Arius


In this Mediterranean world of the fourth century [AD 300–400], where the state depended so much on religion, ecclesiastical affairs were in such turmoil that government felt called upon to interfere even in the mysteries of theology. The great debate between Athanasius and Arius had not ended with the Council of Nicaea (325). Many bishops—in the East a majority¹ —still openly or secretly sided with Arius; i.e., they considered Christ the Son of God, but neither consubstantial [of the same substance or essence] nor coeternal with the Father. [Note: that is as LDS believe, as far as it goes. However, Arius did not believe Christ to be the physical offspring of God and Mary, but that he became a Son of God some time after his birth.] Constantine himself, after accepting the Council’s decree [in favor of Athanasius], and banishing Arius, invited him to a personal conference (331), could find no heresy in him, and recommended the restoration of Arius and the Arians to their churches. Athanasius protested; a council of Eastern bishops at Tyre deposed him [Athanasius] from his Alexandrian [Egypt] see (335); and for two years he lived as an exile in Gaul [France]. Arius again visited Constantine, and professed adherence to the Nicene Creed, with subtle reservations that an emperor could not be expected to understand. Constantine believed him, and bade Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople, receive him into communion.