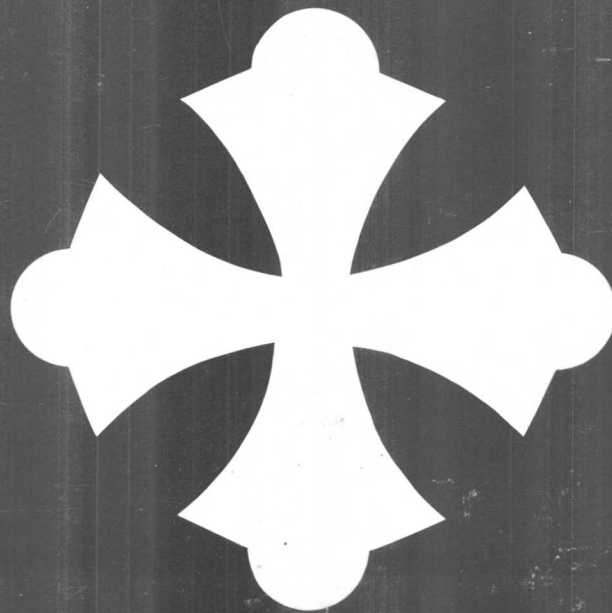


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

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**SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT
BY
FREDERIC W. FARRAR**



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INTRODUCTION

At a time when the Coptic Church is suffering through the exile of its Patriarch, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the Copts find their consolation in the history of the Church which bears witness to the triumph of the Christian faith against all adversaries and tyrants and against all divisions and Satanic conspiracies. Coptic Church Review dedicates this double-issue on Saint Athanasius the Great so its readers may meditate upon during this time of trial. The reader will find many parallels to what is happening in the Coptic Church now. St. Athanasius, the 20th Patriarch of Alexandria, lived in exile for eighteen years. He suffered at the hands of foreign rulers what his successor Pope Shenouda III suffers at the hands of modern rulers of Egypt. "Athanasius was a man who never knew despair . . . Emperors stood against him . . . with their arms, their power, and their authority. But he possessed the simple unarmed faith which overpowered all their weapons. He used to repeat his famous saying, 'He who protects us is stronger than that who persecutes us.' He was a strong man who knew no meaning for fear. He feared nobody, dreaded nobody, not even a whole crowd nor an army. He showed no dread of exile, nor prison, nor removal, nor excommunication, nor councils. This is the unyielding, mighty and strong Athanasius, who held the oar of faith to protect it from innovations and from heresies. Alone he stood against the world to protect it from itself, and to defend the faith against the world. He did not fear persecution, and he was able to radiate his courage into every heart. He was steadfast in his faith, and confident in his heart. He never hesitated, nor yielded, nor bargained about the faith delivered to him from the saints."¹

The important role which St. Athanasius has in Christian history is clear from the various titles given to him. These include 'the Great', 'the Apostolic', 'the Father of Orthodoxy', 'the Pillar of Faith', and 'the Doctor of the Church'. Many wrote about Athanasius. This biography is taken from *Lives of the Fathers* by F. W. Farrar (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black; 1889.) The original work appears here in an abridged form. However, the superb style of the author is kept, and his vivid description of events that makes them come back to life remains untouched. Some words, passages and paragraphs have been omitted. The two chapters on "*The Dawn of Arianism*" and "*The Council of Nice*" have been reduced to one short chapter; only what concerns us for the life of Athanasius is left. Some personal views and unhistorical opinions of the author have been avoided. Still all what follows is in Farrar's own words, including the notes and references. Divisions of the chapters are added for clarity.

Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903) was a novelist, philologist and educator, but he gained his popularity through his theological writings. In 1856 he became a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He became canon of Westminster Cathedral in 1876, and its archdeacon in 1883. He was the dean of Canterbury from 1895. Farrar had a great influence on the religious feeling of the Victorian age especially through his *Life of Christ* (1874) and *Life and Work of St. Paul* (1879). The former ran into more than thirty editions, including an Arabic translation.

Editor

Notes

1. H.H. Pope Shenouda III on the occasion of transferring the relics of St.

AUTHORITIES FOR THE LIFE OF ATHANASIUS

The chief materials for his biography are derived from:—

1. His own writings, especially his "Encyclic Epistle," "Apology against the Arians," "Letter to the Bishops of Egypt and Libya," "Apology to Constantius," "Apology for his Flight," "Letter to Serapion on the Death of Arius," "Letter to the Monks," "History of the Arians," and "Letter on the Synods of Ariminum and Seleucia." These have been conveniently edited in the original by Canon Bright, with an introduction (Clarendon Press, 1881). Other notices are scattered through his other writings.

2. Contemporary or early notices of Hilary, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Epiphanius, and Jerome.

3. The Church historians, Sulpicius Severus, Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret. These must be used with caution, and corrected from more certain data, or we shall have "the frequent scandal of seeing the *consensus ecclesiae* resolve itself into some mendacious novel-writer and his tail of copyists."

4. Greek lives by Pachomius, Gelasius, Metaphrastes, and an anonymous writer (used by Photius) are for the most part valueless.

EDITIONS

The best editions of the *Opera Omnia* are the Benedictine, 1698; Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxv. His historical writings and orations against the Arians have been edited by Canon Bright, Oxford, 1881 and 1873, and are translated in the *Library of the Fathers*, under Dr. Newman's editorship, in 1843-4.

There are lives of Athanasius by Montfaucon, in the Benedictine edition, 1698; Tillemont, vol. viii.; Cave, *Lives of the Fathers* and *Historia Literaria*; Canon Bright, in his edition of the *Orations against the Arians*; Mohler, *Athanasius der Grosse*, 1827, second ed. 1844; Fialon, *St. Athanase*, Paris, 1887.

Other books which are useful for this phase of the fifth century are Zahn, *Marcellus*, 1867, and *Constantin*, 1876; Reinkens's *Hilarius*, 1864; Keim's *Constantin*, 1862; Rendall's *Julian*; Sievers's *Libanius*, 1868. For the rise and progress of Arianism, we may refer to Dorner's *Person of Christ* (E.T.), vol. ii.; Newman's *Arians*, Gwatkin's *Arians*, Kaye's *Council of Nicaea*, and Dr. Hort's *Two Dissertations*.

PROBABLE CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF ATHANASIUS

- A.D.
- 297. Birth of Athanasius.
 - 303. Great persecution of Maximian.
 - 318. Writes c. *Gentes and De Incarn.*
 - 321. Arius excommunicated.
 - 325. Council of Nicaea.
 - 326 or. Election of Athanasius.
 - 328.
 - 335. Aug. Council of Tyre.
Sept. Council of Jerusalem.
Oct. 30. Athanasius at Constantinople.
 - 336. Feb. 5. Exile of Athanasius.
Death of Arius.
 - 337. May 22. Death of Constantine.
 - ? Nov. 23. First return of Athanasius.
 - 339. Lent. Athanasius expelled by Philagrius.
 - 340. Council at Rome. Letter of Julius.
 - 341. Council of the Dedication at Antioch.
 - 342. Death of Eusebius of Nicomedia.
 - ? 343. Councils of Sardica and Philippopolis.
 - 344. "Makrostich Creed" issued at Antioch.
 - ? 345. Death of Gregory at Alexandria.
 - ? 346. Oct. 21. Second return of Athanasius.
 - 350. Jan. 18. Death of Constans.
 - 353. Council of Arles.
 - 355. Exile of Hosius and Liberius.
 - ? 356. Feb. 8. Athanasius expelled by Syrianus.
Writes *Apol. ad Constantius and De Fug.*
 - 358. Writes *Hist. Arianorum ad Monachos.*
 - 359. The "Dated Creed" of Sirmium.
July 21. Council of Rimini.
Sept. 27. Council of Seleucia.
Oct. Council at Nike
Dec. (?) Athanasius, *De Synodis.*
 - 362. Murder of George. Third return of Athanasius.
 - 363. June 26. Death of Julian.
 - 366. Fifth return of Athanasius.
 - 373. Death of Athanasius.

I have given the chronology adopted by Mr. Gwatkin in his *Arianism*, but have put a ? to the dates which are disputable.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS ORDINATION

*"Know that we must not serve the time, but serve the Lord." —
Athanasius to Abbot Dracontius.*

Early Years and Education

ATHANASIUS, the greatest and most persistent of the early defenders of the faith, was born in Alexandria about the year 297. His childhood fell in the period of the terrible persecution of Christians by Maximian in A.D. 303. Of that persecution he had no personal recollection, and merely mentions that he had heard from the men of that generation how even the Pagans commiserated the Christians, and endured fines and imprisonment rather than betray them.¹ As he published an elaborate theological book in 319, he could not have been born much after 297, and he tells us that he was trained in theology by confessors who had suffered from Pagan persecution.²

His parents were Christians, who occupied a good position in Alexandria. They were probably poor, but they gave him a thorough training both in secular and religious knowledge. He had studied grammar and rhetoric,³ and his early book *Against the Gentiles* proves his familiarity with Homer and Plato. It is clear too that he was acquainted with Greek philosophy in its later forms, and that he had studied jurisprudence.⁴ Though he always speaks of himself with singular modesty, he was evidently a man of liberal education.⁵ But the knowledge which he valued most was extreme familiarity with the Scriptures, which he quotes with fulness and appositeness, and which he had studied with the aid of the best existing commentaries.

To a quick and lively boy, life in Alexandria was itself an education. He came in contact with all forms of commerce and of culture, with literary men from all countries, and with the votaries of many forms of Pagan and heretical belief.⁶ He must have been a daily witness of the dying superstitions of Egyptian Paganism, of the influence of Judaism in one of its most powerful centres, and of the conduct of Christians who had turned aside to various forms of heresy. In that teeming centre of life and speculation his faculties must have been trained and sharpened for what Hooker truly calls the "long tragedy" of his life.

The Meletian Schism

That tragedy was materially influenced by events which occurred while he was still a little child. In the year 301 arose the Meletian schism of Egypt. Meletius was Bishop of Lycopolis, a see which in Egypt was only second in dignity to that of

Alexandria, of which Peter was bishop from 300 to 311. During the persecution under Maximian Peter fled from his diocese, and Meletius unwarrantably took upon him to ordain priests in other dioceses, and to assume the functions of a primate.⁷ Four bishops who were then in prison and were afterwards martyred protested against his conduct, but received no reply. Meletius, on the contrary, went to Alexandria, excommunicated two of Peter's presbyters, and, supported by Arius and Isidore, behaved with such contumacious arrogance that in 306 he was deposed by Peter and a synod of Egyptian bishops. Meletius, instead of obeying the mandate, at once put himself at the head of a schism which was denounced in 325 at the Council of Nice. Meletius himself, though condemned, continued to exercise his episcopal functions. Athanasius was elected to the primacy, he threw in his lot with the Arians, and became so troublesome as to wring from the archbishop the exclamation, "Would to God he had never been received at Nicaea!" His followers did not die out till the fifth century.

Athanasius and the Church historian Socrates bring against Meletius the charge that during the persecution "he had denied the faith and sacrificed." It is no doubt difficult to understand how the Bishop of Lycopolis could so securely and arrogantly exercise his episcopal functions while other bishops were in prison and in exile.

Arius at Alexandria

The other event which threw its shadow over his young life was the arrival of Arius at Alexandria, from his Libyan home. The "melancholy, moon-struck giant" had been some time at Alexandria before his doctrines attracted attention. Had he not become an heresiarch he had all the views, gifts, and habits which would have marked him out as a saint. His countenance was pale, his expression sad, his locks dishevelled, his dress squalid, his manners gracious and sympathetic. It is said that he originally sided with Meletius, and then went over to Peter, by whom he was ordained deacon, but afterwards (according to some) suspected. As a boy Athanasius must often have seen and perhaps have heard him, little conscious how prominent a part they two would have to play in the coming years.

Spiritual Influences upon the Early Life of Athanasius

In 311 the good Bishop Peter won the martyr's crown. In 306 another bishop, Phileas of Thmuis, had been martyred. If Athanasius did not witness the glorious end of these faithful Christians, his boyish mind cannot fail to have been impressed by the story of their courage.⁸ Peter had firmly held and clearly taught the faith in Christ as One who "being by nature God, became by nature man."

There can be no doubt that Athanasius received a careful training in the orthodox faith. Such a training was eminently necessary in a city like Alexandria, where Jews and Gentiles were alike ready with their calumnies and jeers against truths for which Christians gladly gave their lives. Happily his theological studies went on in the midst

of deep spiritual influences of other kinds. It is said that one of the strongest of these was his friendship with the hermit Antony, whom "for some time he attended, and poured water upon his hands." It was from Antony that he caught the fervour of the monastic idea, and when he was called to the episcopal throne of Alexandria while still a young man, he was regarded by the people as "one of the ascetics." The cheerfulness, the wisdom, the rosy, healthy countenance, the beautiful sayings, the tender sympathy attributed to the great hermit, would present the life of monks and solitaries in its most fascinating aspect to the ardent soul of the young Alexandrian. His familiarity with the desert, and the love felt for him by the dwellers in its recesses, were the means of his deliverance from the machinations of his enemies in after years.

In 312, after the brief episcopate of Achillas, Alexander was chosen to the metropolitan see. Shortly after his election occurred the incident which has been believed on the sole authority of Rufinus.⁹ The Aquileian presbyter, who visited Alexandria in 372, and must have talked to some who had known Athanasius, tells us that one day Alexander had been keeping the "birthday" of his martyred predecessor Peter, and was expecting some of his clergy to a banquet at his house. His windows looked towards the sea, and as he stood gazing out of them towards the present harbour he saw a group of boys upon the shore. They were playing at Church ceremonies, and, thinking that they were going a little too far, he called some of the clergy to witness the scene, and then sent them to bring the boys into his presence. After a little pressure, the boys admitted that in play they had made Athanasius bishop, and that he had baptized some of them, who were catechumens, by immersion in the sea, with all legitimate forms. Finding that the questions had been duly put and the answers correctly given, the Archbishop determined to recognise the baptism as valid, but to follow it up by confirmation. He summoned the parents of the boys who had acted as presbyters, and recommended that they should be trained for holy orders. He allowed Athanasius to finish his education, and then retained him in his own house, even as Samuel was brought up in the Temple of the Lord. Sozomen adds that the youth became his secretary and amanuensis.¹⁰

The story is strange, but it rests on good and almost contemporary authority. Even if it cannot have occurred before Athanasius was sixteen, it does not seem impossible. Hefele accepts it,¹¹ as does also Dean Stanley. The Benedictine editors think it incredible that Alexander should have attached such serious importance to a boyish game; but rebaptism was regarded with horror, the boys seem to have looked upon what they did as something better than play, and if so learned a presbyter as Rufinus saw nothing incredible in the story, there seems no reason for wholly rejecting it. It is certain that Athanasius, while still little more than a boy, took his place as a favoured member of the household of Alexander, lived with him "as a son with a father,"¹² and thus spent some active and fruitful years in the centre of ecclesiastical activity under the roof of a prelate whose authority was revered by more than a hundred bishops of Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis.

