmament, as a *centre* of light and heat. “Such an Only-begotten Son, the excellent artificer of His will and operator, did the supreme God and Father of that operator Himself first of all beget, through Him and in Him giving subsistence to the operative words (ideas or causes) of things which were to be, and casting in Him the seeds of the constitution and governance of the universe;... Therefore the Father being One, it behoved the Son to be one also; but should any one object that He constituted not more, it is fitting for such a one to complain that He constituted not more suns, and moons, and worlds, and ten thousand other things.” *Dem. Ev.* iv. 5 fin. vid. also iv. 6.

⁴²¹ Eusebius does not say that our Lord is “from the essence of” the Father, but has “an essence from” the Father. This is the Semi-arian doctrine, which, whether confessing the Son from the essence of the Father or not, implied that His essence was not the Father’s essence, but a second essence. The same doctrine is found in the Semi-arians of Ancyra, though they seem to have confessed “of the essence.” And this is one object of the ὁμοούσιον, to hinder the confession “of the essence” from implying a second essence, which was not obviated or was even encouraged by the ὁμοιούσιον. The Council of Ancyra, quoting the text “As the Father hath life in Himself so,” &c., says, “since the life which is in the Father means essence, and the life of the Only-begotten which is begotten from the Father means essence, the word ‘so’ implies a likeness of essence to essence.” *Har.* 73. 10 fin. Hence Eusebius does not scruple to speak of “two essences,” and other writers of three essences, *contr. Marc.* i. 4. p. 25. He calls our Lord “a second essence.” *Dem. Ev.* vi. *Præf. Præp. Ev.* vii. 12. p. 320, and the Holy Spirit a third essence, *ibid.* 15. p. 325. This it was that made the Latins so suspicious of three hypostases, because the Semi-arians, as well as they, understood ὑπόστασις to mean essence [but this is dubious]. Eusebius in like manner [after Origen] calls our Lord “another God,” “a second God.” *Dem. Ev.* v. 4. p. 226. v. fin. “second Lord.” *ibid.* 3 init. 6. fin. “second cause.” *Dem. Ev.* v. *Præf.* vid. also ἕτερον ἔχουσα τὸ κατ’ οὐσίαν ὑποκείμενον, *Dem. Ev.* v. 1. p. 215. καθ’ ἑαυτὸν οὐσιωμένος. *ibid.* iv. 3. And so ἕτερος παρὰ τὸν πατέρα. *Eccl. Theol.* i. 60. p. 90. and ζῶν ἰδίαν ἔχων. *ibid.* and ζῶν καὶ ὑφ’ ἑστώσ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπάρχων ἔκτος. *ibid.* Hence Athan. insists so much, as in *de Decr.*, on our Lord *not* being external to the Father. Once admit that He is in the Father, and we may call the Father, the *only* God, for He is included. And so again as to the Ingenerate, the term does not exclude the Son, for He is generate in the Ingenerate.

power⁴²² (since from all such the unoriginate nature of the Father is alien), but because “one in essence with the Father” suggests that the Son of God bears no resemblance to the originated creatures, but that to His Father alone Who begat Him is He in every way assimilated, and that He is not of any other subsistence and essence, but from the Father⁴²³. To which term also, thus interpreted, it appeared well to assent; since we were aware that even among the ancients, some learned and illustrious Bishops and writers⁴²⁴ have used the term “one in essence,” in their theological teaching concerning the Father and Son.

8. So much then be said concerning the faith which was published; to which all of us assented, not without inquiry, but according to the specified senses, mentioned before the most religious Emperor himself, and justified by the forementioned considerations. And as to the anathematism published by them at the end of the Faith, it did not pain us, because it forbade to use words not in Scripture, from which almost all the confusion and disorder of the Church have come. Since then no divinely inspired Scripture has used the phrases, “out of nothing,” and “once He was not,” and the rest which follow, there appeared no ground for using or teaching them; to which also we assented as a good decision, since it had not been our custom hitherto to use these terms.

9. Moreover to anathematize “Before His generation He was not,” did not seem preposterous, in that it is confessed by all, that the Son of God was before the generation according to the flesh⁴²⁵.

