

Letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia to Paulinus of Tyre (*Dok.* 4)

Reference	<i>Dok.</i> 4; <i>Urk.</i> 8; CPG 2045
Incipit	Οὔτε ἡ τοῦ δεσπότου
Date	c. 320-321
Ancient source	Theodoret, <i>H.E.</i> 1.6.1-8
Modern edition	GCS 50:27-28 [Parmentier, 1954] AW 3.1:12-13

Already by the early days of his occupying the bishopric of Nicomedia (318-341), Eusebius was taking Arius’s side in the latter’s conflict with Alexander (see *Dok.* 2.2, §4). This letter indicates that Eusebius of Caesarea had already expressed some support as well (§1), and that the recipient of the letter, Paulinus of Tyre (c. 315-327), was being expected to do so as well—but had so far remained silent. The letter then includes an analysis of how the “begetting” of the Son should be understood. This is one of the most complete statements we have from Eusebius of Nicomedia.

The Greek text as preserved in Theodore’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, is given below from the GCS edition of Parmentier (1954). The translation is Glen Thompson’s slight revision of B. Jackson’s in *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 3:42.

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1. Τῷ δεσπότη μου Παυλίνῳ Εὐσεβίος ἐν κυρίῳ χαίρειν	To my lord Paulinus, Eusebius sends his greetings in the Lord.
Οὔτε ἡ τοῦ δεσπότου μου Εὐσεβίου σπουδή, ἡ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς λόγου, παρεσιωπήθη ἀλλ’ ἔφθασεν ἕως καὶ ἡμῶν, οὔτε ἡ σοῦ ἐπὶ τούτῳ σιωπή, δέσποτα. καὶ ὡς ἦν ἀκόλουθον, ἐπὶ μὲν τῷ δεσπότη μου Εὐσεβίῳ ἠυφράνθημεν, ἐπὶ δὲ σοὶ λυπούμεθα, στοχαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν σιωπὴν ἀνδρὸς τοιοῦτου ἦτταν ἡμῶν εἶναι.	1. The zeal of my lord Eusebius [of Caesarea] in the cause of the truth, and likewise your silence concerning it, has not failed to reach our ears. Accordingly, if, on the one hand, we rejoiced on account of the zeal of my lord Eusebius; on the other we are grieved at you, because the mere silence of man like you appears like a defeat of our cause.
2. διὸ παρακαλῶ εἰδότα σε ὡς ἀπρεπὲς ἀνδρὶ φρονίμῳ ἀλλοῖα φρονεῖν καὶ σιωπᾶν τάληθῆ, ἀνασκαλεύσαντι τῷ πνεύματι τὸν λογισμὸν περὶ τὸ γράφειν περὶ τούτου ἄρχου, λυσιτελοῦντος καὶ σοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἀκούουσί σου, μάλισθ’ ὅταν κατὰ ἀκολουθίαν τῆς γραφῆς καὶ τοῖς ἴχνεσι τῶν λόγων αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν βουλευμάτων ἐθέλοις γράφειν.	2. Hence, as it is not proper for a wise man to be of a different opinion from others, and to be silent concerning the truth, stir up, I exhort you, within yourself the spirit of wisdom to write, and at length begin what may be profitable to yourself and to others, especially if you consent to write in accordance with Scripture, and tread in the tracks of its words and will.