He was still a young man when he wrote his treatise *Against the Gentiles*. It is a refutation of heathenism and a defence of monotheism, and gives us a great impression of his originality and quickness of mind.¹³ The first part is devoted to an exposure of the absurd beliefs which many Pagans professed; in the second he is constructive, and argues in favour of One God revealed in Christ. The theme is continued in his treatise *On the Incarnation*, which, though written at so early an age, is doubly remarkable—both because it shows with unwonted clearness an intensely fervid consciousness of the truth that all Christianity centres in One Divine Person, and also because it is one of the earliest attempts to present this Christian truth in a philosophically religious form.¹⁴

Notes

1. *Hist. Arian.* sec. 64.
2. *De Incarn.* 56.
3. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* xxi
4. *Sulp. Sev.* ii. 36; *comp. Soc.* i. 31.
5. Newman, *Athan. Treatises*, i. 52.
6. See *Ammian.* xxii. 11, sec. 3.
7. The titles Patriarch and Archbishop did not actually come into vogue till later. The bishops were often styled Father (*Papa*, see Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* iii. 235), but I sometimes use the title Archbishop or Patriarch to connote to modern readers the high authority of those who held the great metropolitan sees.
8. *Euseb.* viii. 12, *Athan. De Incarn.* 27.
9. *Rufin. H. E.* i. 14.
10. *Sozom.* ii. 17.
11. Hefele, *Hist. of Councils*, ii. c. 2, sec. 25.
12. *Cyril. Alex. Ep.* 1.
13. Villemain quotes passages of this treatise with great admiration. In it occurs the striking sentence, "Polytheism is atheism," sec. 38.
14. Mohler, *Athan. der Grosse*; Dorner, *Person of Christ*; Bright, *Orations of St. Athanasius*, p. ix.

THE DAWN OF ARIANISM AND THE COUNCIL OF NICE

IT was not till the year 319, Athanasius now archdeacon, that the heretical speculations of Arius started to attract many followers. Arius had received his education under Lucian of Antioch, where he was a fellow-pupil with Eusebius of Nicomedia. He arrived to Alexandria before 311, and was ordained deacon by Peter; later he was ordained presbyter. He was known as an eloquent preacher and an acute reasoner, and his voice had a peculiar charm. He seems to have held the position of an exegete of Scripture and head of the Alexandrian presbyterate. Arius regarded the Son as inferior and subordinate to the Father. He taught that "there was (a time) when He was not"; hence that He must be "a creature" and that there could be no *identity* but only a *resemblance* of nature between the Father and Son. At first Alexander spoke to Arius in private, but he produced no effect. The bishop therefore issued a circular letter directed against Arius and his "impious, godless doctrine". It was signed by thirty priests and forty deacons.¹ Arius, on his side, did his best to organise his adherents and they held incessant gatherings. Things could not remain in this condition, and in 321 Alexander summoned a council of a hundred bishops of Egypt, Mareotis, Pentapolis and Libya. Arius was condemned by the synod, and with him two bishops, Secondus and Theonas, and eleven deacons.

Arius retired to Palestine and then to Nicomedia, and by means of his letters, songs and poems tried to win over the multitudes to his views. Athanasius urged against Arius with irresistible force such passages as "This is my beloved Son," "the Word was God," and "all things were made by him," and many others both of the Old and New Testament, such as Ps. ii. 7; xlv. 2; cx. 3; cxlv. 13; Matt. iii. 17; xxviii. 19; John i 1, 8, 14; x. 30; xiv. 9, 10; Rom. i. 20; viii. 32; ix. 5; 1 John v. 20; Heb. i. 12; xiii. 8. He showed that the texts quoted by Arius were inapplicable or misrendered, and with consequent and powerful trains of reasoning he explained the whole philosophy of the plan of salvation as indicated in Scripture and set forth in the Catholic faith. He could appeal to the writings of Origen, of Theognostos, and of Dionysius of Alexandria. Arius regarded Christianity as a subjective revelation, the offspring mainly of man's spirit; Athanasius accepted it as the revelation of divine, eternal, objective facts. Athanasius saw with intellectual clearness that Arianism was practically *ditheistic* in worshipping two gods of unequal dignity; that it arose from the desire to rationalise insoluble mysteries; and that, in its ultimate issues, though detestable to the Jews as involving the worship of a created being, it was yet akin to

the Judaism which had crucified the Lord because of His claims to the divine nature. He saw no less clearly that the belief in Christ as "truly God" was taught by Scripture, was implied in His unique Sonship, was necessary to the efficacy of the redemption, and had always been the essential doctrine of the Christian Church. To him the statement that the Son was mutable was shocking. He pressed the Arians with the dilemma, "Either admit that the Son is of the same substance with the Father, or say openly that He is a creature—in which case He cannot be worshipped." It may have been pardonable in a half-pagan soldier like Constantine to treat the dispute as one of mere words; but, while Arianism began by attempting to establish Christian doctrines, it ended by subverting each and all of them. It obscured the divinity of Christ and gave Him but a fantastic humanity. It destroyed the bridge of real com-

Before three years had elapsed from the outbreak of the discussion, the whole Christian world was in a ferment of excitement. The songs of Arius were heard on the lips of fishermen and pedlars, while at the same time his views formed a topic of heated debate among bishops and rulers. Alexander wrote some seventy letters on the subject. The very theatres of Byzantium began to ring with jokes on the divisions of Christians.² Bishops were dashing against bishops, and dioceses against dioceses, says Eusebius, like the Symplegades on a day of storm.³ But there was one man who was prepared to make the question vital to the very existence of Christianity, and that man was Athanasius. He was an inmate of Alexander's house; he was his secretary, ate at his table, worked in his study, and inspired his most strenuous exertions. Against him the chief fury of the Arians was bent. It was intolerable to them that their giant champion should be met and foiled at every turn by the diminutive opponent whom, like the Emperor Julian, they were inclined to despise as "not even a man, but only a paltry mannikin";⁴ and yet they knew they had everything to fear from his mixture of "magnetic attractiveness with adamantine firmness."

The Emperor Constantine heard about the controversy which threatened the turbulence in Egypt. Arianism continued to make way and Constantine had to summon the first Ecumenical Council which met at Nice. Confronting Arius were Alexander, the aged bishop of Alexandria, and Athanasius, the youthful deacon, whose vehement zeal and keen logic were the terror of his enemies. Arius was then sixty years old. His face was of a ghastly pallor, his eyes were downcast, his features emaciated, his hair matted, his figure tall and thin, his manner often marked by outbursts of excitement. Athanasius, on the other hand, was insignificant in height, but his cheerful vivacity, bright glance, and angelic countenance were the delight of his friends.

In vain could Arius and his friends stand against the able and convincing answers of Athanasius. The Council ended in formulating the Nicene Creed. Arius was banished, as were also Theonas and Secundus.

Notes

1. This document is given in Socr. i. 6
2. Socr. i. 7; Euseb. *Vit. Const.* iv. 60.
3. *Vit. Const.* iii. 4.
4. Julian, *Ep.* li.

ATHANASIUS AT ALEXANDRIA (A.. D. 326-336)

"We know our place and our portion; to give a witness and to be condemned; to be ill-used and to succeed. Such is the law which God has annexed to the promulgation of the truth; its preachers suffer, but its course prevails." — Newman.

Athanasius Pope of Alexandria

FIVE months after the Council of Nice, in the year 326, Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, lay on his deathbed.¹ Athanasius was absent on some Church business, but the dying prelate repeatedly called him by his name. Another Athanasius was present and stepped forward, but not noticing him Alexander still called for "Athanasius," and at last exclaimed, "You think you have escaped, but you will not escape."

The patriarch died, and Athanasius on his return to Alexandria was received with transports of joy. The Egyptian bishops were assembled to elect a successor to the vacant see, and the people thronged around them with cries of "Give us Athanasius, the pious, the devout, the true Christian, the ascetic. He will be a bishop indeed." "In a time of public danger," says Gibbon, "the dull claims of age and rank are sometimes superseded." The majority of the bishops voted for him, and, on June 8, 326, he was formally elected. The Meletians and Eusebians in vain trumped up the slander that he had been hastily and secretly consecrated by six or seven bishops, who formed a plot for the purpose. The story of the Arian Philostorgius, that he seized a church by night and compelled two bishops to consecrate him there, is worthy of a man who, in lieu of his name "Lover of affection," has earned the names of Philopseudes and Kakostorgius—"Lover of lies" and "Hater of natural affection."² His peaceful election "in an apostolic and spiritual manner," as Gregory says, "without force and bloodshed, was attested by the public declaration of his suffragans a few years later."³

For forty-six years, amid manifold trials and varied fortunes, Athanasius remained "Pope" of Alexandria,⁴ the occupant of the chair of St. Mark, "the head of the Alexandrian Church," and therefore, according to Gregory of Nazianzus, "the head of the world." As a patriarch strong in the popular affection, he almost held the position of a sovereign prince. By nationality he was himself a Copt. He spoke Coptic, in which language alone could he have conversed with some of the hermits, who knew Greek very imperfectly. The Greek population of Alexandria was largely Pagan, and was

not so deeply attached to him, but his own people loved him with a passionate devotion. However rhetorical may be the magnificent eulogies pronounced upon him by Gregory of Nazianzus, he draws a true picture of a man whose character exhibits a rare constellation of virtues. Vigorous yet full of tact and common-sense, strong yet sympathetic, dignified yet gifted with geniality and humour, attractive as the magnet yet firm as the diamond, Athanasius wielded without arrogance the power of his high office, showing himself gentle to the weak, "hospitable to strangers, kindly to suppliants, accessible to all, slow to anger, pleasant in conversation, still more pleasant in temper, effective alike in discourse and in action, assiduous in devotions, helpful to Christians of every class and age, a theologian with the speculative, a comfort to the afflicted, a staff to the aged, a guide of the young, a physician to the sick, a promoter of Christian marriage and a purifier of married life,— in short, such a prelate as Paul described by anticipation, when in writing to Timothy he showed what a bishop ought to be."⁵

Three events caused him special happiness during the comparatively peaceful years of his early episcopate.

One of these was his visit to the Thebais in 327, during the course of his ordinary pastoral visitation. He travelled as far as Syene, and when he reached Tabenne he was met by a vast multitude of monks of the desert, who received him with a burst of psalmody. They were the ever-growing community founded by the converted Pagan soldier Pachomius, who (A.D. 340) did a work even greater than was done by another converted soldier, Ignatius Loyola, twelve centuries later (1534). These monks, clad in sleeveless tunics, sheepskin cloaks, and woollen cowls, had all accepted the rule of Pachomius, and devoted their lives to silence, to labour, and to worship. All the stately monasteries of which we see the buildings and the ruins throughout the length and breadth of Europe and in many parts of Asia, may be regarded as the daughters of those humble communities on the banks of the Nile. Athanasius, himself an ascetic, saw them with a feeling akin to exultation; but for Pachomius he looked in vain. The lowly abbot, fearing that the archbishop would ordain him priest over the whole body of monks, had hid himself among the undistinguished crowd. Standing in the throng of his companions he saw the face of his bishop, and exclaimed with prophetic voice that "He was a man of God and would have much to endure in the cause of true religion."

A second happy incident was the visit of a stranger from Abyssinia, whose name was Frumentius. He had a curious tale to tell. A Tyrian philosopher named Meropius, anxious to visit India, had taken with him two little boys, who were his wards and kinsmen. Of these the elder one was Frumentius, the younger Aedesius. On their return they had touched at a port of Abyssinia on the Red Sea to obtain water, and there the barbarians, to avenge some grudge against former voyagers, had massacred Meropius and the whole crew. They found the two children seated quietly under a tree preparing their lessons, and, moved by compassion for their tender age, had taken them to their king. The king, whose name was Abreha, and who lived at

Axum, made Aedesius his cup-bearer and Frumentius his secretary, and when he died restored them their liberty.⁶ The queen, however, begged them to remain in the country as tutors and advisers of her young sons. In this position they practically held the administration of Abyssinia, and used their power to introduce Christian ideas and provide churches for Christian residents. The work grew in their hands, but when the young king Atzbeha came of age they wished to return to their native home. Aedesius hastened to Tyre to visit his relatives and friends, but Frumentius went to Alexandria to entreat that a bishop might be appointed to take charge of the Abyssinian Christians. Athanasius called together a synod of bishops, and significantly pointed their attention to Frumentius himself. He was consecrated, and became the founder of Centuries afterwards he was still celebrated in Ethiopian songs under the name of "Abba Salama, the gate of pity and mercy, who caused the glory of Christ's light to dawn in Ethiopia, where before there had been clouds and darkness." This event probably occurred in 330.⁷

Another gleam of happiness fell on years which were full of trouble and anxiety. Antony, the aged hermit of the desert, visited Alexandria for the express purpose of supporting Athanasius and repudiating all sympathy with the Arian cause. The people flocked in crowds to see this strange figure of one who had lived so far from the ways of men, and listened with beating hearts to his fiery, uncultured eloquence. When he returned to his solitudes, Athanasius himself accompanied him to the gates of Alexandria, where his last act was to heal a youth possessed by an evil spirit.

False Charges Against Athanasius

Meanwhile the clouds of hatred and persecution had been gathering densely over the head of the archbishop. Few indeed were the brightening elements in a career which would have been intolerable even unto death to a spirit less radiant and faithful than his. His enemies, with the worldly and astute Eusebius of Nicomedia at their head, pursued him with a sleepless malignity. They strained every effort to undermine the Nicene faith and its chief supporters. On Athanasius himself they poured forth a flood of infamous calumnies with the express object of deposing and ruining him. "The Arians," says Hooker, "never suffered him to enjoy the comfort of a peaceable day." For this object they formed an unholy alliance with the Meletian schismatics, now under a chief bishop whose name was John Arcaph, a man of unscrupulous character. The Meletians were to invent and disseminate the calumnies, the Eusebians were to bring them under the notice of the Emperor.

The first object of the Eusebians was to strengthen their cause at court, and to isolate the archbishop by the overthrow of the most powerful supporters of the *Homoousion*. Three years after the Council of Nice, in 328, they succeeded, through the instrumentality of Constantia, in procuring the recall of Arius from exile, which was followed by the recall of Eusebius and Theognis. Then by odious intrigues they brought about the banishment of Eustathius of Antioch, and in order to carry their

point did not even stop short at subornation of perjury. They carried the election of Eulalius in his place, and on his death offered the see to Eusebius of Caesarea, who wisely declined it. But as an Arian named Euphronius was then elected, this proved to be the beginning of the unhappy schism of Antioch, which troubled the Church for so many years. When they had got possession of other important sees by similar methods, they ventured to secure from Constantine a demand that Arius should be re-admitted into the communion of the Alexandrian Church. To this demand it was of course impossible for Athanasius to accede, and the refusal kindled the Emperor into a rage which made him ready to listen to any lies. After attacking Athanasius on the ground of irregular election and tyrannical conduct, the Eusebians brought against him three definite charges. They said (1) that he had traversed Egypt to provide linen *sticharia* (some sort of alb) for the Alexandrian clergy; (2) that he had sent off gold to a conspirator named Philumenus; (3) that he had despatched his presbyter Macarius to attack another presbyter named Ischyrras, and had so caused a holy chalice to be broken. Athanasius came to Nicomedia to rebut these charges, and was there taken seriously ill. He was able, however, to meet the Emperor in a suburb of Nicomedia, and he so absolutely disposed of the ridiculous accusations against him that Constantine for a time got over his jealous wrath, and wrote a letter in which he commended Athanasius and severely condemned the ambition and turbulence of his Meletian calumniators.

The apparant vacillations of Constantine are not difficult to understand. In matters of theology he was as ignorant as his flatterers led him to fancy that he was profound. He began with irritated indifference, and ended in autocratic dogmatism. At first he blamed Arius and Alexander as though they were equally in the wrong. He then treated the points in dispute as questions of words and names which ought never to have been mooted. But his vanity had been exalted and his imagination magnetised by the Council of Nice, in which he had come to regard himself as a sort of bishop of bishops. After this, in the intense desire to maintain unity, which was probably the sincerest of his motives, he became an ardent champion of the Nicene orthodoxy. When, however, Eusebius had managed not only to procure his own recall from exile, but also to insinuate himself with courtier-like suppleness into the Emperor's confidence, he succeeded in removing his prejudices against Arius and in embellishing Arianism itself in colours so seductive as to induce the Emperor to look upon it as the only sensible form of right belief. With such a man as Eusebius at the ear of such a man as Constantine, there was little chance that Athanasius would be left in peace.