⁴²² This was the point on which the Semi-arians made their principal stand against the “one in essence,” though they also objected to it as being of a Sabellian character. E.g. Euseb. *Demonstr.* iv. 3. p. 148. d.p. 149. a, b. v. 1. pp. 213–215. *contr. Marcell.* i. 4. p. 20. *Eccl. Theol.* i. 12. p. 73. *in laud. Const.* p. 525. *de Fide* i. ap. Sirmond. tom. i. p. 7. *de Fide* ii. p. 16, and apparently his *de Incorporali*. And so the Semi-arians at Ancyra Epiph. *Hær.* 73. 11. p. 858. a, b. And so Meletius *ibid.* p. 878 fin. and Cyril Hier. *Catech.* vii. 5. xi. 18. though of course Catholics would speak as strongly on this point as their opponents.

⁴²³ Here again Eusebius does not say “from the Father’s essence,” but “not from other essence, but from the Father.” According to note 5, *supr.* he considered the will of God a certain matter or substance. Montfaucon in *loc.* and *Collect. Nov.* Præf. p. xxvi. translates without warrant “ex Patris hypostasi et substantiâ.” As to the Son’s perfect likeness to the Father which he seems here to grant, it has been already shewn, *de Decr.* 20, note 9, how the admission was evaded. The likeness was but a likeness after its own kind, as a picture is of the original. “Though our Saviour Himself teaches,” he says, “that the Father is the ‘only true God,’ still let me not be backward to confess Him also the true God, ‘as in an image,’ and that possessed; so that the addition of ‘only’ may belong to the Father alone as archetype of the image....As, supposing one king held sway, and his image was carried about into every quarter, no one in his right mind would say that those who held sway were two, but one who was honoured through his image; in like manner,” &c. *de Eccles. Theol.* ii. 23, *vid. ibid.* 7.

⁴²⁴ Athanasius in like manner, *ad Afros.* 6. speaks of “testimony of ancient Bishops about 130 years since;” and in *de Syn.* §43. of “long before” the Council of Antioch, a.d. 269. viz. the Dionysii, &c. *vid. note on de Decr.* 20.

⁴²⁵ Socrates, who advocates the orthodoxy of Eusebius, leaves out this heterodox paragraph [§§9, 10] altogether. Bull, however, *Defens. F. N.* iii. 9. n. 3. thinks it an interpolation. Athanasius alludes to the early part of the clause, *supr.* §4. and *de Syn.* §13. where he says, that Eusebius implied that the Arians denied even our Lord’s existence before His incarnation. As to Constantine, he seems to have been used on these occasions by the court Bishops who were his instructors, and who made him the organ of their own heresy. Upon the first rise of the Arian controversy he addressed a sort of pastoral letter to Alexander and

10. Nay, our most religious Emperor did at the time prove, in a speech, that He was in being even according to His divine generation which is before all ages, since even before He was generated in energy, He was in virtue⁴²⁶ with the Father ingenerately, the Father being always Father, as King always, and Saviour always, being all things in virtue, and being always in the same respects and in the same way.

11. This we have been forced to transmit to you, Beloved, as making clear to you the deliberation of our inquiry and assent, and how reasonably we resisted even to the last minute as long as we were offended at statements which differed from our own, but received without contention what no longer pained us, as soon as, on a candid examination of the sense of the words, they appeared to us to coincide with what we ourselves have professed in the faith which we have already published.



Excursus⁴²⁷ A.

On the meaning of the phrase

in the Nicene Anathema.

Arius, telling them that they were disputing about a question of words, and recommending them to drop it and live together peaceably. Euseb. *vit. C.* ii. 69. 72.

⁴²⁶ [Rather ‘potentially’ both here and three lines below.] Theognis, [one] of the Nicene Arians, says the same, according to Philostorgius; viz. “that God even before He begat the Son was a Father, as having the power, δύναμις, of begetting.” *Hist.* ii. 15. Though Bull pronounces such doctrine to be heretical, as of course it is, still he considers that it expresses what *otherwise* stated may be orthodox, viz. the doctrine that our Lord was called the Word from eternity, and the Son upon His descent to create the worlds. And he acutely and ingeniously interprets the Arian formula, “Before His generation He was not,” to support this view. Another opportunity will occur of giving an opinion upon this question; meanwhile, the *parallel* on which the heretical doctrine is supported in the text is answered by many writers, on the ground that Father and Son are words of nature, but Creator, King, Saviour, are external, or what may be called accidental to Him. Thus Athanasius observes, that Father actually implies Son, but Creator only the power to create, as expressing a δύναμις; “a maker is before his works, but he who says Father, forthwith in Father implies the existence of the Son.” *Orat.* iii. §6. vid. Cyril too, *Dial.* ii. p. 459. Pseudo-Basil, *contr. Eun.* iv. 1. fin. On the other hand Origen argues the reverse way, that since God is eternally a Father, therefore eternally Creator also: “As one cannot be father without a son, nor lord without possession, so neither can God be called All-powerful, without subjects of His power;” *de Princ.* i. 2. n. 10. hence he argued for the eternity of matter.

