The Triune God of the Bible

I. Introduction: The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Believing in the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of no small importance. To worship a false god is idolatry (Exodus 20:1-3), and all "idolaters . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8). God must be worshipped in truth (John 4:24), but this is impossible if we have a false view of His nature. Holding improper ideas of God is in itself a great sin, and a cause of further evils (Exodus 20:4-6; Romans 1:18-25). One who believes in a false god or gods continually breaks the greatest of all commandments (Mark 12:29). Those who deny the Deity of the Father (John 17:3), of the Son (John 8:24), or of the Spirit (Acts 19:2) are lost. Scripture states that those with an improper view of the Person and saving work of the Son as God and man are unsaved (2 John 9) antichrists (1 John 2:22-23). Believing in the Trinity, then, is essential to salvation. Furthermore, Scripture commands, "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Love with the heart and the soul will lead the people of God to a longing to know their Lord ever the better, and love for Him with the mind will lead them to wish to understand all they can about Him. Those who have been brought into fellowship with Jehovah already "know the Lord" (Hebrews 8:11), and having once tasted that the Lord is gracious, they wish for ever-greater depths of intellectual and relational knowledge of Him. Furthermore, recognizing that their heavenly Father is seeking for worshippers (John 4:23), God's own recognize the value of deep knowledge of Trinitiarian teaching for the purpose of communicating the knowledge of God to the lost world (Mark 16:15; Psalm 67). Thus, the study of the doctrine of the Trinity is of immense value both for those who deny the doctrine, and are thus in need of faith in that one God who alone can deliver them from sin and eternal death, and for all those who have already been redeemed by Him.

This study presupposes the Biblical truths that every word of Scripture was infallibly given by inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16) and perfectly preserved in the traditional original language texts (Psalm 12:6-7). This Bible, examined according to literal,

grammatical-historical interpretation, is its sole authority (2 Timothy 3:17). Additional alleged revelation, common in many anti-Trinitarian religious systems, whether in the form of extra holy books, supposedly infallible or uniquely authoritative people or organizations, or biased translations of Scripture,[1] are rejected (Revelation 22:18-19;

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[1] The *New World Translation* (NWT) of the anti-Trinitarian Watchtower Society (WTS, "Jehovah's Witnesses") is a classic example. Rejecting the original language *Textus Receptus* of the standard English Bible for the last 400 years, the King James Version (KJV), which is based on the New Testament Greek text representative of the overwhelming majority of manuscripts, the NWT opted to follow a tiny minority of corrupt manuscripts (a practice which is oddly followed by many other modern versions). The King James Bible was translated by some fifty incredibly scholarly men, such as Lancelot Andrews, who had mastered fifteen languages, and John Bois, who had read the entire Old Testament in Hebrew when he was five years old. Every portion of the translation was scrutinized at least sixteen times during the translation process, even apart from the consideration that the KJV was the culmination of a century-long refining process beginning with the Tyndale Bible and subsequent English versions. Information about the KJV translators is available to the public and published in many books (i. e., *The Translators Revived,* Alexander McClure. Port Huron, MI: Way of Life Literature, 2001; electronic ed., orig. pub. 1855.) In contrast, the NWT was made by an anonymous "New World Bible Translation Committee." The Watchtower Society seeks to hide the identity of these men, but sources such as the former Watchtower Governing Body member Raymond Franz identify the constituents of the committee as seven men: Fred Franz, Nathan Knorr, Milton Henschel, Albert Schroeder, Karl Klein, and George Gangas. The majority of these "translators" were high school drop-outs. None had ever graduated from college. Only one of them had any training whatever in the Biblical languages—Fred Franz had taken one 2 credit hour course in New Testament Greek and a number of courses in non-Biblical, classical Greek. None of the "translators" had ever taken any courses in Hebrew (or Aramaic) in their lives; they had no knowledge of the language of the Old Testament and simply were totally unable to translate it (see pg. 50, *Crisis of Conscience,* Raymond Franz, Atlanta, GA: Commentary Press, 1985; pg. 64, *Kingdom of the Cults,* Walter Martin (rev. ed), Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1977; pgs. 105-106, 207, *A Guide to Cults and New Religions,* Ronald Enroth, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983.). They knew just about as much Hebrew as a Hebrew national hot dog. These facts make it clear why the Watchtower tries to hide the identity of the WTS "translators." No religious group in the world uses the NWT besides the Watchtower society because it is not a translation at all—the "translation" committee did not know the Biblical languages. It is a corruption that mutilates God's Word when it contradicts Watchtower doctrine.

