

Christ seems plain and a condemnation of him in 269 had that as its basis along with some suggestions of immoral behavior. It appears that his teachings were propagated by Lucian of Antioch (d. 312) who, while not a dynamic monarchian per se, did not allow for the Son to have eternal pre-existence. Lucian was head of the Antiochan school and a proponent of more literal exegesis (as well as a textual critic of no small ability) and maintained a wide number of followers while winning added supporters through the school.

b. The Controversy

One of Lucian's followers apparently was Arius of Alexandria (d. 336), a presbyter under the jurisdiction of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. Arius was a man of skill and popular abilities and used the churchmanly position as a vehicle to popularize the views of Lucian as well as his own additions. It seems clear that the teaching of Arius included ideas that may have developed with Lucian and Origen blended together. In a nutshell they amounted to this:

--To call the Son begotten meant that he had a beginning of existence...there was a time when he was not, although it was a very long time ago.

--Hence the Son is different from the Father in essential quality...the one is eternally existent, the other is created or brought into being.

--There are 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 still a created person.

--He is like the Father only as specified but not, in any case, in substance or essence.

Alexander, (d. 328) the Bishop of Alexandria, responded to this teaching in several synods and councils. He propounded five points of his own to articulate the person of Christ in a defensible fashion.

--The Son has true Deity of His own.

--The Son is described with eternal generation.

--The Son and Father are identical in essence.