⁴²⁷ [This excursus supports the view taken above, Prolegg. ch. ii. §3 (2) b; the student should supplement Newman’s discussion by Zahn *Marcellus* and Harnack *Dogmengesch.* as quoted at the head of that section of the Prolegg. The word ‘Semi-arian’ is used in a somewhat inexact sense in this excursus, see Prolegg. ch. ii. §3 (2) c, and §8 (2) c.]

Bishop Bull has made it a question, whether these words in the Nicene Creed mean the same thing, or are to be considered distinct from each other, advocating himself the latter opinion against Petavius. The history of the word ὑπόστασις is of too intricate a character to enter upon here; but a few words may be in place in illustration of its sense as it occurs in the Creed, and with reference to the view taken of it by the great divine, who has commented on it.

Bishop Bull, as I understood him (*Defens. F. N.* ii. 9. §11.), considers that two distinct ideas are intended by the words οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, in the clause ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας; as if the Creed condemned those who said that the Son was not from the Father's essence, and those also who said that He was not from the Father's hypostasis or subsistence; as if a man might hold at least one of the two without holding the other. And in matter of fact, he does profess to assign two parties of heretics, who denied this or that proposition respectively.

Petavius, on the other hand (*de Trin.* iv. I.), considers that the word ὑπόστασις is but another term for οὐσία, and that not two but one proposition is contained in the clause in question; the word ὑπόστασις not being publicly recognised in its present meaning till the Council of Alexandria, in the year 362. Coustant. (*Epist. Pont. Rom.* pp. 274. 290. 462.) Tillemont (*Memoires S. Denys. d'Alex.* §15.), Huet (*Origenian.* ii. 2. n. 3.), Thomassin (*de Incarn.* iii. 1.), and Morinus (*de Sac. Ordin.* ii. 6.), take substantially the same view; while Maranus (*Præf. ad S. Basil.* §1. tom. 3. ed. Bened.), Natalis Alexander, *Hist. (Sæc. 1. Diss. 22. circ. fin.)*, Burton (*Testimonies to the Trinity*, No. 71), and [Routh] (*Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. iii. p. 189.), differ from Petavius, if they do not agree with Bull.

Bull's principal argument lies in the strong fact, that S. Basil expressly asserts, that the Council did mean the two terms to be distinct, and this when he is answering the Sabellians, who grounded their assertion that there was but one ὑπόστασις, on the alleged fact that the Council had used οὐσία and ὑπόστασις indifferently.

Bull refers also to Anastasius *Hodeg.* 21. (22. p. 343.?) who says, that the Nicene Fathers defined that there are three hypostases or Persons in the Holy Trinity. Petavius considers that he derived this from Gelasius of Cyzicus, a writer of no great authority; but, as the passage occurs in Anastasius, they are the words of Andrew of Samosata. But what is more important, elsewhere Anastasius quotes a passage from Amphilochius to something of the same effect. c. 10. p. 164. He states it besides himself, c. 9. p. 150. and c. 24. p. 364. In addition, Bull quotes passages from S. Dionysius of Alexandria, S. Dionysius of Rome (vid. below, *de Decr.* 25–27 and notes), Eusebius of Cæsarea, and afterwards Origen; in all of which three hypostases being spoken of, whereas antiquity, early or late, never speaks in the same way of three οὐσίαι, it is plain that ὑπόστασις then conveyed an idea which οὐσία did not. To these may be added a passage in Athanasius, *in Illud, Omnia*, §6.

Bishop Bull adds the following explanation of the two words as they occur in the Creed: he conceives that the one is intended to reach the Arians, and the other the Semi-arians; that the Semi-arians did actually make a distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, admitting in a certain sense that the Son was from the ὑπόστασις of the Father, while they denied that He was from His

οὐσία. They then are anathematized in the words ἐξ ἑτέρας οὐσίας; and, as he would seem to mean, the Arians in the ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως.