A few examples of the many corruptions in the NWT include:

1.) In Zechariah 12:10, Jehovah is speaking, and He says, *"they [the Jews] shall look upon <u>me</u> [Heb. 'elay] whom they have pierced."* Since this verse teaches that Jehovah was pierced by the Jews, and John 19:37 shows that this verse refers to the death of Christ, proving that Jesus is Jehovah, the NWT changes Zechariah 12:10 to *"<u>the One</u> whom they pierced,"* although this is impossible in Hebrew.

2.) The NWT adds the words "other" or "others" to Acts 10:36, Phil 2:9; Col 1:16, 17, 20, despite the fact that the word is not in any Greek MSS in the entire world, because without the addition Jesus Christ is "Lord of all," has a Name "above every name," and He created "all things" and is "before all things," and so is Jehovah the Creator. God's Word contradicts their doctrine, so they change His Word, instead of repenting of their doctrine.

3.) 1 Tim 4:1 reads, *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly,"* but the WTS does not believe that the Spirit is a personal Being who can speak, so it replaces "Spirit" with "inspired utterance." Similarly, in Genesis 1:2, God's Word reads "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," showing that the Spirit was involved in creation, but the Watchtower denies that the Holy Spirit is the Creator, so it changes "Spirit" to "active force."

The Watchtower Society claims that the NWT is the true Bible because it has the name *Jehovah* in it more times than the KJV. The KJV does use the name *Jehovah* in various verses (Ex 6:3; Is 12:2, etc.), but usually it renders the Hebrew יְהוָה as *LORD* instead in the Old Testament (OT). Rather than being motivated by any sinister plot to malign Jehovah's name, the KJV translators were simply following the

Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 13:8). These presuppositions are ably defended elsewhere—here they will not be addressed further.[2]

II. The Definition of the Doctrine of the Trinity

It is very valuable in any sort of debate or discussion for all parties involved to know exactly what it is they are talking about. This is all the more necessary in a discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, as its opponents have, with great frequency, evidenced either ignorance of the doctrine they are opposing or intentional misrepresentation of the Trinitarian position, and, in these days of apostasy and spiritiual weakness in Christiandom, many even of the people of God are less able to give the accurate, orthodox doctrine as confessed for nearly two thousand years. A short

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practice of Christ and the apostles. Jesus Christ in Mt. 23:39 quoted Ps. 118:26 "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of [Jehovah]" with the Greek word *Kurios* (Lord). He did the same thing in many other places, such as Mt 22:44 when quoting Ps 110:1. The apostles also quoted the OT name Jehovah as Lord: Peter did it in Ac 2:34 (cf. Ps 110:1), Paul did it in Rom 10:13 (cf. Joel 2:32), James did it in Ac 15:16-17 (cf. Am 9:11-12), etc. The KJV generally translates the OT name Jehovah as LORD because that is what the Son of God and His disciples did.

While it would not necessarily be wrong to render יְהוָה as *Jehovah* in the OT every time instead of following the practice of Christ and the apostles and using LORD instead, the NWT corrupts Scripture by adding the name *Jehovah* to the New Testament, although it is not found in even one of the 5,000+ Greek New Testament (NT) manuscripts in existence. The Greek says *Kurios*, that is, *Lord,* every time the NWT alters the Bible to put the word *Jehovah* in the NT. However, the NWT is inconsistent. When the Father is called *Lord*, the NWT changes the word to *Jehovah*, but when the identical Greek word is used for Jesus Christ, as it is hundreds of times in the NT, or the Holy Spirit is called *Kurios*, the NWT leaves it as *Lord* instead of changing it to *Jehovah*. The WTS does this because it does not want to say *Jehovah-Jesus Christ* every time the NT says "the Lord Jesus Christ," or have people say to Jesus, "Have mercy on me, O Jehovah, thou Son of David" (Mt 15:22), or have the Bible say of the Holy Spirit, "Jehovah is that Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17). The NWT and the Watchtower Society that made it fall under the curse of Rev 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

This book, *The Triune God of the Bible,* will not create its own translation to attempt to hide things the Bible teaches, like the Watchtower Society does. Nor will it follow the practice of many false teachers of searching through countless English translations of disputed verses until it finds one that is consistent with its pre-determined position, and then using that one. It will use only the KJV, the traditional English Bible, the one that has been used universally in the English-speaking world for centuries by all who wished to have an accurate version of Scripture. When the meaning of words is an issue, it will, instead of sorting through countless other English paraphrases or versions, examine the traditional Greek Received Text of the New Testament and the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text.

