

as King Jesus, the Father's only begotten Son, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, who had said, "I and the Father are one." As soon as he became a good scholar, Bishop Alexander took him into his house and made him his secretary. But Athanasius wished to be able to preach about Jesus Christ; so at last the ministers were called together and he was made a deacon. Now, it is not the business of a deacon to preach the gospel, but to take charge of the buildings and the money of the church and look after the poor people in it. They did many things even in these early days, however, that God's Word never told them to do, and to make a deacon preach was one of these. So Athanasius became a deacon, and preached to the boys he once had played with, and before Alexander and many more, that Jesus Christ the Saviour is the only begotten Son of God.

Now nearly all who called themselves Christians believed what Athanasius said about Christ, because it is so plainly written in the Bible. But, for more than seventy years there had been people in Asia Minor and Syria and Africa who did not believe, or said they did not believe (because people don't always believe what they say) that there are "three persons in the Godhead, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." There was such a man in the Church in Alexandria; his name was Arius, and he was a presbyter or elder; for the word presbyter means elder, and the Presbyterian Church is the Church of the Elders. He was much older than Athanasius, who was only a deacon, and would have liked to be bishop instead of Alexander. Because he was not elected, he quarrelled with Alexander, and Alexander was not a very good friend to him. Indeed, where there are bishops set over ministers, there are nearly always quarrels, for many of the ministers think that they have as good a right to be bishops as another, and when one is appointed, the others don't like to submit. Every minister in the Presbyterian Church is a bishop, so that there is no need of quarrelling about who shall be first. Well, this Arius began to teach the people that Jesus Christ, although very great, is simply a creature, and not the only begotten son of God,—just what the Unitarians do to-day. Alexander disputed with him, and Athanasius helped him with proofs out of the Word of God, like those we find at the end of the answers in the Shorter Catechism. At last the great Emperor Constantine, who ruled over the world, and who was the first Christian that sat upon the throne since Jesus Christ was crucified, called all the principal ministers together in the city of Nice in Asia Minor. More than three hundred of them came from many parts of Europe, Asia and Africa, and sat down before the Emperor in the great hall of his beautiful palace. Among them were Alexander the bishop, Arius the elder, and Athanasius the deacon. The Emperor made an oration, telling the ministers how glad he was to see them all there, and Alexander delivered a speech against Arius after he had been questioned about his doctrines. Then a clever man called Eusebius rose and defended Arius, and others followed him, all making excuses for what Arius had said, until Athanasius could endure it no longer. He was a deacon, and only twenty-seven years old, while most of those who spoke were bishops and old men; but the Emperor and the Council allowed him to speak for Christ. So Athanasius arose with much trembling, for he was a very modest man, although bold for the truth, and began to speak. Soon his heart became warm, and he spoke with great boldness, as he told how Jesus was no creature, but God's only begotten Son and equal with the Father. All the bishops and elders listened to his eloquent words with great attention and earnestness, and when his speech