Now I hope it will not be considered any disrespect to so great an authority, if I differ from this view, and express my reasons for doing so.

1. First then, supposing his account of the Semi-arian doctrine ever so free from objection, granting that they denied the ἐξ οὐσίας, and admitted the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως, yet *who* are they who, according to his view, *denied* the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως, or said that the Son was ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως? he does not assign any parties, though he implies the Arians. Yet though, as is notorious, they denied the ἐξ οὐσίας, there is nothing to shew that they or any other party of Arians maintained specifically that the Son was not [from] the ὑπόστασις, or subsistence of the Father. That is, the hypothesis supported by this eminent divine does not answer the very question which it raises. It professes that those who denied the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως, were not the same as those who denied the ἐξ οὐσίας; yet it fails to tell us who did deny the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως, in a sense distinct from ἐξ οὐσίας.

2. Next, his only proof that the Semi-arians did hold the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως as distinct from the ἐξ οὐσίας, lies in the circumstance, that the three (commonly called) Semi-arian confessions of a.d. 341, 344, 351, known as Mark's of Arethusa [i.e. the 'fourth Antiochene'], the Macrostich, and the first Sirmian, anathematize those who say that the Son is ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως, not anathematizing the καὶ μὴ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, which he thence infers was their own belief. Another explanation of this passage will be offered presently; meanwhile, it is well to observe, that Hilary, in speaking of the confession of Philippopolis which was taken from Mark's, far from suspecting that the clause involved an omission, defends it on the *ground of its retaining the Anathema* (*de Synod.* 35.), thus implying that ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως καὶ μὴ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ was equivalent to ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας. And it may be added, that Athanasius in like manner, in his account of the Nicene Council (*de Decret.* §20. fin.), when repeating its anathema, drops the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως altogether, and reads τούτους δὲ λέγοντας ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων,....ἢ ποίημα, ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρας οὐσίας, τούτους ἀναθεματίζει κ. τ. λ.

3. Further, Bull gives us no proof whatever that the Semi-arians *did* deny the ἐξ οὐσίας; while it is very clear, if it is right to contradict so great a writer, that most of them did not deny it. He says that it is "certissimum" that the heretics who wrote the three confessions above noticed, that is, the Semi-arians, "*nunquam fassos, nunquam fassuros fuisse filium ἐξ οὐσίας, e substantia, Patris progenitum.*" His reason for not offering any proof for this naturally is, that Petavius, with whom he is in controversy, maintains it also, and he makes use of Petavius's admission against himself. Now it may seem bold in a writer of this day to differ not only with Bull, but with Petavius; but the reason for doing so is simple; it is because Athanasius asserts the very thing which Petavius and Bull deny, and Petavius admits that he does; that is, he allows it by implication when he complains that Athanasius had not got to the bottom of the doctrine of the Semi-arians, and thought too favourably of them. "Horum Semi-arianorum, quorum antesignanus fuit Basilius Ancyrae episcopus, prorsus obscura fuit hæresis.....ut ne ipse quidem Athanasius satis illam exploratam habuerit." *de Trin.* i. x. §7.

Now S. Athanasius's words are most distinct and express; "As to those who receive all else that was defined at Nicæa, but dispute about the 'One in essence' only, we must not feel as towards enemies....for, as *confessing that the Son is from the essence of the Father* and not of other subsistence, ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι, καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως τὸν υἱόν, ...they are not far from receiving the phrase 'One in essence' also. Such is Basil of Ancyra, in what he has written about the faith" *de Syn.* §41;—a passage, not only express for the matter in hand, but remarkable too, as apparently using ὑπόστασις and οὐσία as synonymous, which is the main point which Bull denies. What follows in Athanasius is equally to the purpose: he urges the Semi-arians to accept the ὁμοούσιον, in consistency, *because* they maintain the ἐξ οὐσίας and the ὁμοιούσιον would not sufficiently secure it.

Moreover Hilary, while defending the Semi-arian decrees of Ancyra or Sirmium, says expressly, that according to them, among other truths, "non creatura est Filius genitus, sed *a natura Patris indiscreta substantia est.*" *de Syn.* 27.