<p>3. ὅτι γὰρ οὔτε δύο ἀγέννητα ἀκηκόαμεν οὔτε ἓν εἰς δύο διηρημένον οὐδὲ σωματικόν τι πεπονθὸς μεμαθήκαμεν ἢ πεπιστεύκαμεν, δέσποτα, ἀλλ' ἓν μὲν τὸ ἀγέννητον, ἓν δὲ τὸ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀληθῶς καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ γεγονός, καθόλου τῆς φύσεως τῆς ἀγεννήτου μὴ μετέχον ἢ ὄν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ γεγονὸς ὁλοσχερῶς ἕτερον τῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ δυνάμει, πρὸς τελείαν ὁμοιότητα διαθέσεώς τε καὶ δυνάμεως τοῦ πεποιηκότος γενόμενον· οὗ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐ λόγῳ μόνον ἀδιήγητον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐννοίᾳ οὐκ ἀνθρώπων μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπου πάντων εἶναι ἀκατάληπτον πεπιστεύκαμεν.</p>	<p>3. We have never heard that there are two unbegotten beings, nor that one has been divided into two, nor have we learned or believed that the unbegotten has ever undergone any change of a corporeal nature. On the contrary, we affirm that the unbegotten is one. One also is that which exists in truth by him, yet was not made out of his substance, and does not at all participate in the nature or substance of the unbegotten, entirely distinct in nature and in power, and made after perfect likeness both of character and power to the maker. We believe that the mode of His beginning not only cannot be expressed by words but even in thought, and is incomprehensible not only to man, but also to all beings superior to man.</p>
<p>4. Καὶ ταῦτα οὐχὶ λογισμοὺς ἑαυτῶν ὑποθέμενοι, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγίας γραφῆς μεμαθηκότες λέγομεν· κτιστὸν εἶναι καὶ θεμελιωτὸν καὶ γεννητὸν τῇ οὐσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀναλλοιώτῳ καὶ ἀρρήτῳ φύσει καὶ τῇ ὁμοιότητι τῇ πρὸς τὸν πεποιηκότα μεμαθήκαμεν, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ κύριός φησιν· “Ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ,” καὶ “<b>Πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐθεμελίωσέ με· πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾶ με.</b>”</p>	<p>4. These opinions we advance not as having derived them from our own imagination, but as having deduced them from Scripture, whence we learn that the Son was created, established, and begotten with respect to his essence and his unchanging, inexpressible nature, in the likeness of the one for whom he has been made. The Lord himself tells us this: ‘God created me the beginning of his ways; Before the ages he established me; he begat me before all the hills’ [Prov. 8.22-23,25, LXX]</p>
<p>5. εἰ δὲ ἐξ αὐτοῦ, τουτέστιν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἦν, ὡς ἂν μέρος αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀπορροίας τῆς οὐσίας, οὐκ ἂν ἔτι κτιστὸν οὐδὲ θεμελιωτὸν εἶναι ἐλέγετο· οὐδὲ αὐτὸς ἀγνοεῖς, κύριε, ἀληθῶς. τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου ὑπάρχον κτιστὸν ἔτι ὑφ' ἑτέρου ἢ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἢ θεμελιωτὸν οὐκ ἂν εἶη, ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀγέννητον ὑπάρχον.</p>	<p>5. If the Son had been from him or of him, as a portion of him, or by an emanation of his substance, it could not be said that the Son was created or established; and of this you, my lord, are certainly not ignorant. For that which is from the unbegotten could not be said to have been created or founded, either by him or by another, since it is unbegotten from the beginning.</p>
<p>6. εἰ δὲ τὸ γεννητὸν αὐτὸν λέγεσθαι ὑπόφασίν τινα παρέχει, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς πατρικῆς αὐτὸν γεγονότα καὶ ἔχειν ἐκ τούτου τὴν ταυτότητα τῆς φύσεως, γινώσκομεν ὡς οὐ περὶ αὐτοῦ μόνου τὸ γεννητὸν εἶναι φησιν ἢ γραφή, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνομοίων αὐτῷ κατὰ πάντα τῇ φύσει.</p>	<p>6. But if the fact of his being called “the begotten” gives any ground for the belief that, having come into being of the Father’s substance, he also has from the Father likeness of nature, we reply that it is not of the Son alone that the Scriptures have spoken as begotten, but that they also thus speak of those who are entirely dissimilar to God by nature.</p>

<p>7. καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων φησὶν· “Υἱοὺς ἐγέννησα καὶ ὕψωσα, αὐτοὶ δὲ με ἠθέτησαν,” καὶ “Θεὸν τὸν γεννήσαντά σε ἐγκατέλιπες,” καὶ ἐν ἑτέροις· “Τίς,” φησί, “ὁ τετοκῶς βώλους δρόσου;” οὐ τὴν φύσιν ἐκ τῆς φύσεως διηγούμενος, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐφ’ ἐκάστῳ τῶν γενομένων ἐκ τοῦ βουλήματος αὐτοῦ γένεσιν. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ γενομένα ἕκαστον, ὡς καὶ ἐγένετο, ἐστίν.</p>	<p>7. For of men it is said, ‘I have begotten and brought up sons, and they have rebelled against me;’ [Is. 1:2]; and in another place, ‘You have forsaken God who begat you’ [Deut. 32:18]; and again it is said, ‘Who begat the drops of dew’ [Job 38:28]? This expression does not imply that the dew partakes of the nature of God, but simply that all things were formed according to his will. There is, indeed, nothing which shares his substance, yet everything which exists has been called into being by his will.</p>
<p>8. ὁ μὲν γὰρ θεός, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ὁμοιότητα αὐτοῦ λόγῳ ὅμοια ἐσόμενα, τὰ δὲ καθ’ ἑκουσισμὸν γενομένα· τὰ δὲ πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ γενομένα, πάντα δὲ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. ἅπερ λαβὼν καὶ ἐξεργασάμενος κατὰ τὴν προσοῦσάν σοι θεόθεν χάριν, γράψαι τῷ δεσπότη μου Ἀλεξάνδρῳ σπούδασον· πεπίστευκα γὰρ ὡς εἰ γράψειας αὐτῷ, ἐντρέψειας αὐτόν.</p>	<p>8. For there is God on the one hand, and then there are the things in line with his likeness which will be similar to the Word, and these things which have come into being by [his] free will. All things were made by God by means of the Word. All things are from God. When you have received my letter, and have revised it according to the knowledge and grace given you by God, I beg you will write as soon as possible to my lord Alexander. I feel confident that if you would write to him, you would succeed in bringing him over to your opinion.</p>
<p>πρόσειπε πάντα τοὺς ἐν κυρίῳ. ἐρρωμένον σε καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εὐχόμενον ἢ θεία χάρις διαφυλάττοι, δέσποτα.</p>	<p>Salute all the brethren in the Lord. May you, my lord, be preserved by the grace of God, and be led to pray for us.</p>