The two first charges against Athanasius died of their own absurdity, but the third continued to be a source of pain and trouble for many years.

The story was this. In the Mareotis was a hamlet named "the Peace of the Secontaruri," where lived a man named Ischyrras, who is said to have been hated for his bad character. He had been spuriously ordained by the schismatic presbyter Colluthus, and had been ordered by Hosius to return to the ranks of the laity. In spite

of this he continued to usurp the functions of a presbyter, and, as there was no church in the village, he officiated at the house of an orphan, where he only succeeded in inducing seven persons to attend his ministry. Hearing of these irregularities, Athanasius in the course of his visitation (about A.D. 329) sent his presbyter Macarius to summon Ischyras, and to induce his father to prevent the misconduct of his son. Ischyras at the moment was ill in bed. The father of Ischyras forbade his son to continue his unauthorised proceedings, and the young man went over to the Meletians. They at once seized their opportunity. They compelled Ischyras by threats, and even by blows,⁸ to support a story that Macarius—or, as some of them preferred to say, Athanasius himself—had rushed into the church, broken the chalice, overthrown the holy table, burnt the books, and destroyed the building! The answer of Athanasius to this calumny was complete. He showed that the house was not a church; that Ischyras was not a presbyter; that no communion had been or could have been celebrated on the day mentioned;⁹ that the man himself had been ill in bed; and that there was not the shadow of a ground for the entire fiction. Nor was this all. Unable to bear the indignation of his friends and the contempt of all good men, Ischyras himself came to Athanasius and confessed with tears that he had been compelled to his criminal false-witness by the personal violence of three Meletian bishops. "God is witness," he stated in writing, "that I know nothing of your having done any of the things they state. No cup was broken, no holy table overturned. They goaded me by force into these assertions."¹⁰ This recantation was witnessed by the signatures of thirteen of the clergy of Alexandria and Mareotis.

It was, however, impossible to re-admit into immediate communion a man who was doubly a schismatic, who stood self-condemned for heinous perjuries, and who had persisted in his calumny even after Constantine had driven away in disgrace the accusers of Athanasius. The Meletians took advantage of this interval, and induced the wretched slanderer in due time to recant his recantation.

Yet darker, if yet more absurd, was a fourth charge, persistently urged for years against the great archbishop by his enemies. It was a charge of nothing less than murder and magic, and it shows the liability of that age to fall into paroxysms of terrifying superstition.

If there was one charge more than another which it was impossible to disprove and which yet created the intensest prejudice against any one who was its victim, it was the charge of magic. The slightest suspicion of sorcery wrought up the ignorance and credulity of men's minds into a frenzy of horror and alarm. Of this the Meletians were aware, and they went about horrifying all whom they met by showing them a wooden box in which was the black and withered hand of a dead man. "This," they said, "is the hand of Arsenius, Bishop of Hypsele. It is well known that he has disappeared. He has been poisoned by Athanasius, and his remains have been used for magical incantations." Grotesque as the charge appears to us, it was supported by John Arcaph and his Meletian suffragans, and it seemed so formidable even to the startled mind of Constantine, that in spite of the baselessness of the previous charges,

he summoned Athanasius to appear at Antioch before his half-brother the Censor Dalmatius, and there to answer these accusations. At first the archbishop was inclined to treat the matter as too contemptible for notice; but finding that it was regarded as serious, he sent a deacon to the Thebais to make inquiries.

It was true that Arsenius had disappeared. He had been bribed by John Arcaph to hide himself in the monastery of Ptemencyrcis, and the deacon discovered this fact from some monks. They, however, sent warning to Pinnes, the Abbot of Ptemencyrcis, and he sent Arsenius down the Nile with a monk named Helias. The deacon made his way to Ptemencyrcis, arrested Pinnes and Helias, and brought them before the duke of the district. There they confessed that Arsenius was alive, and had been sent to Tyre; and a letter from Pinnes to Arcaph was intercepted, in which he told the Meletian that it would be useless to persist in the old story. The deacon—evidently a man of admirable promptitude—hastened with all speed to Tyre, and was informed by the servants of a consular that they had overheard a man in a tavern saying that Arsenius was concealed in a certain house. There he was found, and at first denied his own identity, but was at last "convicted of being himself" before the tribunal of Paul, Bishop of Tyre. Arsenius thereupon wrote a humble and deeply penitent letter to Athanasius, "his blessed pope," promising to abandon his schism and to return to the Church. This promise he faithfully kept. The archbishop wrote to inform the Emperor that Arsenius had been discovered, and Constantine, once more disabused of the prejudices which were daily buzzed in his ears, stopped further proceedings. He wrote two letters, one dismissing the Eusebian accusers, and the other to Athanasius himself, in which he threatened the Meletians with his extremest displeasure. Arcaph thereupon wrote both to the Emperor and to Athanasius to express regret, and asked to be admitted into communion.¹¹

Council of Tyre

This was in the year 333: but, strange to say, the matter was not even now set at rest, nor did Athanasius long enjoy the happy peace which breathes through the Festal Letter, in which he announced the Easter day of this year. Eusebius of Nicomedia persuaded the Emperor that the charges which had been so completely shattered to pieces ought to be examined before an ecclesiastical council at Caesarea under the auspices of the historian Eusebius. The council met, but for thirty months Athanasius refused to take the least notice of its citations.

In 335 another council was summoned at Tyre, before the dedication of the splendid Church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem. The archbishop received a positive command from the Emperor to appear before this council. He went there accompanied by forty eight of his suffragans, and at once saw that it was, as Paphnutius called it, "a council of malignants." The president was Flacillus, the Arian usurper of the see of Antioch, and among the judges were six Eusebian bishops, notoriously hostile to the champion of the Nicene faith. The primate and his Egyptian suffragans were insolently introduced, not by deacons, but by a registrar. Macarius, innocent as he

was by the confession of Ischyrras himself, was dragged in by soldiers a fettered prisoner. Athanasius handed in legal exceptions to the constitution of the council, but they were not received, and he was kept standing as though he were a criminal. The sight of so many undeserved indignities was too much for the feelings of the old confessor, Potamon. Seeing Eusebius of Caesarea sitting among the judges, he broke out with the indignant exclamation, "Do *you* sit there and pretend to be a judge of the innocent Athanasius? Intolerable! You and I were once in prison together. I lost an eye. How came you to get off scatheless?" "If you are so domineering here," answered Eusebius, "so far from your own district, it is quite natural that your countrymen should accuse you of insolent arrogance."

The Bishop of Nicomedia stood at the head of the theological conservatism of the East, and it was his duty to ruin its most prominent defender. If once Athanasius could be set aside, he did not despair of an Arian reaction. New charges were brought against him of having overthrown the episcopal chair of Callinicus, a bishop who refused to abandon the story about the broken chalice; of exciting the repugnance of the laity of Alexandria; and of various acts of irregularity and cruelty. Eustathius had been deposed at Antioch on the lying charge of a suborned woman, and one story is that the same attempt was made against the honour of Athanasius. It was instantly refuted by the presence of mind of the presbyter Timotheus, who, getting up, asked the woman "if she really accused him of this crime?" "Certainly," said the woman, thus showing to the whole council that she did not even know Athanasius by sight.¹² But the old stories were persisted in. The wooden box and the dead hand again caused a cry of real or simulated horror, and the story of the discovery of Arsenius was declared to be an imposture. "Do any of you know Arsenius by sight?" asked the archbishop. "We did, when he was alive," said some of them. He led forward the muffled figure of a man, who stood there with head bent down. Athanasius withdrew the mantel from his face, and said, "Raise your head." "Is this Arsenius?" he asked. The bishops who knew him exclaimed, "It is!" Lifting the cloak, he bade him put forth first one hand, then, after a pause, the other. "You see," he said, with the humour which often lightened forth even amid his worst troubles, "he has two hands. Where is the third which I cut off? God has created men with two hands only."¹³ Arcaph rushed out, declaring that this was another case of magical illusion; but by this time Count Dionysius, who had been appointed by the Emperor to watch the proceedings, saw the shamefully unscrupulous character of the assembly. He consented, however, to a commission of enquiry into the affair of Ischyrras, and this commission, in spite of the protest of the Egyptian bishops, was composed of six notorious Eusebians. Among these were Valens and Ursacius, who, after degradation from the priesthood, had been appointed to bishoprics in Pannonia solely because they were adherents of Arius. The proceedings of this commission were the most flagrant travesty of justice. They took Ischyrras with them to share lodging, board, and wine-cup, and made him their friend.

They intimidated adverse witnesses, received impossible testimony, encouraged the Pagan rabble to insult the Catholics, disregarded all counter-protests, and presented an adverse report. Their proceedings had been invalid and infamous from beginning to end, but Athanasius was condemned, and Ischyrras, who was not even a presbyter, was made a bishop and had a church built for him.¹⁴ Then the bishops adjourned to Jerusalem, where they held another synod and dedicated the church. Shortly afterwards, at the request of the Emperor, Arius was re-admitted into Church communion, and an attempt was made to involve Marcellus of Ancyra in a charge of heresy.¹⁵

Athanasius Meets the Emperor

These proceedings were cut short by an unexpected event. Athanasius, seeing the hopeless malice of his enemies, sailed away to Constantinople with the bold design of seeing "whether the throne was accessible to the voice of truth."¹⁶ As the Emperor was riding into his new capital, his bridle was suddenly seized by a man of short stature. It was the Archbishop of Alexandria. At first Constantine did not recognise him, but on being told who he was, refused to hear him. "Then," said Athanasius, "God will be the judge between me and you, since you have joined the ranks of my calumniators." As Constantine persisted in his refusal to listen, he called out, "I want this only. Either convoke a lawful council, or summon the members of the Council of Tyre to meet me in your presence." To this the Emperor yielded, and in a burst of ill-temper wrote a letter to the Eusebians, who were then holding high festival at Jerusalem, rebuking their tumultuous proceedings, and summoning them before him.¹⁷ The alarmed bishops scattered in all directions, but five were chosen to obey the Emperor's summons. These were the two Eusebii, Theognis, Patrophilus, Ursacius, and Valens. When they were confronted with Athanasius they said not a word of the six or seven other calumnies which had been already torn to shreds—not a word about Ischyrras and the broken chalice, not a word about Arsenius and the dead hand—but suddenly accused the archbishop of having threatened to stop the Alexandrian corn ships which supplied the bread of Constantinople! They could have devised no charge, not even that of magic, more calculated to rouse the Emperor into fury, and make him look on Athanasius as a dangerous rival. A few years earlier the mere suspicion of similar interference with the food supply of the capital cost the sophist Sopater his life. Athanasius, though taken completely by surprise, at once answered, "I never said anything of the kind; the charge is absurd; I am a private person, and poor. How could I do anything so serious?"¹⁸ "I swear," answered the Bishop of Nicomedia, "that you are wealthy, and powerful, and quite adequate for such an attempt." The charge succeeded. Constantine knew that Athanasius had been accused of having murdered a man who was alive, and had already declared in his letter that the Meletians were cursed, lawless, and clumsy fools.¹⁹ Yet now, perhaps in despair of discovering any truth whatever among these contending bishops, and in disgust at the whole business, he banished Athanasius to Treves, the capital of Gaul. The triumph of the Eusebians was, however, shortlived, for Constantine curtly refused their request that another bishop should be elected in his stead.²⁰

Notes

1. During these five months he had written the "Festal Letter," in which, by the decision of the Council of Nice, it was the duty of the Alexandrian prelate to announce the day on which Easter would fall.
2. It is strange that so public a fact could be so notoriously misrepresented, but it seems clear that everything did not take place quite so smoothly as his friends asserted.
3. See *Apol. c. Ar.* 5, where this letter is given; but they ignore too entirely the existence of at least *one* strong minority of opponents.
4. The name Pope was at this time perhaps peculiar to the Bishops of Alexandria. It is said to be a corruption of *ab-aba, pater fratrum*. It was not till the time of Siricius (A.D. 385) that it began to be given to the Bishops of Rome. The title "Metropolitan" is used in the canons of Nice. The word Archbishop is said to occur first in Athanasius. The title Patriarch is first found vaguely used in the writings of Basil and the Gregories.
5. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xxi. 9, 10.
6. See Ludolf, *Hist. Eth.* iii. 2. The brothers are called Fremonatos and Sydvacus in Ethiopian records.
7. The date, however, is highly uncertain. Rufinus (i. 9) heard the story from the lips of Aedesius himself, who became a presbyter at Tyre.
8. *Apol. c. Arian.* sec. 64.
9. *Apol.* sec. 11. The Eucharist in Egypt was only celebrated on Saturdays, Sundays, and festivals.
10. Letter of Ischyrras to Athanasius, *Apol. c. Arian.* sec. 64; and letter of Mareotic clergy to Council of Tyre, *id.* sec. 74.
11. The reply of Constantine to the letter of this worthless person is strangely respectful. He invites him to Nicomedia, and offers him the use of the public vehicles (*Apol. c. Arian*, sec. 70). After the death of his mother Helena, Constantine fell more under the influence of his sister Constantia, the widow of Licinius, who was strongly inclined in favour of Arius.
12. Rufin. i. 17; Sozom. ii. 25; Theodoret, i. 30.
13. Neither the slight variations in the mode of telling this story, nor the silence of Athanasius, are sufficient to render it improbable. It is told by Rufinus, Sozomen, Theodoret, and (independently) by Socrates.
14. It is to be observed that Eusebius of Caesarea—whose silence is sometimes more remarkable than his statements—inserts Constantine's address to the Council of Tyre, and the events before and after it (*V. C.* iv. 41, 42), but does not mention Athanasius or the charges against him. Perhaps he felt a touch of shame. Ischyrras appeared as "Bishop of Mareotis" at Sardica (343) and Philippopolis. Soz. iii. 12; Hilar. *Frag.* iii. (called "Quirius").
15. This was pursued later on in a synod at Constantinople, in which Eusebius of Caesarea argued against the books of Marcellus, and procured his deposition.

Marcellus was, however, acquitted by the Councils of Rome and Sardica, and Pope Julius declared him to be orthodox. See *Apol. c. Arian. 32*.

16 Gibbon, iii. 73.

17 Constantine describes the interview with Athanasius in this letter. *Apol. c. Ar. sec. 87*.

18 *Apol. c. Arian. 9*.

19 *Apol. c. Arian. 9, 68*.

20 Constantine II. afterwards declared that his father's object had been to rescue him from his enemies, intending to restore him. — *Apol. secs. 9, 87*.

FROM THE FIRST EXILE OF ATHANASIUS TO HIS SECOND RETURN (A.D. 336-346)

IT was in February 336 that Athanasius arrived at his place of banishment, and happily his exile was not severe. To be so far away from Alexandria, and his own beloved flock, and all whom he had known and loved since childhood, could not fail to be a heavy trial; but the city of Treves was a noble and beautiful one, he was accompanied by several friends, and he received an honourable welcome from the younger Constantine and from Maximin, the orthodox bishop. Nor was he forbidden to correspond with his people, though he ran the risk of having his letters seized and used against him. At Treves he stayed for two years and a half—happy, as he always was, for he never estimated orthodoxy by popular approval, but had "planted his foot beyond the waves of time."