Petavius, however, in the passage to which Bull appeals, refers in proof of this view of Semi-arianism, to those Ancyrene documents, which Epiphanius has preserved, *Hær.* 73. and which he considers to shew, that according to the Semi-arians the Son was not ἐξ οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς. He says, that it is plain from their own explanations that they considered our Lord to be, not ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας, but ἐκ τῆς ὁμοιότητος (he does not say ὑποστάσεως, as Bull wishes) τοῦ πατρὸς and that, ἐνεργείᾳ 139· γεννητικῇ, which was one of the divine ἐνεργεῖαι, as creation, ἢ κτιστικῇ, was another. Yet surely Epiphanius does not bear out this representation better than Athanasius; since the Semi-arians, whose words he reports, speak of "υἱὸς 232· ὅμοιον καὶ κατ' οὐσίαν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, p. 825 b, ὡς ἡ σοφία τοῦ σοφοῦ υἱὸς 232·ς, οὐσία οὐσίας, p. 853 c, κατ' οὐσίαν υἱὸς 232·ν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς, p. 854 c, ἐξουσίᾳ 139· ὁμοῦ καὶ οὐσίᾳ 139· πατρὸς μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ. p. 858 d, besides the strong word γνήσιος, *ibid.* and Athan. *de Syn.* §41. not to insist on other of their statements.

The same fact is brought before us even in a more striking way in the conference at Constantinople, a.d. 360, before Constantius, between the Anomœans and Semi-arians, where the latter, according to Theodoret, shew no unwillingness to acknowledge even the ὁμοούσιον, *because* they acknowledge the ἐξ οὐσίας. When the Anomœans wished the former condemned, Silvanus of Tarsus said, "If God the Word be not out of nothing, nor a creature, *nor of other essence*, therefore is He one in essence, ὁμοούσιος, with God who begot Him, as God from God, and Light from Light, and He has the same nature with His Father." *H. E.* ii. 23. Here again it is observable, as in the passage from Athanasius above, that, while apparently reciting the Nicene Anathema, he omits ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως, as if it were superfluous to mention a synonym.

At the same time there certainly is reason to suspect that the Semi-arians approximated towards orthodoxy as time went on; and perhaps it is hardly fair to determine what they held at Nicæa by their statements at Ancyra, though to the latter Petavius appeals. Several of the most eminent among them, as Meletius, Cyril, and Eusebius of Samosata conformed soon after; on the other hand in Eusebius, who is their representative at Nicæa, it will perhaps be difficult to find a clear admission

of the ἐξ οὐσίας. But at any rate he does not maintain the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως, which Bull's theory requires.

On various grounds then, because the Semi-arians as a body did not deny the ἐξ οὐσίας, nor confess the ἐξ ὑποστάσεως, nor the Arians deny it, there is reason for declining Bishop Bull's explanation of these words as they occur in the Creed; and now let us turn to the consideration of the authorities on which that explanation rests.

As to Gelasius, Bull himself does not insist upon his testimony, and Anastasius [about 700 a.d.] is too late to be of authority. The passage indeed which he quotes from Amphilochius is important, but as he was a friend of S. Basil, perhaps it does not very much increase the weight of S. Basil's more distinct and detailed testimony to the same point, and no one can say that that weight is inconsiderable.

Yet there is evidence the other way which overbalances it. Bull, who complains of Petavius's rejection of S. Basil's testimony concerning a Council which was held before his birth, cannot maintain his own explanation of its Creed without rejecting Athanasius's testimony respecting the doctrine of his contemporaries, the Semi-arians; and moreover the more direct evidence, as we shall see, of the Council of Alexandria, a.d. 362, S. Jerome, Basil of Ancyra, and Socrates.

First, however, no better comment upon the sense of the Council can be required than the incidental language of Athanasius and others, who in a foregoing extract exchanges οὐσία for ὑπόστασις in a way which is natural only on the supposition that he used them as synonyms. Elsewhere, as we have seen, he omits the word ἢ ὑποστάσεως in the Nicene Anathema, while Hilary considers the Anathema sufficient *with* that omission.

In like manner Hilary expressly translates the clause in the Creed by *ex altera substantia vel essentia*. *Fragm.* ii. 27. And somewhat in the same way Eusebius says in his letter, ἐξ ἐτέρας τινὸς ὑποστάσεώς τε καὶ οὐσίας.