[2] Please note that, since this is a work in progress, references within footnotes to other footnotes may be off in number.

definition of the triune nature of the Godhead[3] would be, "One God in essence who eternally exists in three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[4] A somewhat larger definition from a standard confession of faith of Christian churches declares that "The Lord our God is but one only living and true God . . . in this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him."[5] An ancient classical definition,[6] which deals both with the nature of the relations of the three in the Triune God[7] and with the incarnation of

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3 The Biblical word "Godhead" signifies the "Divine nature," and it translates both the Greek *theios* (Acts 17:29) and the Greek *theotes* (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). There are three personal distinctions within the one Godhead.

4 The word *essence*, also signifying *being* or *substance,* translates the Greek *ousia*, from the verb *eimi,* "to be" (cf. Hebrews 11:6; Luke 15:12-13). The word *person* translates the Greek *hupostasis,* Hebrews 1:3. With reference to the Godhead, *ousia* signifies "that which exists and therefore has substance" or "substance, essence . . substantiality" while *hupostasis* is "the . . . basic structure/nature of an entity . . . substantial nature" or "reality . . . real nature . . . existence" (cf. Danker, Frederick William (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd. ed. (BDAG), Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (henceforth cited as BDAG); Lidell, H. G. & Scott, R. *Greek-English Lexicon,* 9th ed., New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996.). God is one *ousia*, that is, one essence, being, or substance, in three *upostaseis,* that is, three personal distinctions or Persons*,* the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "While *ousia* [is] used to refer to the one being of the Godhead common to the three divine Persons, *hupostasis* [is] used to refer to them in their differences from one another and in their relations with one another in accordance with their particular modes of subsistence in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (pg. 219, *The Trinitarian Faith,* T. F. Torrance. New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2004).

5 *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689,* 2:1, 3.

6 The creeds are, in order, the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan (with the Toledo *filioque*), Chalcedonian, and Athanasian creeds. They are reproduced substantially in their original form; the only alterations of note are the addition of an explicit *homoousios* and affirmation that the Spirit is *ho Theos* to the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, the removal of the *Theotokos* from the creed of Chalcedon, and the rendition of the Latin *catholicam* as *Christian* in the Athanasian creed. For a discussion of these creeds and their textual development and significance, see Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* Philip Schaff, vol. 3, 9:117-145.

7 In more depth, "the distinction in the one Godhead it is real and eternal, and is marked by certain properties peculiar to each Person and not communicable. These properties are either *external* or *internal*; the latter relating to the modes of subsistence in the divine essence, the former to the mode of revelation in the world. The *notae internae* are personal *acts* and notions; the former being (1) That the Father generates the Son, etc., and breathes the Spirit; (2) That the Son is begotten of the Father, and with the Father

the Son, the change that took place when He became man, states:

> We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
>
> And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in essence with[8] the Father; by him all things were made.
>
> For us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary, and was made man.[9] He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from thence he will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; His kingdom will have no end.
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> And we believe in the Holy Spirit, who is Lord and God, the giver of life, both one in essence with and proceeding from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets. Amen.

An ancient creed that deals specifically with the Person of the Son and His assumption of a human nature after the incarnation, in what is known as the hypostatic union,[10] states:

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breathes the Spirit; (3) That the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son. The personal *notions* are (1) Unbegottenness and paternity as peculiar to the Father; (2) Spiration as belonging to the Father and Son; (3) Filiation as peculiar to the Son; (4) Procession (*spiratio passiva*) as peculiar to the Spirit. The *external notes* are (1) The *works* in the economy of redemption peculiar to each: the Father sends the Son to redeem and the Spirit to sanctify; the Son redeems mankind and sends the Spirit; the Spirit is sent into the minds of men and renders them partakers of Christ's salvation. (2) The attributive or appropriative works, i.e. those which, though common to the three Persons, are in Scripture usually ascribed to one of them, as universal creation, conservation, and gubernation to the Father through the Son; the creation of the world, raising of the dead, and the conduct of the last judgment, to the Son; the inspiration of the prophets, etc., to the Spirit" ("Trinitarianism, Part 1," Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 97:385 (Jan 1940), pgs. 23-24, citing Dr. Alexander, *System of Biblical Theology*, Vol. I, pg. 104.).