The news which from time to time was brought to him must have been of thrilling interest. He heard that men from whom Constantine had a profound veneration had interceded for him in vain; that the Emperor, kept in a state of perpetual irritation by the intrigues of Eusebius, and unable to believe the motives which prompted an opposition so virulent, had written to the clergy and virgins of Alexandria to upbraid them for petulant affections; that Arius had been permitted to return to Alexandria but had been the cause of so many tumults as to lead to his recall. Then his heart must have sunk to hear that at last Eusebius had succeeded in persuading his bewildered sovereign that Arius was, after all, innocent, and that the only method of securing religious unity was to command the public reconciliation of the heretic with the Church.¹

Death of Arius

Arius appeared before the Emperor, and handed to him a profession of faith which, while it absolutely refused to admit the word "consubstantial," sounded reasonably orthodox to his untrained mind. In his perplexity he exclaimed, "If your faith is sound you have sworn innocently to its soundness, but if it is impious God will punish your perjury!"

Alexander the Primate of Constantinople, was a man of gentle disposition, who felt himself neither strong nor able enough to resist the command of his Emperor that on

the following day he must receive Arius to communion in the church named Irene. In his anguish he prostrated himself in the sacrarium, and prayed with weeping eyes and uplifted hands, "If Arius comes tomorrow to the church, take me away, and let me not perish with the guilty. But if Thou pitiest Thy Church, as Thou dost pity it, take Arius away, lest when he enters heresy enter with him."² The fateful morning dawned.³ Arius, elated beyond his wont, and uttering many idle remarks,⁴ was on his way to the church, surrounded by Eusebians and by a curious and agitated multitude, when he was seized with sudden gastric pain, and retired to a place behind the forum. His attendants waited for him an unwonted time. Going at last to summon him, they were horrified by a ghastly spectacle. The old man—he was past eighty years of age—had burst asunder in the midst, and lay weltering in his blood, a horrid spectacle. "Such," says Bishop Wordsworth, "are the facts of history. The reader will make his own comments upon them."⁵

The death of Arius was universally compared to that of Judas. It struck profound discouragement into the ranks of his supporters, and was accepted by the orthodox as a judgment on his cause.⁶

Death of Constantine and Return of Athanasius

Then, in 337, Athanasius must have heard the news that Julius had succeeded Sylvester as Bishop of Rome: that Constantine was ill; that he had received baptism at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia; that he had entrusted his will to an Arian presbyter favoured by his sister Constantia;⁷ and lastly, that at noon on Whitsunday, May 20, he had breathed his last in a palace near Nicomedia, at the age of sixty-three—still wearing the white chrisom robe of his baptism, for which he had laid aside the imperial purple. There is great significance in his last recorded utterance, "Now let us cast away all duplicity." He had, as Gibbon says, "pursued the great object of his ambition through the dark and bloody paths of war and policy, and his mature age forfeited the reputation which he had acquired in his youth."

The faults of the Emperor had been great and not few in number, yet he had been honest and well-intentioned in the main. His three sons had but little of his statesmanship or his generosity, and they only succeeded to a fraction of his Empire. Unfortunately, however, they inherited from him the taste for discussion, the habit of despotism, and the vain delusion that they were competent to settle theological controversies by the exercise of arbitrary power. The ablest of the three was the second son Constantius, who was but twenty years old. He was well-trained, sober, and moral, but as his short figure and bow-legs contrasted with the martial manliness of his father's aspect, so too did his inferiority in mental gifts. Jealous and feeble, he tried to make up for his deficiencies by the pompous rigidity and motionless artificiality of his bearing. But all the time he had an uneasy sense that his courtiers saw through him, and that he was in reality the tool of the bishops and eunuchs of whom he posed as the master, and who entered with equal passion into a long series of ecclesiastical intrigues.

Athanasius must have heard with alarm and grief of the dreadful inauguration of the reign of Constantius by an indiscriminate massacre of the imperial family. The Caesars, Dalmatius and Annibalianus, nephews of Constantine, his brother Julius Constantius, another brother, and five near kinsmen, together with the Patrician Optatus and the Praefect Ablavius, were all butchered by the soldiery—not it was feared without the secret cognisance, if without the open approval, of Constantius himself. Of the collateral branches of the imperial house, two children only were suffered to escape. Of these Gallus was destined, later on, to be a new victim of the Emperor's jealousy, and his younger brother Julian to be the avenger of the murder of his father and of the wrongs of his house. Their safety was due to the kind care of Mark, Bishop of Arethusa, who hid them in the first days of horror;⁸ due also in part to the fact that Constantius was childless, that the health of Gallus was weak, and that Julian was only six years old.

Athanasius must have heard further that Eusebius and the Arian presbyter were drawing Constantius over to their views, and this would have seemed to him an omen of the gloomiest import—an omen which was fulfilled during the long years in which Constantius was "his scourge and torment."⁹ For more than a year the position of the archbishop remained unaltered; but on June 17, 338, Constantine II. wrote to the Alexandrians informing them that he intended to restore to them the beloved teacher for whom they so deeply longed. In doing this, he said, he was but carrying out the secret intention of his father.

Constantine had divided his empire between his three sons, who were only twenty-one, twenty, and seventeen years old. To Constantine II. he had assigned the Gauls, to Constantius the East, and to Constans Italy and the West. The three Emperors met at Viminacium, and there, after having parcelled out the civilised world between them, they concurred in the restoration of Athanasius. Fortified with this triple permission, he travelled homewards through Constantinople. In an interview with Constantius at the Cappadocian Caesarea, he behaved with the magnanimous charity and consummate prudence which guided his actions. He was able afterwards to appeal to the Emperor himself whether he had abused this opportunity to utter one word of complaint either against his arch-enemy Eusebius or the many others who had done him wrong. He then travelled throughout Syria, and reached Alexandria in Nov. 338. He was received with an outburst of exultation.¹⁰ The churches were filled with joy and thanksgiving, and the clergy regarded this as the happiest day of their lives.

Plots Against Athanasius

But he had scarcely a moment's respite from the dogged tenacity of Eusebius and his followers. Scarcely had he resumed his duties before they charged him with two new crimes—first, with having been the cause of seditions, massacres, and banishments; next, with having diverted to his own purposes the dole of corn which Constantine had set apart for the widows of Libya and Egypt. The refutation of both

charges was easy. As to the first, he was able to prove to Constantius and Constans that the disorders had occurred while he was in Syria; that they were due to the civil, not to the religious administration; and that not a man in Alexandria had suffered through him. As to the second, he could show that the corn had been duly distributed. A third ground of trouble was that, though condemned by the infamous Council of Tyre, he had resumed the government of his see by an intervention of the Emperor alone. That was true; but whatever might have been thought of the technical irregularity, the complaint came with an ill grace from a popularity-hunting courtier like Eusebius; and Athanasius might have thought himself more than justified in despising the biased decrees of a packed and ignoble council such as that of Tyre.

But Eusebius had acquired a boundless influence over the treacherous Constantius, who not only addressed to Athanasius a letter full of reproaches, but sanctioned the appointment of a new bishop in his place. This was the deposed Arian presbyter Pistus, on behalf of whom Eusebius sent an embassy to Rome. Meanwhile, however, Athanasius held a synod at Alexandria, and in 340 sent an encyclical letter to the Churches.¹¹ It was only by this sleepless vigilance that he was able to secure the least chance of justice. When the emissaries of Eusebius were confronted by the Egyptian presbyters who brought this encyclical to Rome, the chief of them decamped in alarm, and the others begged Pope Julius to decide the question.

The Emperor Constans, a man of depraved personal character, was orthodox in his belief, and he asked Athanasius to send him some copies of the Holy Scriptures, which he did. In 340 he added Gaul and Spain to his dominions by the defeat and murder of his brother Constantine II. His favour did not, however, soften the hostility of Constantius against the only great Eastern metropolitan who still maintained the Nicene symbol. In 340 a synod of ninety-seven bishops met at Antioch to dedicate the "Golden Basilica," of which Constantine I. had laid the foundations. Ninety-seven bishops were present, and they drew up a creed, known as "the Creed of the Dedication," originally written by Lucian, which would have been harmless if it had not been intended to supersede the creed of Nicaea.

Second Exile of Athanasius

Eusebius had by this time succeeded in getting rid of the orthodox Bishop Paul on a false accusation, and in thrusting himself into the see of Constantinople. He seized the opportunity of finding a weightier person than Pistus for the see of Alexandria.¹² It was offered to Eusebius of Emesa, and, when he declined it, was bestowed on an Arian named Gregory, a Cappadocian, who, as a student at Alexandria, had received from Athanasius the utmost kindness. Gregory accepted the post, and made his way to Alexandria on March 23, under the protection of a civil and military escort. The atrocities which he there committed are almost inconceivable. Churches were desecrated, altars polluted, sacred stores pillaged; monks, priests, and virgins were beaten and slain; Jews and Pagans were encouraged to burst into Christian congrega-

tions, and to insult and maltreat the worshippers. Everything corresponded to the vision of St. Antony, who was one day found weeping and agitated, and said that he had dreamed that the table of the Lord was hedged round by mules who spurned it with their heels, and that he had heard a voice saying, "My altar shall be polluted."

Athanasius was then living in the precincts of the Church of St. Theonas, and, seeing that he was helpless to stem the tide of desecration, he fled to a place of concealment near the city, from which he despatched another encyclical, describing the miserable invasion of the Church of Alexandria, and warning all other Churches of their common danger. Shortly after Easter he succeeded in getting on board ship, and, accompanied by two monks, Ammonius and Isidore, he made his way safely to Rome. One providential result of his banishment was that the Western Church

At Rome, where his innocence was well known, he was received with the utmost honour by Pope Julius. His visit lasted for more than three years, and produced a deep impression on the life of the West. It must be regarded as nothing less than the fixation of Roman theology and the beginning of Western monachism. The Romans up to this time had little or no knowledge of monastic institutions, and now for the first time they were able to learn at first hand the nature of ascetic discipline, and also to witness its effects on the lives of men. Ammonius, one of the "four Tall Brothers," was so completely detached from the world that neither Rome nor its institutions had any interest for him, nor would he visit any place in the city except the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul. Shortly afterwards, fearing that he would be made bishop, he fled and cut off one ear in order that he might be incapacitated for the office.¹³ Isidore, on the other hand, charmed all men by this simplicity and geniality. Thus the beginning of monasticism in Italy was the result of the second exile of the great archbishop. The noble Marcella received her impulse to self-sacrifice from this visit, and began the reformation among the Roman ladies of which Jerome became the subsequent director.

Athanasius occupied his exile in drawing up his *Exposition of the Faith*, and Church history profited by his enforced leisure. At Rome he was joined by Marcellus of Ancyra, whom the Eusebians had also driven from his see. Julius summoned a council at Rome to take cognisance of the case of both of them; but, after keeping his emissaries waiting for months, the Eusebians, in Jan. 341, returned a cavilling and unmannerly reply, which in the interests of peace Julius kept to himself. Later on they sent a fresh condemnation of Athanasius by the Synod of Antioch, and declared that want of notice, and the imminence of a Persian war, would prevent them from coming to Rome. Meanwhile Gregory was still behaving at Alexandria with the most inconceivable brutality, in which he was supported by the Praefect Philagrius. Monks and virgins were beaten in his presence; widows and the poor were defrauded; an aunt of Athanasius would have been cast out unburied had not some friends of his

represented the corpse as belonging to them. The aged confessor, Bishop Sarapamon, was driven into exile, and, as the climax of these horrors, the afflicted Church saw the venerable Potamon—the confessor-bishop who had played a worthy part both at Nice and at Tyre—so shamefully beaten on the neck that he was left for dead, and died shortly afterwards.¹⁴ The memory of these troubles is traceable in the Festal Letter of Athanasius, written from Rome in 341.

Councils of Rome and Sardica

In Nov. 342, tired of waiting for the Eastern bishops, Julius held a council at Rome, which, after hearing all the documents and some personal witnesses, such as Asclepas, Bishop of Gaza, pronounced the innocence of Athanasius, and acquitted Marcellus of the charge of heresy.¹⁵ Towards the close of the year Eusebius of Nicomedia went to his long account. Dr. Neale calls him "one of the most hateful characters whom history records." That he was more of a courtier than a bishop—that he was shifty, intriguing, unscrupulous—is unfortunately true. Some of his party had attempted to gain the same influence over Constans which he had gained over Constantius, but in this they were defeated by Maximin, the orthodox Bishop of Treves.

After more than three years spent at Rome, Athanasius in 343 was summoned to Milan by the Emperor Constans, who received him kindly, and told him to join Hosius in Gaul, and to go with him to Sardica in Moesia, where towards the end of 343 a council of one hundred and seventy bishops met at the summons of Constantius and Constans. Sardica was in the domain of Constans, and this fact so completely paralysed the intrigues of the Eusebians that they were forced to resort to different tactics.

A dissension of the most impracticable kind at once arose between the Western and the Eastern bishops. The Westerns treated Athanasius as an innocent man, and received him into their communion. The Easterns, declaring that he had been condemned at Tyre and Antioch, refused to take their seats until he, Marcellus, Asclepas, and Lucius of Adrianople (who showed the chains in which he had been fettered by the Arians) were deprived of their seats. It was in vain that the most generous overtures of accommodation were made to them. They sullenly shut themselves up in their lodgings, and at last made their escape secretly from Sardica and got up a counter-council at Philippopolis, in the domains of Constantius. There they occupied themselves in condemning Julius, Hosius, and Athanasius, while the council at Sardica urged the faithful to contend earnestly for the sound faith and the innocence of the Alexandrian prelate.

Death of the Intruder and Return of Athanasius

It rested, however, with Constantius to restore Athanasius, and he, so far from doing so, sent an order to the Alexandrian magistrates to behead him if he entered the

city. A new persecution began; but at last, in 345, the pseudo-Bishop Gregory was killed in a tumult aroused by his own barbarities. Constantius, yielding to the urgent insistence of his brother Constans, who, amid his moral degradation, still retained his esteem for a good and great man, allowed Athanasius to return once more to his see. "Our clemency," he wrote, "no longer allows thee to be tossed about by the wild waves and stormy sea, driven from thy home and spoiled of thy goods." This sudden change of front was probably due in part to the honest indignation which Constantius felt when it was proved to him beyond doubt that Stephen, the Arian Bishop of Antioch, had stooped to a detestable trick, worthy of the most depraved worldling, in the endeavour to fix a charge of immorality on Euphratas of Cologne. Athanasius received the Emperor's letter at Aquileia. Before returning, he went to Constans at Treves, and visited Rome to see Julius, who wrote a letter of the warmest congratulation to the Alexandrian Church.¹⁶ After paying a second visit to Constans, he saw Constantius for the third time at Antioch, and received from him a solemn assurance that he would never again believe the accusations of his enemies. The Emperor begged of him as a favour that he would allow the use of a single church to the Arians at Alexandria. With politic readiness he promised to grant this if the Emperor would allow a single church to the orthodox followers of Eustathius at Antioch. At the Syrian Laodicea he was warmly welcomed by Apollinaris, and at Jerusalem by sixteen orthodox bishops. Finally, he re-entered Alexandria a second time on Oct. 21, 346, amid such universal rejoicings that "the day when Pope Athanasius came home" became a proverb for festivity. The people streamed out of Alexandria to meet him in hundreds of thousands like the Nile in flood. The plaudits of the assembled multitude, the air rich with incense, the ground covered with carpets and gorgeous tapestries, the waving of palm branches, the rolling unbroken continuity of shouts and clapping, the eager outstretched faces of the multitude, the roofs crowded with spectators, the streets blazing with illuminations, left an ineffaceable impression of triumph and joy.¹⁷ But dearer to the placable heart of the archbishop was the peace which he restored, the charity which he evoked, the self-devotion which he rekindled, the spirit of forgiveness which enabled him to win back the hearts of many enemies. "In a word," he says, "there was such an emulousness for virtue that each family and each house seemed to become a church, from the love of holiness of their members, and their prayer towards God. And in the churches there was a peace deep and wonderful, and the bishops wrote to Athanasius and received from him the words of peace."¹⁸ His feeling of gratitude to God is expressed in the Festal Letter for 347.

