

(2) The problem that brought the Nicene matters to fulfillment related to the Trinity. While the general nature had been defined by Tertullian, et al, the particular matters still lacked finalization. The Monarchian camp was still restless and productive and the teaching of Origen, vague on this point ("according to essence and according to his person...he is other than the Father...") allowed a certain amount of ambiguity that made an easy access to the minds of the church flock--for the unorthodox. The problem arose in this way:

(a) Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch in 260-272 had been a leader of dynamic monarchianism and had accordingly been condemned by a synod that met in 269. His teachings however had been propagated by Lucian of Antioch (d. 312) who, while not exactly being a dynamic monarchian, did not allow for the Son to have eternal pre-existence. Lucian was "head" of the Antioch school and a proponent of more literal exegesis (as well as a textual critic of no small ability) and maintained a considerable number of followers while winning a number of supporters through the school.

(b) One of Lucian's followers was Arius, (d. 336) a presbyter from Alexandria and one of the workers under Alexander, bishop of the church in that city. Arius had both the popular skill and the churchmanly position to popularize the views of Lucian with his own additions.

(c) The teaching of Arius included blending certain ideas of both Origen and Lucian. Roughly speaking he taught thus:

-to call the Son begotten meant he had a beginning of existence...there was a time when he was not (although long, long ago.)

-Hence the son is different in essential quality from the Father...the one is eternally existent, the other is created.

-There are only two levels of being, God and creature...since God is united as one, the Son is obviously creature. He is the first and highest, but a created Person.

(d) Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria (d. 328) responded to this teaching in several synods and more local councils. He propounded five points in particular:

-The Son has True Deity (of His Own)

Background  
to Nicaea:  
The Arian  
Problem on  
the Deity  
and  
Eternal  
Nature of  
the Son.