But further, Athanasius says expressly, *ad Afros*,—"Hypostasis is essence, οὐσία, and means nothing else than simply being, which Jeremiah calls existence when he says," &c. §4. It is true, he elsewhere speaks of three Hypostases, but this only shews that he attached no fixed sense to the word. [Rather, he abandons the latter usage in his middle and later writings.] This is just what I would maintain; its sense must be determined by the context; and, whereas it always stands in all Catholic writers for the *Una Res* (as the 4th Lateran speaks), which οὐσία denotes, when Athanasius says, "three hypostases," he takes the word to mean οὐσία in that particular sense in which it is three, and when he makes it synonymous with οὐσία, he uses it to signify Almighty God in that sense in which He is one.

Leaving Athanasius, we have the following evidence concerning the history of the word ὑπόστασις. S. Jerome says, "The whole school of secular learning understanding nothing else by hypostasis than *usia*, essence," *Ep.* xv. 4, where, speaking of the Three Hypostases he uses the strong language, "If you desire it, then be a *new* faith framed *after* the Nicene, and let the orthodox confess in terms like the Arian."

In like manner, Basil of Ancyra, George, and the other Semi-arians, say distinctly, “This hypostasis our Fathers called essence,” οὐσία. Epiph. *Hær.* 74. 12. fin.; in accordance with which is the unauthorized addition to the Sardican Epistle, “ὑπόστασιν, ἣν αὐτοὶ οἱ αἱρετικοὶ οὐσίαν προσαγορεύουσι.” Theod. *H. E.* ii. 6.

If it be said that Jerome from his Roman connection, and Basil and George as Semi-arians, would be led by their respective theologies for distinct reasons thus to speak, it is true, and may have led them to too broad a statement of the fact; but then on the other hand it was in accordance also with the theology of S. Basil, so strenuous a defender of the formula of the Three Hypostases, to suppose that the Nicene Fathers meant to distinguish ὑπόστασις from οὐσία in their anathema.

Again, Socrates informs us that, though there was some dispute about hypostasis at Alexandria shortly before the Nicene Council, yet the Council itself “devoted not a word to the question,” *H. E.* iii. 7.; which hardly consists with its having intended to rule that ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως was distinct from ἐξ ἑτέρας οὐσίας.

And in like manner the Council of Alexandria, a.d. 362, in deciding that the sense of Hypostasis was an open question, not only from the very nature of the case goes on the supposition that the Nicene Council had not closed it, but says so in words again and again in its Synodal Letter. If the Nicene Council had already used “hypostasis” in its present sense, what remained to Athanasius at Alexandria but to submit to it?

Indeed the history of this Council is perhaps the strongest argument against the supposed discrimination of the two terms by the Council of Nicæa. Bull can only meet it by considering that an innovation upon the “*veterem vocabuli usum*” began at the date of the Council of Sardica, though Socrates mentions the dispute as existing at Alexandria before the Nicene Council, *H. E.* iii. 4. 5. while the supposititious confession of Sardica professes to have received the doctrine of the one hypostasis by tradition as Catholic.

Nor is the use of the word in earlier times inconsistent with these testimonies; though it occurs so seldom, in spite of its being a word of S. Paul [i.e. Heb. i. 3], that testimony is our principal evidence. Socrates’ remarks deserve to be quoted; “Those among the Greeks who have treated of the Greek philosophy, have defined essence, οὐσία, in many ways, but they had made no mention at all of hypostasis. Irenæus the Grammarian, in his alphabetical Atticist, even calls the term barbarous; because it is not used by any of the ancients, and if anywhere found, it does not mean what it is now taken for. Thus in the Phœnix of Sophocles it means an ‘ambush;’ but in Menander, ‘preserves,’ as if one were to call the wine-lees in a cask ‘hypostasis.’ However it must be observed, that, in spite of the old philosophers being silent about the term, the more modern continually use it for essence, οὐσίας, *H. E.* iii. 7. The word principally occurs in Origen among Ante-Nicene writers, and he, it must be confessed uses it, as far as the context decides its sense, to mean subsistence or person. In other words, it was the word of a certain school in the Church, which afterwards was accepted by the Church; but this proves nothing about the sense in which it was used at Nicæa. The three Hypostases are spoken of by Origen, his pupil Dionysius, as afterwards by Eusebius of Cæsarea (though he may notwithstanding have considered hypostasis synonymous