Notes

1. The letter of Constantine to Arius (Socr. i. 25) is addressed to "your inflexibility", and ends, "may God protect you, beloved!"
2. The prayer, as overheard by the presbyter Macarius, is given by Athanasius in

- his letter to Serapion, sec. 3. Compare Socr. i. 37.
3. Or perhaps the event took place that same evening, Socr. i. 38; Epiphanius (*Haer.* lxviii. 5) The details vary.
 4. Athan. *Ep. ad Sarap.* 3.
 5. Comments are made by Athanasius, Epiphanius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose, and the Greek ecclesiastical historians; see too Gibbon, ch. xxi.; Newman, *on Eccl. Miracles*, p. clxx.
 6. Athanasius is perhaps the safest witness of what actually occurred. He says (*Ep. ad Ep. Eg.* sec. 19), "The sun had not yet set" (apparently, however, on the day of Alexander's prayer), "when necessity dragging Arius to a certain place, he there fell down, and was at once deprived of both things — communion and life. And the blessed Constantine, the moment he heard it, wondered, *seeing him convicted as a perjurer.*" In the *Letter to Serapion* he says (sec. 3), after mentioning the prayer of Bishop Alexander, "And a thing took place marvellous and strange. While the Eusebians were threatening, the bishop prayed; but Arius was confident in the Eusebians, and, with many futile speeches, entered into a latrine to relieve himself, and suddenly, as it is written, 'falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst' and instantly expired."
 7. This "Arian presbyter" is a very dubious personage mentioned by Rufinus. It is said that his name was Eutocius.
 8. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* iv. 91. Gregory there relates the cruel treatment Mark received for having destroyed an idol-temple, and (unworthily) says it was a retribution on him for having saved Julian. On the massacre, see *Hist. Ar.* sec. 69.
 9. *Hist. Ar.* sec. 70.
 10. *Apol. c. Ar.* 7.
 11. The letter of the eighty Egyptian and Libyan bishops is a weighty and noble document. It is preserved by Athanasius in the *Apology against the Arians*, secs. 3-19.
 12. Eusebius of Caesarea died before the council met. and had been succeeded by Acacius.
 13. Hence he is called parotis.—Niceph. xi. 37; Pallad. *Hist. Laus.* 12.
 14. *Hist. Arian.* 13.
 15. In his able letter to Dianius, Flacillus, etc. (Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 21) Julius gives an account of these decisions.
 16. Athanasius (*Apol.* 52) quotes the letter of Julius, but omits some of the paragraphs most laudatory to himself.—Socr. ii. 23.
 17. See Bright, *Orations of St. Athan.* p. liii. Gregory of Nazianzus gives a rhetorical description of this triumph in *Orat.* xxi. secs. 27, 29, 31.
 18. *Hist. Arian.* sec. 25.

FROM THE SECOND RETURN TILL THE CLOSE OF THE THIRD EXILE (From Autumn 346 to Spring 356)

...and yet, being so long in exile, even into prison, he was not disturbed thereby; for these things were foretold by Christ." — St. Cyril Hierosol. Catech. xiii. 40

FOR nearly five years Athanasius was left in comparative repose. He employed his time partly in the high duties of his pastoral office, partly in correspondence with orthodox bishops, of whom more than four hundred were in communion with him, and partly in literary work. To this period belong his letter *On the Nicene Definition*, his essay *On the Opinion of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria*, and the first sketch of his *Apology against the Arians*,—a collection of valuable documents which was afterwards appended to the Arian history. In 347 even Valens and Ursacius anathematised Arianism at Milan, recanted their accusations against Athanasius, and wrote an apologetic letter to the Bishop of Rome.¹ It was not then known how hollow was their recantation, which was due only to their fear of Constans. About this time the archbishop gave to the Catechetical School of Alexandria a worthy head in the person of the blind scholar Didymus.

A New Storm Gathers Against Athanasius

But in 350 the soldiers under Magnentius, in disgust at the neglect and immorality of Constans, revolted against him, murdered him, and made Magnentius Emperor. Athanasius thus lost his truest friend and protector. At present, however, Constantius was not in a position to annoy him. He had to deal with the revolt of Magnentius in the West and with that of Vetricianus in Pannonia. Neither of these usurpers got any countenance from the archbishop. Grieved to the heart by the murder of Constans, of whom he could scarcely speak without tears, he yet remained true to Constantius, for whom he offered public prayers, and from whom he received a letter of encouragement and support, in which was the remarkable sentence, "If it is my fixed purpose that you should always remain in your place as bishop." To that promise it was natural that Athanasius should frequently appeal.²

But by the summer of 353 Constantius was lord of the world, and was again free to carry out his determination to enforce a Semi-Arianism upon the whole Empire.

Magnentius had been finally defeated at Mount Seleucus, and with his mother, his son, and his brother, had committed suicide. Vetrano had been quietly set aside. Constantius, more inflated than ever with the sense of his own grandeur, was the undisputed head of the Christian world. Valens had been with him on September 28, 351, while he remained praying in a church at Mursa during the battle between his troops and those of Magnentius; and by an astute artifice had gained early knowledge of the victory, which he pretended had been revealed to him by an angel. This trick had rendered him more influential than ever. Constantius was further influenced in a heretical direction by his marriage with Aurelia Eusebia, who was heart and soul with the Arian party.

The theological proclivities of this Emperor were most unfortunate. He mistook his own ignorance for exceptional knowledge. Even the Pagan historian saw through his absurd pretensions. "The Christian religion," says Ammianus, "is plain and simple, but Constantius confounded it with anile superstition. He roused many differences by curious inquiries, instead of reconciling them by his authority, and when these had spread in all directions, he propagated them by verbal disputes. He utterly ruined the postal service by allowing the use of the horses to troops of bishops, who were constantly galloping hither and thither to the various synods, as they call them, in the endeavour to enforce uniformity for their own opinions."

Already in 351 Valens and Ursacius had flung off the mask, recanted their recantation, and entered into a new conspiracy. They combined with George of Laodicea, Leontius of Antioch, Acacius of Caesarea, and others who had escaped from the Council of Sardica, and who could claim the active favour of the Emperor. In 352 Athanasius lost the support of Julius. Liberius, the new Bishop of Rome, was at once assailed with the old accusations against the Archbishop of Alexandria. The storm burst on May 19, 353. Athanasius thought it necessary to send five bishops, one of whom was his friend Serapion of Thmuis, to Constantius at Milan, to defend himself against new and old insinuations. But on May 23 arrived the *silentarius* Montanus forbidding him to send envoys, but saying that, "according to his request," he might visit Milan in person. Athanasius having made no such request, saw through the trap, and declined to go unless expressly bidden. Liberius had suggested that a council should be summoned, and, to please the Arians, Constantius held it at Arles. This council, at which neither Liberius nor Hosius were present, condemned Athanasius. Even Vincent, Bishop of Padua, the delegate from Rome, signed the condemnation. The only dissentient was the faithful Paulinus of Treves, who was banished in consequence. Liberius deplored the timidity and unfaithfulness of Vincent, and wrote to Hosius, "I have resolved rather to die for God than abandon the truth." Alas! they little knew the disgrace and calamity which the future had in store for them!

In Lent 354 the plot thickened. Under the faithful ministry of Athanasius the churches were crowded so densely that some persons were injured by the press. Under these circumstances the people begged him to hold the services in an unfinished and undedicated church called the Caesareum. He was unwilling to do this lest he

should give offence, for the site of the church was the property of the Emperor. But after a time he yielded to their urgency, and a new accusation was founded on this circumstance. He was also charged with a treasonable support of Magnentius, and with contumacy in not coming to Milan at the bidding of Montanus. He saw the perils which were gathering around him, as he shows in a beautiful letter written at this period. The Abbot Dracontius had been elected bishop, and in fear of the crisis as well as out of preference for his monastic life, had fled from his duties. Athanasius wrote to recall him to the post of danger. Dracontius obeyed, and was subsequently banished. The letter is remarkable alike for its sober view of the ascetic life, and also for its firm courage of conviction that it is our duty not "to serve the opportunity," but "to serve the Lord."

In 355 a yet heavier blow fell on the archbishop. He was again condemned by a large council assembled at Milan, and of all the assembled bishops only Eusebius of Vercellae, Lucifer of Calaris, Dionysius of Milan, and Maximus of Naples, finally refused to sign his condemnation. At this council there had been some remarkable scenes. The brave Eusebius of Vercellae, at that time the ablest of the Italian bishops, had entered the assembly with a copy of the Nicene Creed, and when asked to sign the condemnation of Athanasius, of whom he probably knew but little, he said, "Be it so; but first let every one sign this creed. Dionysius, Bishop of Milan, took up a pen to sign; but this was the opposite of what the Arian bishops wished, and Valens seized him by the arm and snatched the pen out of his hand. Eusebius, Dionysius, and Lucifer (who was kept in his house under surveillance) might easily have raised a riot, had they chosen to do so, among the orthodox Milanese. The Emperor sent for them to the palace, and in vain tried to cajole or intimidate them. The impetuous Lucifer bluntly told him that he was an Arian; that the Arians were precursors of Antichrist; and that his victories proved nothing. Infuriated as he was by the remark, Constantius would still have been content if they would have signed the condemnation of Athanasius. "How can he be condemned unheard?" they said. "We are not here to avenge your private wrongs. As a bishop he must be judged by bishops, not by the Emperor. Do not confuse the canons with imperial decrees." "Canons?" exclaimed Constantius. "What I wish, *that* is a canon." So far had Caesarism gone that the Emperor could practically say *L'Eglise c'est moi*.³

The bishops were permitted, for fear of a popular disturbance, to retire unhurt, but in the night they were arrested in their bedrooms by the eunuch Eusebius; and on that occasion one hundred and forty-seven persons, clergy and laity, were banished. These brave men shook the dust off their feet, and, looking up to God, neither feared the threats of the Emperor nor turned traitors when the sword was bared. As they were carried in chains from city to city they proclaimed the holy faith, anathematised the Arian heresy, and denounced the apostasy of Ursacius and Valens. Lucifer in particular poured forth against the Emperor the sternest denunciations in language of rustic simplicity. Athanasius could only take comfort in the promise, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord taketh me up."

The Fall of Liberius

The one great object was to isolate Athanasius before striking the final blow. This could not be effectually accomplished so long as Liberius of Rome and Hosius of Cordova remained his firm friends.⁴ It therefore became essential at all costs to separate them from his cause. The cooks, barbers, women, spies, ecclesiastics, eunuchs, and court officials, who ruled over the lord of the world with undisputed sway, hated the great bishop; and they were so powerful that any one who wished to get anything done applied to them. It might be truly said of Constantius, observes Ammianus with a sneer, that he had considerable influence with his head-chamberlain.⁵ Naturally every great man—every man like Athanasius, Hilary, or Julian—was an object of execration to this callous egotist and to the gang of epicene intriguers by whom he was surrounded.⁶

Accordingly the eunuch Eusebius was sent to Rome to attempt, first of all, to win Liberius by bribes, and, if those failed, to coerce him with threats. He begged the Pope to do two things; to sign the condemnation of Athanasius, and to communicate with the Arians. "This," he said, "the Emperor wishes and orders you to do." Then, showing the gifts, he grasped him by the hands, and said, "Obey the king, and accept these presents."

Liberius firmly refused. Athanasius, he said, had been twice absolved by fair and free synods. If the Emperor would call another synod, free from all imperial influence or military terror, to examine into the question once more, be it so; but he would neither condemn Athanasius at his order nor condone Arianism. It was for bishops, and not for emperors, to decide in theological questions. But the dull Constantius thought that he could settle theological questions by saying to all who opposed the Arian heresy, "The doctrine you oppose is mine; if it is false how comes it that God has put the world in my hands?"⁷

The eunuch went away in great indignation, and, managing to get into the Church of St. Peter, he presented his gifts there; but Liberius cast them forth as an unhallowed offering. Eusebius returned and roused to fury the whole consistory of eunuchs, by whom the Emperor was surrounded. Emissaries were sent to drag the Pope, if necessary even by violence, into the Emperor's presence. To avoid tumults, he started with them secretly by midnight, but refused to condemn Athanasius, and compared himself to the three children before Nebuchadnezzar. He was banished to Beroea in Thrace, and the deacon Felix became Pope in his place. Rome was handed over to Arian terrorism.⁸ When the Emperor sent Liberius fifty pieces of gold for his journey, he declined it, saying that it would be wanted for soldiers and eunuchs. When the Empress sent him money, he sent it back, saying that she had bishops among her friends who needed it more. Eusebius pressed gold upon him. "Am I a criminal," he asked indignantly, "that the ravager of churches offers me alms? Go, wretch, and think first of all of becoming a Christian!" The grandeur of the scene, when the Bishop of Rome was sent forth a prisoner as a reward for his fidelity to the

innocent, struck even the Pagan historian.⁹

But alas! the Pope failed to maintain his lofty attitude. Exile broke down the spirit which threats could not terrify nor bribes cajole. He lingered for two years—aged, miserable, alone—for it was a part of the cruel policy of the Emperor and his eunuchs to separate the exiles from all communication with each other. At last, in 358, he fell. He wrote to the Emperor a letter full of anguish and feebleness, and, longing to return to his people, signed a condemnation of Athanasius and a creed which sacrificed the word *Homoousios*. Athanasius passes lightly and with noble lenience over his lapse. The crime rests, he says, not with him who was terrified, but with those who slowly tortured him into guilty acquiescence.¹⁰ That he had not forfeited the confidence and affection of his people even by his lapse is certain. When Constantius was in Rome ~~the emperor's policy of separating the exiles from their friends and supporters~~ is shown by the passionate complaint of Hilary, "Here is Arian perfidy! Anathema to thee, O Liberius! Twice and thrice anathema, O prevaricator Liberius, to thee!"¹¹

The Fall of Hosius

Still sadder had been the earlier lapse of the venerable Hosius, "the father of the bishops," whose head was now white with the snows of a hundred winters. He had been a confessor under Maximian, had been the president of the Councils of Nice and Sardica, and had been at the Council of Eliberis fifty years before. At first he answered Constantius with dignified firmness. "I am," he wrote, "your grandsire in age. God entrusted to you the kingdom, to us the affairs of the Church. And as he who tries to steal away thy power resists the ordinance of God, so do thou also fear lest in dragging to thyself the affairs of the Church, thou shouldst become liable to a grievous charge. 'Give,' it has been written, 'the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.' " The remonstrance was in vain. Constantius, "the champion of impioussness, and the emperor of heresy," sent for Hosius, and kept him for a year in Sirmium, "neither fearing God, nor reverencing his father's regard for Hosius, nor honouring his old age—this new Ahab and Balthasar." Hosius, like the rest, was kept apart from all his friends; for Constantius forgot, in the blindness of his malice, that though each confessor was separated in body from his fellows, yet each had God by his side, and therefore had more to defend him than all the soldiers of the Empire.¹²

To the Emperor's eternal disgrace, the venerable old man, bewildered by discussions for which his brain had become unfit, was tortured, terrified, beaten, attacked, by plots against his kinsfolk, and in all ways so shamefully mishandled that at last in 357 his feeble body gave way. Longing only for peace, understanding neither what he did nor what his tormentors said, to the grief and pity of the good, he signed one of the "Arianising" creeds of Sirmium. Athanasius, whom he refused to pronounce guilty, drops a tear of compassion over a lapse for which the aged confessor can be hardly held responsible.¹³ It reflects far more infamy on his Arian persecutors than on

himself. They could enjoy the detestable triumph of having perverted the actual president of the Council of Nice, now reduced to the mere ghost and shadow of what he once had been. On his deathbed, however, he repudiated his fatal concession, and once more pronounced his malediction on the Arian creed.¹⁴

Third Exile of Athanasius

Long before the endurance of these two great champions had been broken down, Constantius and his party of bishops and eunuchs felt that the time had come to strike an archbishop than the fact that he now stood out as the sole enemy of whom the Emperor was afraid. Gallus had been swept aside almost as soon as he had been set up, and in 355, for the first time during seventy years, the world saw only a single Augustus, with not even a subordinate Caesar to assist him. The world was at his feet, but he was as uneasy as Haman, because there was one man who would neither yield to him nor flatter him. True that this was a Christian bishop, a man without arms, without guards, without wealth, without political power. He was neither an intriguing courtier nor a conspiring general, nor a dangerous tribune of the people. He was only a humble servant of God passing his whole days in prayer and almsgiving between a cell and a church;—yet the master of the world was plotting every possible means by which to get rid of him. In August 355 Diogenes, an imperial notary, had been despatched on a futile mission to try to get him out of Alexandria. On Jan. 5, 356, another notary named Hilarius, accompanied by Duke Syrianus, was sent to take more decisive measures. Athanasius, supported by all his clergy and people, refused to leave his place unless the envoys could produce a letter from the Emperor. On Jan. 18 Syrianus swore "by the life of the Emperor" that no change should be made until such a letter was procured, and until the Alexandrian Church had sent an embassy to Constantius.¹⁵ Meanwhile he concentrated his troops about the city to the number of 5000, and at midnight on Feb. 8, while Athanasius and his flock were gathered at a vigil service in the Church of St. Theonas, the church was surrounded with guards, and Syrianus with his soldiers prepared to burst into the sacred precincts. Athanasius, undaunted by the imminent peril, took his seat on his episcopal throne, and bade his deacon to intone the 136th psalm while the people repeated the response, "For his mercy endureth for ever." Before it was finished the doors had been forced open, and the church was filled with shouting soldiers in full armour, who bent their bows and fiercely brandished their clubs and naked swords. The terror caused by the flash of arms in the lamplight left a deep impression.¹⁶ Many were wounded by arrows, many were trampled to death in the press; the virgins were in agonies of fright. Only the archbishop sat calmly on his throne and urged all to pray. The clergy besought him to escape, but, like a captain on a sinking vessel, he declared that he would not move from that scene of violence and plunder till they had secured their own safety. When most of them had made good their escape, the monks and clergy seized hold of Athanasius, who was now half fainting from the press and excitement,¹⁷ and, aided

no doubt by his diminutive figure, succeeded in dragging him unnoticed through the gates, though he was almost torn to pieces in the rush. Once outside the church, as soon as he recovered from his swoon, he thanked God for having enabled him to escape without betraying his people, and then did not hesitate to make good his flight. He knew that the Arians were thirsting for his blood. He was no fanatic, and had not the diseased passion for thrusting himself into needless martyrdom. God had given him his life for high and holy ends. It was still most necessary for the defence of the Church. So "he vanished, no one knew whither, into the darkness of the winter night." He knew that he could have rendered to his enemies no more decided service than to suffer himself to be arrested. Christ had said, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." He obeyed the divine command, and hid himself "for a little moment until the tyranny should be overpast." He

"Stayed the arm
Of tyrannous power, and learning's sophist tone,
Keen-visaged seer, alone.
The many bowed before an idol-priest,
Lord of the world's rank feast.
In the dark night, 'mid the saints' trial sore
He stood, then bowed before
The Holy Mysteries—he their meetest sign,
Weak vessel, but divine."¹⁸

At first he probably hoped that the tempest would speedily spend its violence, and that by going in person to Constantius he might be able to secure justice. But he soon found that such a hope was vain. Constantius sent a wicked Cappadocian named George, an ignorant Arian, a glutton, and a fraudulent pork contractor—to usurp the episcopal throne,¹⁹ and Athanasius at once wrote his letter to the Egyptian and Libyan bishops to warn them against the specious creed of the usurper. George with his myrmidons arrived at the beginning of Lent (Feb. 24, 357). He acted as though Christianity had no gentleness in it, and began a new orgy of persecution. Twenty-six orthodox bishops were deposed and exiled, more than thirty others fled, and a crowd of unfit and youthful Arian pretenders were thrust into their places. Faithfulness to the Nicene Creed became perilous even to laymen and to the poor. After eighteen months George was chased out of Alexandria by the people; he remained nine months in exile and then returned, while his opponents were severely punished by the civil power. On the Sunday before Pentecost, when the Catholics had met to worship in a cemetery, a fierce Manichean general named Sebastian burst upon them. Fortunately most of the congregation had already retired, but a few virgins still remained in prayer. These were seized by the brutal soldiery, and Sebastian, having kindled a fire, set them before it, and tried to compel them to say that they were of the Arian faith. But when he saw that even these weak women preferred martyrdom to apostasy, he stripped them and beat them in the face till they were unrecognisable. He then seized forty

men and scourged them so terribly with stiff and thorny branches of fresh-cut palm that some of them died. Their bodies were huddled away unburied, and the survivors were banished to the great oasis. While such horrors were taking place at Alexandria it was clear that the life of the archbishop would not have been safe for a single hour from the soldiers of George. All thoughts of appealing to Constantius became absurd when news came to Athanasius that the Emperor had written a letter full of sneers and reproaches, in which he denounced him as a pestilent and turbulent rebel, a proscribed and cowardly exile, who deserved nothing short of death ten times over.²⁰

Athanasius therefore, ceasing to struggle against the inevitable, retired into the desert. Among the monks and hermits, from the Nitrian mountains and the "wilderness of cells" to the Scetis and the pathless solitudes of Thebais, he had countless friends who were ready if need were to sacrifice even life for his sake. The Abbot-hermits Pior and Pambon and Macarius were still living, and into the wild and barren wastes no foot of Arian bishop or Manichean duke could follow him. There were times when he even "lived with the wild beasts."²¹ Nothing was easier than concealment, and even concealment was not often necessary, for if some chance emissary came to track him out, the monks had swift ways of flashing intelligence to each other from laura to laura and hermitage to hermitage. A boat on the Nile or a mule on the desert sands left no traces which could be pursued. It is unfortunate that he never recorded his adventures, for his life during those six years must have been full of romantic incidents and hairbreadth escapes. From the remotest deserts, from cells and tombs and mountain caves, he still continued to rule his Church and to influence the farthest quarters of the Christian world. For, as Rufinus says, the world at this time could provide him with no other place of refuge. Tribunes, praefects, counts, the whole army, were egged on by imperial decrees to hunt him down, and large rewards were offered either for his head or for his living person.²² His most frequent residence seems to have been the monastery of Phbou, opposite Diospolis parva, on the east bank of the Nile, where at one time the General Artemius came with his troops to arrest him. He was ordered to pursue him even to Ethiopia, and to bring him back dead or alive. Yet he escaped the emissaries of the tyrant. From his friends he constantly received letters which kindled him to fresh efforts, and beguiled the weariness of his exile. Nor was he dependent for information on letters only. Tradition says that from time to time, with infinite peril, he visited Alexandria in disguise. Once, if the story be true, he was concealed in the chamber of the virgin Eudaemonis.²³ At another time his abode for a long period was a dry cistern.²⁴ Most of his time was doubtless spent as a monk among monks, or as a hermit among hermits. Familiar from youth upwards with the ascetic discipline, it came to him neither as a novelty nor as a hardship. His thoughts were in perpetual activity, and during those years of exile and wandering he found time to write books which are rich in personal, historical, and theological interest.²⁵ The resolution which remained undaunted when he exchanged the almost royal position of Pope of Alexandria for that of a hunted and hated fugitive could only have been supported by strong religious

faith. He was now old, and saw no prospect before him but that of death in the desert, yet his courage never quailed, and his cheerfulness remained undimmed.

Writings during the Third Exile

One of the fruits of his enforced leisure was the *Apology to Constantius*, in which he once more defends himself against an outburst of disgraceful calumnies.

1. Of these the most dangerous was that he had tried to set Constans against his brother. Athanasius appeals to God in witness that he had never said a word against Constantius to his kind protector Constans. If he had done so Constans was not a person to be so lightly set against an Emperor and a brother. Further, he had never seen or spoken to Constans alone, nor had he interchanged any letters with him.

2. Still more groundless was the charge that he had corresponded with the usurper Magnentius, of whom he knew nothing. What should he write to such a man? Should he write to praise him for having murdered his imperial friend? Constantius could produce no tittle of evidence, spoken or written, for such a charge.

3. Was it not almost ludicrous to make a crime out of the use for divine service of the unfinished Caesareum? The same thing had been done in many other cases and no blame had ever been attached to any one for a mere arrangement with no object but that of convenience and edification.

4. He was accused of disregarding the Emperor's summons. He would have been quite ready to come had the emissaries produced any command to that effect. But this they had not been able to do.

These are his main points of defence, but it is not certain that his *Apology* was ever allowed to reach the hands of Constantius.

Another treatise of this period is the *Apology for his Flight*. He had been taunted with cowardice and the desertion of his flock. He proves decisively from Scripture and from common sense that it was his duty to abstain from throwing away his life; and he says, with a sigh, that a hunted fugitive, daily liable to be attacked by his enemies, deems death the lighter evil of the two.²⁶

A third work, written at the request of Bishop Serapion and addressed to monks, was the important and interesting *History of the Arians*, which furnishes us with the documents and events of that internecine conflict chiefly between the years 336 and 347. It is very vivid and impassioned. In it he launches out into the most unmeasured invectives against the Emperor. The Emperor becomes on the one hand a Pharaoh, an Ahab, a Belshazzar, a Pilate, an Antichrist—a man self-abandoned to the future doom of fire; and on the other a mere *Kostyllios* or "Connikin," the murderer of his kinsmen and the imbecile slave of his own eunuchs.

Besides these works he wrote during this period both his circular letter to the bishops of Egypt and Libya, and in all probability his four powerful dogmatic orations against the Arians, which remained for centuries the chief stronghold of Nicene orthodoxy. The first, second, and third of these orations are devoted to the refutation of objections and the discussion of Scripture proofs of the Deity of Christ.

The fourth is considered by Cardinal Newman to be a series of memoranda on Sabellian and other forms of heresy attributed to Marcellus and his school.

Divisions of the Arians

But meanwhile, under the shadow of that dangerous imperial interference in Church affairs, the "Caesarean-Papism," against which Athanasius energetically protested, heresy acquired ever greater developments.²⁷ "We see," he says, "a new spectacle nowadays, and it is an invention of the Arian heresy. Heretics and the Emperor Constantius meet together that both he, under the pretext of episcopal sanction, may act by the civil power against whom he wills, and may persecute without being called a persecutor; and that they, exercising the emperor's autocracy, comedy on a stage." But it was in vain that Athanasius repudiated the intrusion of Byzantinism into theology. For many a long year to come it was destined to run its course.

The extreme left wing of the Arian party was occupied by such men as Aetius of Antioch and Eunomius of Cappadocia. Those who shared in the opinions of the latter were named Eunomians, or Anomoeans, because they openly declared that the Son was *unlike* the Father, in that He was begotten.

At the other extreme, and therefore less distant from the orthodox, were the Eusebians, many of whom were only Semi-Arians, who held the Homoiousian doctrine that "the Son was of like substance" with the Father, and who were willing to give to the word "*like*" the greatest possible latitude. This party was headed by Basil of Ancyra and George of Cappadocia. Basil was a prelate of eminent respectability,²⁸ and Athanasius always speaks with sympathy of those who, like him, were called Semi-Arians, but whose objection was far more to the word *Homoousion* than to the doctrine which it implied. They thought that, besides being non-Scriptural, the word furnished an excuse for the counter extremes of Marcellus of Ancyra and Photinus of Sirmium, who "confounded the Persons" of the Trinity. If by abandoning a word they could re-establish peace and satisfy the Emperor, they considered Athanasius too obstinate in his refusal to do so.

Between these parties were bishops formed in the school of Eusebius of Nicomedia, less blunt than the Anomoeans, more determined than the Semi-Arians. They were the Herodians of the fourth century. They were courtiers and politicians quite as much as theologians, and were represented by such men as Acacius, Ursacius, Valens, and Eudoxius. The latter, though notoriously friendly to the reckless Aetius, had managed to thrust himself into the see of Antioch.

Fall of the Western Churches at Rimini

The agitations caused by these parties and their common embarrassments were deplorable. The number, confusion, and vacillation of the formulas which they

circulated attest their difficulties. From Sirmium alone there issued at least five different creeds.²⁹ The Semi-Arians, of whom Athanasius never despaired, were sincerely shocked by the bold impieties of Aetius. All men were eager for some decisive council to put an end to miseries and mutual recriminations.

Constantius had fixed on Nicomedia³⁰ as the place for the council, when suddenly the city was destroyed by a terrible earthquake, which buried the Bishop Cecrops in the ruins of his church and the Governor Aristaenetus in the ruins of his palace. The earthquake was followed by a conflagration, and Nicomedia became impossible. Then the eunuch Eusebius suggested the division of the council into two, which, when separate, could be more easily manipulated, and which would diminish the enormous expenses incurred by the service of public conveyances which were put at the disposal of the bishops.³¹ Rimini and the Isaurian Seleucia were fixed upon as the two places of meeting, and Acacius undertook to manage the Synod of the East, while Valens and Ursacius, who spoke Latin, kept an eye on the Synod of the West. The selection of Seleucia, however, was not agreed upon till after six months of discussion; and meanwhile, "to keep their hands in" at the work of creed-making, Constantius issued in 359 the formula which was held up to general scorn as "the Dated Creed." It exhibited two instances of blundering bad taste. It was *dated* by the year of the Consuls,³² in order to show, says Athanasius with keen sarcasm, the exact year, and month, and day (May 22, 359) in which *the Catholic Faith was set forth*; and it not only denied that the Son was everlasting, but blasphemously gave to the poor idol of an Emperor the names of "Eternal" and of "Lord". The "Eternal Constantius" was the first to grow ashamed of this monstrous adulation, and ordered the copies of the document to be suppressed.³³ This "Dated Creed" declared that the Son was "*like the Father in all things.*"

At Rimini more than four hundred bishops met in July 359, under the control of the Praefect Taurus, who opened the session by reading a long letter from the Emperor. Some seventy heretical bishops were present, and Valens, seizing his opportunity, got up when the letter had been read, and proposed to the assembly the Dated Creed. "Do not," he said, "divide the Church about words, and those not in Scripture. This creed is simple, Scriptural, unspeculative; and the Emperor has approved of it." But the good Fathers, unaccustomed to these showers of creeds, declared that they had not yet to learn what they believed. With great alacrity and in brief time they rejected the innovation, declared Valens and his party to be heretics, adhered to the creed of Nice—the only one with which they were familiar—and as early as July sent ten deputies to convey these decisions to Constantius. These deputies, chosen with the simplicity which marked the whole conduct of the orthodox bishops, were young men of insufficient learning and caution. Valens, on the other hand, sent other emissaries much more prudently selected and familiar with the ways of courts.