with essence), and Athanasius (Origen *in Joan.* ii. 6. Dionys. *ap. Basil de Sp. S.* n. 72. Euseb. *ap. Socr.* i. 23. Athan. *in Illud Omnia, &c.* 6); and the Two Hypostases of the Father and the Son, by Origen, Ammonius, and Alexander (Origen *c. Cels.* viii. 2. Ammon. *ap. Caten. in Joan.* x. 30. Alex. *ap. Theod.* i. 3. p. 740). As to the passage in which two hypostases are spoken of in Dionysius' letter to Paul of Samosata, that letter certainly is not genuine, as might be shewn on a fitting occasion, though it is acknowledged by very great authorities.

I confess that to my mind there is an antecedent probability that the view which has here been followed is correct. Judging by the general history of doctrine, one should not expect that the formal ecclesiastical meaning of the word should have obtained everywhere so early. Nothing is more certain than that the doctrines themselves of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation were developed, or, to speak more definitely, that the propositions containing them were acknowledged, from the earliest times; but the particular terms which now belong to them are most uniformly of a later date. Ideas were brought out, but technical phrases did not obtain. Not that these phrases did not exist, but either not as technical, or in use in a particular School or Church, or with a particular writer, or as μ , as words discussed, nay resisted, perhaps used by some local Council, and then at length accepted generally from their obvious propriety. Thus the words of the Schools pass into the service of the Catholic Church. Instead then of the word $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{o}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ being, as Maran says, received in the East "summo consensu," from the date of Noetus or at least Sabellius, or of Bull's opinion "apud *Catholicos* Dionysii ætate *ratum et fixum* illud fuisse, tres esse in divinis hypostases," I would consider that the present use of the word was in the first instance Alexandrian, and that it was little more than Alexandrian till the middle of the fourth century.

Lastly, it comes to be considered how the two words are to be accounted for in the Creed, if they have not distinct senses. Coustant supposes that $\acute{\epsilon}\xi$ οὐσίας was added to explain $\acute{\epsilon}\xi$ ὑποστάσεως, lest the latter should be taken in a Sabellian sense. On which we may perhaps remark besides, that the reason why $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{o}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ was selected as the principal term was, that it was agreeable to the Westerns as well as admitted by the Orientals. Thus, by way of contrast, we find the Second General Council, at which there were no Latins, speaking of Three Hypostases, and Pope Damasus and the Roman Council speaking a few years sooner of the Holy Ghost as of the same hypostasis and usia with the Father and the Son. *Theod. H. E.* ii. 17. Many things go to make this probable. For instance, Coustant acutely points out, though Maran and the President of Magdalen [Routh, *Rel. Sac.* iii. 383] dissent, that this probably was a point of dispute between the two Dionysii; the Bishop of Alexandria asserting, as we know he did assert, Three Hypostases, the Bishop of Rome protesting in reply against "Three *partitive* Hypostases," as involving tritheism, and his namesake rejoining, "If because there are Three Hypostases, any say that they are partitive, three there are, though they like it not." Again, the influence of the West shews itself in the language of Athanasius, who, contrary to the custom of his Church, of Origen, Dionysius, and his own immediate patron and master Alexander, so varies his own use of the word, as to make his writings almost an example of that freedom which he vindicated in the Council of Alexandria. Again, when Hosius went to Alexandria before the Nicene Council, and a dispute arose with reference to Sabellianism about

the words ὑπόστασις and οὐσία, what is this too, but the collision of East and West? It should be remembered moreover that Hosius presided at Nicæa, a Latin in an Eastern city; and again at Sardica, where, though the decree in favour of the One Hypostasis was not passed, it seems clear from the history that he was resisting persons with whom in great measure he agreed. Further, the same consideration accounts for the omission of the ἐξ οὐσίας from the Confession of Mark and the two which follow, on which Bull relies in proof that the Semi-arians rejected this formula. These three Semi-arian Creeds, and these only, were addressed to the Latins, and therefore their compilers naturally select that synonym which was most pleasing to them, as the means of securing a hearing; just as Athanasius on the other hand in his *de Decretis*, writing to the Greeks, omits ὑποστάσεως and writes οὐσίας.