Constantius, angry as he was at the turn which events had taken, and all the more so because he had promised the consulship to Taurus if he managed things as he wished, adopted his usual tactics, and preferred diplomacy to violence. He deter-

mined to lead the deputies the same kind of dance which Caligula had done to Philo and the Jewish embassy from Alexandria, though in a more decorous manner. From Sirmium he set out for Constantinople, and told the deputies to follow him there. From Constantinople, on a new pretext, he started for Adrianople, writing to the Council at Rimini that the decision about creeds was a matter so important that he could not take part in it until he was free from political distractions. From Adrianople they were summoned to a Thracian city named Nike, and there—when they had been thus thoroughly wearied out—they were plied with arguments for signing a creed which simply declared that "the Son was like the Father," and which forbade altogether the use of the word essence (*ousia*). After a few days these ill-chosen delegates consented to sign, and Constantius sent them back with a letter to Taurus ordering all the council to accept the creed which had been signed by their deputies.

The unhappy bishops, shut up in a little town, without resources, suffering from cold and privation, watching with despair the fall of the early snows which would soon enclose them in the impassable barriers of the Alps, and separate them for many months from all chance of visiting their neglected flocks, were to the last degree impatient to get home. Three of them had come all the way from Britain. There were no great theologians, no resolute leaders among them. All the most eminent champions of the Nicene faith were dead, or were in exile, or had succumbed. They were stunned and bewildered by the incessant enginery of astute sophisms, wire-drawn distinctions, and plausible appeals. Their deputies came back, crestfallen from their submission. "We must get back at all costs," said some of them. "Why, then, do you not sign?" asked Valens. "Are you Christians or Athanasians? Are you worshippers of Jesus Christ or of the word *Consubstantial*?" One after another they yielded and went away, till only about twenty continued resolute. "Sign," said Valens, "and then append to your signature any anathema against Arius that you like, and I will myself utter it aloud in the cathedral." They agreed; and Valens in the cathedral anathematised "all who said that Jesus Christ is not God, Son of God, Eternal, and, above all, who said that He is a creature." He only made the unauthorised and destructive addition—"a creature *as other creatures*." Thus by bribery, by cajolment, by fear, by ignorance, by worry, the Western bishops, some sooner, some later, were induced to abandon the watchword of Nicaea.

Then the bishops all went home, some boldly defending their defection, others declaring that they had given up *a word*, but not *a belief*, others with a deep sense of guilt and humiliation. And then it was that, in the bold hyperbole of Jerome, "The whole world groaned, and was amazed to find itself Arian." A council more numerous than that at Nice had been browbeaten and deceived into the acceptance of an Arian creed.³⁴

Council of Seleucia

On Sept. 24, two months before the disgraceful issue of the Council of Rimini, the Eastern Fathers had met at Seleucia. Hilary of Poitiers, who had been banished from

his diocese by Constantius in 356, had meanwhile written his books *On Synods* and *On the Trinity* to counteract Arianism and to win back the more conscientious Semi-Arians into communion with the Church. His object was pacific, and he determined to present himself at Seleucia, the only Latin and the only exile there. Besides himself there were but eleven defenders of the Nicene faith. Of the one hundred and fifty bishops present some forty were extreme Arians who adopted the views of Aetius, while the rest were Semi-Arians, and some were politicians like Acacius. Hilary's object, like that of Athanasius, was to induce the moderate Arians to accept the *truth* conveyed by the word *Homoousion*, even if they declined to accept the word itself.³⁵ Suffice it to say that when Leonas had dismissed the council with disgust, Acacius, the leader of the heterodox party, cared no more for anything that the council might do or not do. He went away to Constantius with Eudoxius of Antioch, Aetius, and Eunomius. Hilary went also, and "the Athanasius of Gaul" was thus confronted with the enemies of the Nicene faith. Even now all might have gone well had not the envoys from Rimini brought at that time the unhappy and vapid decrees of that council. Constantius hesitated no longer. He enforced the acceptance of the creed of Rimini, and banished on the one hand Basil of Ancyra and all for whom that creed was inadequate, and on the other hand Aetius and Eunomius, for whom it was too orthodox. But the creed of Rimini was a nullity. In saying that the Son was "*like*" the Father, it was neither Arian, nor orthodox, nor Semi-Arian, but a mere ambiguity. Of its subscribers some wrote to implore pardon of the confessors, while others in indignant shame shut themselves up in their own churches and refused to take any part in further controversies. Many would probably have shared in the cry of Ephraem Syrus, "Happy the sailor of the faith whom the storms of controversy have landed in the harbour of silence! Happy he who is mute when men discuss Thy generation, but ringing as a trumpet when they adore it. Happy they who know how difficult it is to understand, how sweet to praise Thee! Happy he who has not tasted the wisdom of the Greeks, nor lost the simplicity of the Apostles!"³⁶

The Faith of Athanasius

But at this point, having watched the heroic struggles of the Catholic party, and the infidel perplexities and intrigues of all who rejected the Nicene symbol, let us pause to say that nothing can be more frivolous and superficial than the attempt to represent the *whole* dispute as simply verbal. The question at stake was nothing less than the doctrine of the Incarnation in its fullest significance. The word *Homoousios* came to be of supreme importance because no other word could be discovered which absolutely excluded the impieties of Arianism. The tenacity, the sobriety, the endurance, the genius, the inflexibility, the lucid exposition of Athanasius rendered to the Church of Christ an inestimable service. So far from being the too-curious speculator and rash intruder into the secrets of the Deity, he was the one effectual opponent of speculations which sprang in great measure from Plato and the Gnostics. "We are contending"—so he wrote to the Egyptian bishops from Treves in

338—"for our all."³⁷

And though the cause might have been lost had it not been for the wisdom, courage, and statesmanship of its chief defender, yet its strength lay also in the adhesion of the multitude, who were not to be sophisticated by specious dialectics. Though such emperors as Constantius and Valens were Arians, and though the Arians held a large number of bishoprics, including some of the most important metropolitan sees, the mass of the Christian laity was still sound in the faith. The Arian bishops did not dare to preach their exact belief, but concealed it under clouds of ingenious formulae. Even the forms of creed which they adopted were often only distinguishable from the Nicene by their denial of the divinity of the Son, a denial of latent heresy. "The ears of the people," says Hilary, "were holier than the hearts of the priests."³⁸

It is impossible to estimate too highly the indomitable hopefulness which Athanasius showed throughout this disastrous epoch. Even to a sanguine temperament it might well have seemed that everything was lost. Two Cappadocian heresiarchs in succession—Gregory and George—usurped his see; six heretics in succession—Eulalius, Euphronius, Flacillus, Stephanus, Leontius, Eudoxius—held the see of Antioch; Eusebius of Nicomedia was enthroned at Constantinople, and was succeeded by Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, by the coarse Eudoxius, and by Demophilus of Beroea, who tempted Liberius to his fall. Cyril was driven from the see of Jerusalem, and Hosius was tortured into the acceptance of an Arian creed. Liberius also apostatised, and, last of all, "he saw the almost universal shipwreck of the Catholic episcopate in the Council of Rimini."³⁹ And yet he neither yielded to flattery nor quailed before force, but

"Still bore on and steered
Uphillward."

"Only in Athanasius," says Hooker, "there was nothing observed throughout the course of that long tragedy, other than such as very well became a wise man to do and a righteous to suffer. So that this was the plain condition of those times: the whole world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against it; half a hundred of years spent in doubtful trial which of the two in the end would prevail—the side which has all, or else the part which had no friend but God and death, the one a defender of his innocence, the other a finisher of all his troubles."⁴⁰

In 360 Eudoxius was transferred by the Arians to the see of Constantinople, and Meletius was made Bishop of Antioch. Finding that he was orthodox, the Arians secured his deposition and exile, and elected Euzoius, the friend of Arius. They were accordingly abandoned by the old congregation of Eustathius, and the schism of Antioch passed into an acuter phase.

In 361 Julian was saluted Emperor by the troops in Gaul, and Constantius, on his way to confront him, died, at the age of forty-five, on Nov. 4, at Mopsucrene, near

Tarsus in Cilicia. He had been baptized on his deathbed by Euzoius, and was buried with great pomp in the Church of the Apostles. The Church ceased henceforth to be troubled by the shifting currents of a will which Theodoret calls an Euripus of theology. Julian, who succeeded without dispute, had been for ten years a secret Pagan, and on Dec. 24 the Pagans of Alexandria—who hated George no less than the Christians, and who were indignant at his cruelties—rose in tumult, beat and kicked him to death, burnt his ashes and flung them into the sea. Julian mildly reproved them, and annexed the valuable library of the Arian bishop to his own use.⁴¹ To show his scornful indifference to all Christian quarrels, and not perhaps without a secret desire to exacerbate them, he published an edict that all the bishops who had been exiled in the previous reign might return home. Athanasius, amid the joy of the populace, returned on Feb. 22, 362, and seated himself once more on his episcopal throne. The usurpers Gregory and George had perished speedily by violent ends, though supported by imperial power; Athanasius, persecuted by bishops and emperors, held his office for nearly fifty years.

Notes

1. Valens and Ursacius were always Arians, and it is probable that all the Pannonian bishops had been influenced by Arius during his exile in Illyricum (Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* ii. 38). They appear, says Professor Stokes, as Arian leaders at every council and synod from 330 to 370, both in the East and West.
2. *Hist. Arian.* secs. 24, 51. *Apol. ad Const.* 23.
3. *Hist. Arian.* sec. 34.
4. Athan. *Hist. Ar.* 33.
5. Amm. Marc. xviii. 4; xxii. 4. In xxi. 16 he says that Constantius was entirely under the influence of women and a chorus of thin-voiced, applauding eunuchs.
6. *Hist. Arian.* 6. Constantia the aunt of Constantius, his second wife Aurelia Eusebia, Albia Dominica the wife of Valens, and Justina the wife of Valentinian I., were all Arians.
7. Lucifer Cal. *Pro Athanas.* p. 22.
8. At the election of Felix, three eunuchs represented the Roman people, and three court prelates the Suburbicarian bishops!
9. Ammianus Marcellinus, xv. 7. He is, however, strangely unjust to Athanasius, whom he calls "ultra professionem altius se efferentem."
10. The attempt of Zaccaria (*De Commentitio Liberii lapsu*) to deny the fall of Liberius breaks down under the contemporary testimony of Athanasius, Hilary, and Jerome. See *Hist. Arian.* 41.
11. Hil. *Fragm.* 6.
12. *Hist. Arian.* 46.
13. *Apol. de Fuga*, sec. 5. Hilary calls this Sirmian formula "*Sirmiensis blasphemia*," "*fides infidelis*," and "*Hosii deliramentum*."
14. *Hist. Arian.* 45.

15. De Broglie (*L'Egl. et. l'Emp.* iii. 312) thinks that it was at this time that Antony came to Alexandria to support Athanasius.
16. *Hist. Arian.* 81.
17. *Apol. ad Const.* 25. A fuller account is given in the Second Testimony of the Alexandrian laity (*Hist. Arian.* 81). The corpses of those who perished were secretly disposed of—"martyrs of the most pious Constantius."
18. Newman, *Lyra Apostolica*, xciv.
19. Amm. Marcell. xxii. 11.
20. See two of the letters of Constantius in the *Apol. ad Const.* secs. 30, 31.
21. *Apol. ad Const.* 34.
22. Rufin. i. 16.
23. Compare Sozom. v. 6 with Pallad. *Vit. Patr.* viii. 136. Palladius professes to have heard the story from Eudaemonis herself in her old age.
24. Rufin. i. 18, Sozom. iv. 10. He alludes to such possibilities in *De Fuga*, 17.
25. "We may still read his words among the tombs of the Pharaohs in the cave of Abdelkurna. The inscription in Boeckh, 8607 (quoted by Fialon, p. 133), is a letter of Athanasius from the ruins of Thebes."—Gwatkin, p. 154.
26. *Apol. de. Fug.* 17.
27. *Hist. Arian.* 52.
28. He had superseded Marcellus, and had been condemned at Sardica.
29. In 347; in 351 (with twenty-seven anathemas); in 357, which Hilary (*De Syn.* 11) calls "a blasphemy" (Athan. *De Syn.* 28); in 358, and "the Dated Creed" in 359. See Bright, *Athan. Hist. Writings*, p. lxxxiii.
30. He had thought of Nicaea, that there might be a Nicene Council for the *Homoiousion* as well as for the *Homoousion*; but this was considered unsafe.
31. Pagans laughed and without ceasing at the spectacle of bishops burdening the public treasury while they ran distractedly hither and thither to decide what they were to believe.—Amm. Marc. xxi. 16. Some bishops, to diminish the scandal, came at their own expense and lived with their brethren.—Sulp. Sev. ii. 21; De Broglie, iii. 419.
32. *De Synod.* 3: "In the consulship of the illustrious Flavius Eusebius and Flavius Hypatius." "The faith itself," said Hilary, "has become a thing of times and seasons rather than of Scripture. Every year gives birth to a new creed; there are as many creeds as wills, as many dogmas as tempers."—*Ad Constant.*
33. Id. 29. This book of Athanasius was written towards the close of 359. At first, however, Constantius had been highly pleased with the title. Eusebius speaks of "unutterable flattery" in the court of Constantine, but it was nothing to that in the court of Constantius.
34. The authorities for the Council of Rimini are Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, Hilary, Sulpicius Severus (*Hist. Sacr.* ii.), Rufinus, Jerome, (*Dial. adv. Lucifer*, 18, 19). The Church historians, Socrates, Sozomen, Philostorgius, etc.;

Tillemont, viii.; Montfaucon, *Vit. S. Athan.*; Labbe, *Conc. Sacros.* ii. 791-801. The best *resume'* of the facts is given by De Broglie, iii. 418-427. See too Bright, *Hist. Treatises*, lxxix. f.; *Life of St. Athanasius*,; lxxxvii. f.; Newman, *Arians*, 359 f.; and for still briefer notices, see Gibbon, iii. 80, and Hooker, v. c. 42 (mainly from Gregory). The decrees of Rimini were anathematised at Toledo 230 years later.—Mansi, ix. 986.

35. The expression of Athanasius (*De Syn.* 1) that he had seen and accurately ascertained what took place at Rimini and Seleucia, has been understood to imply that he was actually present, at least at the latter council, in disguise. More porbably, however, the expression only means that he had read the documents and acts of the councils. George the Alexandrian usurper, who had been driven out of Alexandria for his cruelties in 358, was present. If Athanasius visited Seleucia it must have been in the deepest secrecy.
36. Jer. *Dial. c. Lucif.* 19.
37. Fialon, *St. Athanase*, p. 50. See Athanas. *Decr. Nic.* 28, *Orat.* iii.
38. Hil. *c. Auxent.* 6.
39. Wordsworth, ii. 27.
40. *Eccl. Pol.* v. xlii. 5.
41. Julian, *Ep.* ix. x.

LAST DAYS OF ATHANASIUS

Council of Alexandria

THE return of the archbishop enabled him to carry out some great designs of ecclesiastical reorganisation. One of his first acts was to hold a council at the request of Eusebius of Vercellae, who, being enabled to return home by the edict of Julian, did an infinitude of mischief. Twenty bishops met together, and among them deputies from Paulinus of Antioch and Apollinaris of Laodicea. They discussed three questions.

1. How were the orthodox to deal with bishops and others who had lapsed during the Arian persecution?

Athanasius deeply yearned for peace and union, and it was decided to treat with mildness, and to re-admit to communion all who now frankly acknowledged their error and accepted the Nicene faith. Paulinus and his little church of Eustathian followers at Antioch were recommended to rejoin the community of Meletius. Had it not been for Lucifer this advice would have been undoubtedly followed, and the Church would have been spared many grievous woes.

2. What view should be taken of the unfortunate word *hypostasis*, "substance"?

Some Christians talked of *three* hypostases in the Trinity, and were suspected as Arians; and some said there was only *one* hypostasis, and were suspected as Sabellians. Athanasius, "sensitive alive to the difference between misbelief and misapprehension," found that both parties meant the same thing. By three hypostases one party merely meant three *Persons* (*prosopa*), and by one hypostasis the other party only meant one *Essence* (*ousia*). The Nicene symbol used neither phrase, but implied that *hypostasis* was identical with *ousia*, and therefore might seem to sanction only the phrase "*one hypostasis*." But Athanasius was not going to allow "the two quarters of the world to be torn asunder by a difference of syllables."¹ He cared for truths and realities, not for words and sounds, and therefore held that both phrases were (in a true sense) admissible.

3. How were they to treat the dawning errors afterwards identified with the names of Nestorius and Apollinaris?

By some the Incarnation was made a separable visitation of manhood by the Word; on the other hand, the manhood of Christ was impaired by denying that He was "of *reasonable soul* and human flesh subsisting," and by saying that the Word *took the place of* the reasonable soul. The errors were not, however, as yet, sufficiently

definite to have assumed the form of heresy, and mutual explanations were accepted as sufficient.

The conclusions of the council were stated in a beautiful and charitable Synodal Letter "to those of Antioch," which was taken thither by Eusebius of Vercellae. It was in vain. Lucifer, fanatical in his orthodoxy and embittered by his sufferings, had already consecrated Paulinus as Bishop of Antioch—thus perpetuating the Antiochene schism for fifty years.

Julian the Apostate and Fourth Exile of Athanasius

The new Emperor Julian had never known the best side of Christianity. He had only witnessed its fruits as exhibited in temporising bishops, who condoned the massacre of his relatives, and in sects who persecuted each other with intolerant fury.² From dogmatic dissensions about matters which were to him incomprehensible he turned with a sense of relief to the poems of Homer and the manliness of Stoic philosophy. As he only saw Christianity through the lurid fog of prejudice, so he saw Paganism, not in its naked hideousness, but refined, magnified, idealised in the Neo-Platonic philosophy. For 300 years Christianity had been persecuted, for fifty years it had been enthroned. Its triumph had been marked by the myriad-fold development of internecine schisms, until it seemed to Julian to be a dispute about words and names. He would not at first openly persecute it, for he professed admiration for tolerance and freedom; but he thought that by the exercise of a little cajolement and cunning he could so patronise the Pagans as to leave Christianity to perish of its inner discords. So he washed away the lustral water of baptism in the reeking horrors of a Tauroboly—in which the initiated were deluged with a bull's blood—offered unnumbered sacrifices, and passionately abjured his former faith. With amazing ignorance of the meaning of his own times and the preceding centuries, he thought that he could bid the shadow go back on the sundial of history. He was soon rudely undeceived, and was proportionately irritated. His blows fell alike on heretics and the orthodox. Eusebius, the intriguing eunuch who had been the evil genius of Constantius, was beheaded. Taurus, who had managed the Council of Rimini, was impeached in his own consulship.³ Mark of Arethusa, author of the "Dated Creed," who had saved the life of Julian when he was an infant, perished in one of the Pagan tumults which Julian so readily condoned. The Cappadocian George was murdered at Alexandria, and his death was left unpunished. On the other hand, Julian flattered the Novatians and the Donatists, and Aetius, and Photinus. Against Athanasius he was specially embittered. The Alexandrian Pagans told him that the worship of the gods could make no progress against the influence of the archbishop. Was this "mannikin," as Julian contemptuously called him, to frustrate all his religious and political plans for a universal reformation? Athanasius had not been at home for a year when, on Oct. 23, he was informed by the philosopher Pythiodorus that though the Emperor had allowed him to return he had not intended him to resume his episcopal duties, and that he was threatened not only with banishment but with

something worse.⁴ He instantly took boat up the Nile, assuring his weeping friends that this was but a passing cloud which would soon blow over. He was pursued, but receiving swift intimation of this, he availed himself of a bend in the river and ordered his boat to turn and go down the Nile. They met the imperial officers, who shouted to them, "Where is Athanasius?" "Not very far off," answered the archbishop; and the two boats pursued their way in opposite directions.⁵ He sailed towards Alexandria, hid himself in various places, wrote from Memphis his Festal Letter for 363, and escaped safely into the Thebaid.

It was his fourth exile, and was not unmarked by happy incidents. Near Hermopolis he was met on the banks of the Nile by a torchlit procession of numberless monks headed by Theodore of Tabenne. "Who are these," he asked in the words of Isaiah, "that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?"⁶ So pleased was he with their life and demeanour that he exclaimed, "These men, devoted to humility and obedience, are fathers; not I." "Remember us in your prayers," said the Abbot Theodore. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!" answered the archbishop, deeply moved.

The exile was a brief one. One day at Antinoe, as he himself told the people in a sermon, he was in fear of arrest and death, when the Abbots Theodore and Pammon came to him and persuaded him to fly in Theodore's covered boat and hide himself at Tabenne. The monks of Tabenne began to tow the boat, while the archbishop poured out his soul in agitated prayer. "I am calmer," he said to Pammon, "in persecution than in peace. If I be killed—" At the word "killed" the two abbots smiled at each other. "Are you smiling as though I feared death?" he asked. "No," said Theodore, "at this very hour your enemy Julian has been killed in his Persian war."

It was indeed so. Julian had been lured to his destruction by oracles which paltered with him in a double sense.⁷ "The gods," says even Libanius, "made him the most brilliant promises. At last they totally renounced him. They lured him on as a fisherman lures a fish." On June 26, 363, before he had reached the age of thirty-two, he was slain by a chance arrow in his ill-omened expedition. We say "by a chance arrow," and such appears to have been the general belief. Callistus, one of his bodyguards, who wrote a poem on his death, said that he was killed by a demon, and Socrates approves of the suggestion.⁸

Peace under Jovian

His successor, Jovian, a mediocre but honest officer, was a friend of Athanasius, and wrote to him at once bidding him to resume his work. Athanasius was already in concealment in Alexandria, and he quietly reappeared on his episcopal chair as though nothing had happened. One of his first acts was to summon another council. and to write to Jovian, in answer to his request, a Synodal Letter in which he set forth the Nicene faith. Jovian, at Antioch, was besieged by religious controversialists, whose arguments he did not pretend to understand. "I detest quarrels," he said, "and love all those who know how to live in peace." He received Lucius, the Arian

pretender to the see of Alexandria, with a rough soldier's joke. Lucius was a man of mean appearance, and when he was brought before the Emperor, Jovian asked him "whether he had come by sea or by land?" "By sea," he answered. "Heaven punish the sailors," said Jovian, "who missed so favourable an opportunity of throwing you into the sea." After such a reception of their bishop, the Arians were cautious not to trouble Jovian with any more delations.

On Sept. 5 Athanasius sailed to Antioch with his letter to Jovian. At that moment everything seemed to smile. Liberius had risen from his fall. The Churches were now in almost universal accord about the Nicene faith. At Antioch he wrote his Festal Letter for 364, and returned to Alexandria on Feb. 19, a few days before Jovian ended his eight months' reign at the age of thirty-two. The unfortunate Emperor was smothered by the fumes of a charcoal brazier in his bedroom, and died at Dadasthenes on the borders of Galatia. His successor, Valentinian I., though "rude without vigour and feeble without mildness," was happily tolerant by policy; but he handed over the government of the East to his brother Valens, who was a zealous Arian.

Fifth Exile of Athanasius

At first Athanasius was not disturbed, and about this time he may have written *Life of Antony*.⁹ But in 365 Valens ordered the banishment anew of all those bishops whom Constantius had banished, and whom Julian had permitted to return. Unwilling to disturb the peace of the city and the Empire, Athanasius, for the fifth time, went into exile. His flight was almost too late, for on Oct. 5 the praefect broke into the Church of St. Dionysius, in the precincts of which he had been living, and searched it from roof to basement in vain. The archbishop hid himself in his father's tomb, or, according to another story, in a country house. But, four months later, Valens revoked his edict. The imperial notary, Brasidas, was guided to the hiding-place of Athanasius, and, with a great multitude of his jubilant people, led him back once more on Feb. 1, 366. In 367 Lucius, the rival bishop of the Arians, had to be removed from Alexandria because his life was endangered by the resentment which his presence caused.

The Hero of Faith in His Last Years

After this time the life of Athanasius was spent in peace, unmarked during its last six years by any of the troubles and persecutions in which the greater part of it had been passed. His Festal Letter for 367 is memorable for its list of the New Testament Scriptures, "the fountain of salvation," which accords precisely with our own. In this letter he draws much the same distinction between non-canonical and canonical Scriptures. He also wrote a treatise, which is believed to be genuine, at least in the main, *On the Incarnation*. In 369 he must have felt how strong was the Nicene reaction when he received from Pope Damasus and a Roman council their excommunication of Ursacius and Valens, and subsequently (by his own suggestion) of Auxentius, the

Arian Bishop of Milan. In this year he also rebuilt the Caesarean church, and laid the foundation of another, which was named after himself. Basil, the Bishop of Caesarea, appealed to his judgment as the acknowledged head of the Christian Church in influence and distinction, and he in his turn warmly defended Basil from imputations of heresy. They never met, but they corresponded with each other, and remained firm friends, though the inability of Basil to re-establish kindly relations between Athanasius and Meletius caused the failure of his endeavour to put an end to the schism of Antioch. The personal element of the misunderstanding between the Bishops of Antioch and Alexandria was perhaps inevitable. Meletius felt, not had always felt closely drawn to the congregation of which Pualinus was the head, and with whom he had communicated when an Arian held the see. To the end of his days Athanasius lost no opportunity to support and to define the simple creed of Nice against the various speculations and heresies which continued to ferment in the minds of Marcellus, Apollinaris, and other contemporaries. Yet to the men themselves he was gentle and generous. Though he wrote against the errors of Apollinaris, who was his old friend, he does not mention his name in the two books; and while he went to the utmost extreme in trying to believe the orthodoxy of Marcellus, yet, when asked what he thought of his theology, his whole features broadened into a significant smile. In his letters to Adelphius, Maximus, and Epictetus he deals with various errors regarding the Deity and Humanity of Christ.

Amid these labours old age came upon him. His hair—once auburn—now grew white with the snows of so many winters. He had been bishop for forty-six years, and in a few months more the forty-seventh year of his episcopate would have been completed. But on May 2, 373, after consecrating his friend and presbyter Peter as his successor, he died peacefully in his own house. He had outlived many of his enemies, and none of the survivors were powerful enough to injure him. He was now honoured by all in spite of the mountain-loads of infamous falsehoods which the malice of controversy had heaped upon his name. He died in full possession of the episcopal dignity, from which he had been five times driven into exile—by Constantine, twice by Constantius, by Julian, and by Valens. Had he lived but a few years longer he would have rejoiced in the vigorous orthodoxy of Theodosius, and in the decrees of the Second Ecumenical Council—the Council of Constantinople—which in 381 pronounced its emphatic ratification of the watchword and the creed in defence of which he had expended the high genius and indomitable energy of his truly heroic life.

From the days when Gregory of Nazianzus pronounced upon his memory that gorgeous panegyric which is still extant,¹⁰ and Basil appealed to him as "the Samuel of the Church," and compared him to the Pharos of his city looking down with calm dominance over the wreck-strewn waves,¹¹ Athanasius has received the ungrudging admiration not only of the Church but of the world. Even Gibbon was fascinated by

the spell of his ascendancy. Cosmas said of him, "Whenever thou findest a book of Athanasius, if thou hast no paper write it on thy clothes."¹² Erasmus puts him before all the Fathers for pure and simple eloquence. Hooker has eulogised him in one of his noblest and stateliest passages. Cardinal Newman has spoken of him in verse as

"Royal-hearted Athanase

With Paul's own mantle blest,"

and in prose as "a principal instrument, after the Apostles, by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world."

His was a deeply religious mind. Faith inspired and brightened his whole career. "He was," says De Broglie, "inflamed from youth upwards with the passion that makes saints—the love of Jesus Christ." The prevailing attribute of his intellect was versatility, of his conduct moderation, of his character courage, of his religion faithfulness. He was, as Gregory says, manifold in his methods, single in his aims. His energy roused the sluggish, and his balanced wisdom repressed the extravagant. To error he was not only as the sword but also as the winnowing fan, and his influence was not only like the blows of the conqueror, but also like the breath of the quickening spirit.¹³ He mingled meekness with power, and his spirit was as humble as his temper was royal. His biography is his best panegyric. Firm amid incessant opposition, dauntless amid innumerable dangers, cheerful in spite of long-continued afflictions, uncowed by storms of calumny, of which any single outburst would have been sufficient to crush a smaller man, peaceful amid the enmities of hostile parties, affectionate though he breathed the atmosphere of hatred—many-sided, conciliatory, prudent, never suffering his enthusiasm to be quenched by disappointments, never losing his faith in humanity though he was daily confronted with the aspect of its meanest failings, never losing his faith in God though again and again the cause which he regarded as sacred seemed to be hopelessly lost—Athanasius presents an example as pure and noble as any which the Church of God has ever seen since Paul was led forth from his Roman dungeon to his martyr-death. He was adamant to smiters, a loadstone to the dissentient "the one found him no more apt to yield than a rock of marble, the other by a singular meekness and a generous patience he drew over to himself."¹⁴

Notes

1. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xxi.
2. Amm. Marcell. xxii. 5.
3. Amm. Marcell. xxii. 3.
4. Julian, *Epp.* 6, 26, 51, in which he vents all his spleen on Athanasius.
5. Theodor. iii. 9.
6. When Pachomius founded his rule it spread so rapidly that before his death, in 348, there were 1400 at Tabenne, and eight other monasteries, numbering 3000 in all. Early in the fifth century there were 50,000 monks. Macarius fixed his house in the desert of Scetis, and Ammon on the Nitrian mountains.

7. He had received favourable answers from Delphi, Delos, and Dodona (Theodoret, iii. 16).
8. Socr. iv. 21.
9. Besides all its other effects, this life was instrumental in no small degree in the conversion of Augustine.
10. *Orat.* xxi.
11. Basil, *Ep.* 82.
12. *Pratum spirituale*, xl.
13. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xxi.
14. Cave.

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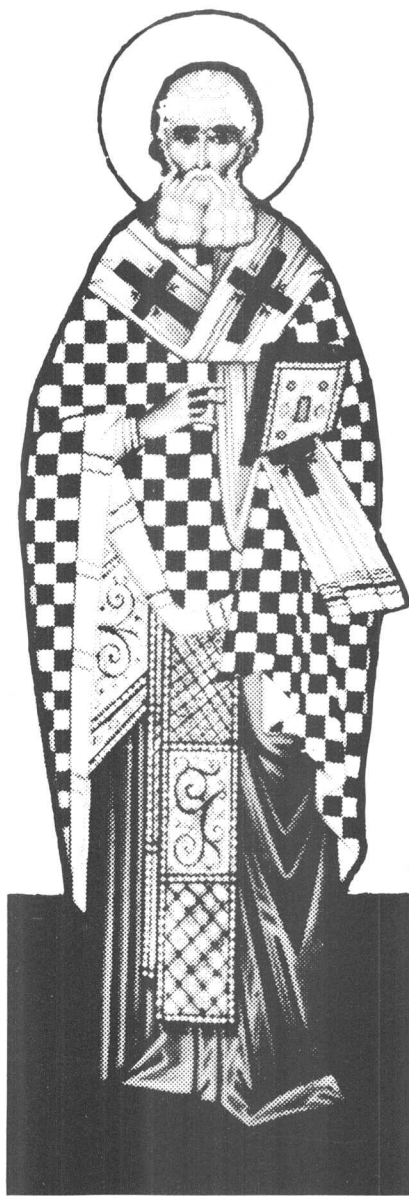
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