[8] Greek *homoousios,* of the same *ousia* as the Father.

[9] Shedd states, "the following reasons for the incarnation of the second person, rather than of the first or third: . . . First, that by the incarnation the names of the divine persons should remain unchanged; so that neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit should have to take the name of a Son. Secondly, it was fitting that by the incarnation men should become God's adopted sons, through him who is God's natural Son. Thirdly, it was proper that man, who occupies a middle position between angels and beasts, in the scale of creatures, should be redeemed by the middle person in the trinity. Lastly, it was proper that the fallen nature of man which was created by the Word (John 1:3) should be restored by him. In addition to these reasons, it is evident that it is more fitting that a father should commis ion and send a son upon an errand of mercy, than that a son should commission and send a father" (William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (sec. "Christology," Chap. 1, "Christ's Theanthropic Person," pgs. 4-5, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

[10] The *hypostatic union* refers to the extremely important fact of the union of the Divine and human natures in Christ. Charles L. Feinberg ("The Hypostatic Union," *Bibliotheca Sacra,* 92:368 (Oct 1935), pgs. 412-426) explains that when "we have postulated the two natures in Christ, we are not by so much attributing to Him a dual personality. We never read in the Word that one nature in Christ speaks to the other or is distinguished from it as a distinct hypostasis. Nowhere in the Scriptures does the Son of God

address the Son of man or vice versa (cf. Rom 1:2–5; 9:5; 1 John 1:1–3; John 1:1–14). 'The human and the Divine nature exist in the person of the Redeemer by no means only outwardly together, or parallel to each other, but so intimately united that this personality is as little merely human as exclusively Divine, but is and remains to all eternity, Divine-human.' So real is this union that in Scripture human attributes are ascribed to Him when He is designated by a divine title, and divine attributes when addressed by a human title (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 2:8; Col 1:13, 14; John 3:13; Rom 9:5; Rev 5:12).

Another feature to be kept in mind with regard to the hypostatic union is the fact that the divine nature was always hypostasized. The preincarnate Logos ever existed as a personality, the Second Person of the Trinity. The Logos was never enhypostatic [that is, without personality]. . . .

When the two natures united in Christ and the human nature received its personality from that of the Logos, this does not imply that the natures became somehow confused or commingled. Indeed, the natures maintain and retain their distinctness throughout together with their properties. . . . The two natures do not unite to form a theanthropic nature, but a theanthropic Person . . . what the Scriptures seek to convey is that the properties of both the human nature and divine nature are communicated to the theanthropic Person constituted of them.

Just a word need be said now concerning the consciousness of Christ. Some say He had a human consciousness; some hold a divine consciousness; others a divine-human consciousness. Christ had two forms of consciousness and experience: one in the realm of the human and one in the realm of the divine. But He had only one self-consciousness. He spoke of Himself with the first personal pronoun, was spoken to with the second personal pronoun, and spoken about with the third personal pronoun.

An error to be guarded against in considering this subject is that which would say the divine nature united with a human person. Because the human nature united with a divine Person when it united with a divine nature, does not warrant us in drawing a parallel for the human nature. . . . [T]he human nature before the union was enhypostatic, and have also called attention in our introduction to the distinction between nature and person. The Logos did not take up into His consciousness the 'whole human nature both distributed and undistributed, individualized, and undividualized, but only a transmitted fractional part of the undistributed remainder of it, as this existed in the Virgin Mary.' If the preincarnate Logos had united with a human person, there would have been another person added to the trinity which would have sensibly altered its constituency. . . .

[T]he hypostatic union is eternal. Scripture reveals nowhere that this union may sometime be dissolved. On the contrary, we read: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is "over all, God blessed for ever." This union did not cease for a moment while He was on earth. Now in heaven the glorified God-man continues unchangeably. Throughout all eternity it shall be the Man Christ Jesus."

Feinberg also clarifies that the "union known as the hypostatic union is not analogous to any within the realm of human experience. Many attempts have been made, with recognition of their insufficiency and inadequacy to be sure, to liken it to the union in man of soul and body, or the union of iron and heat to get molten ore. When we speak of the hypostatic union, it is not meant to convey the idea of an indwelling of deity comparable to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. Nor are the two natures bound together by the moral tie of friendship or sympathy. The manner of the union is confessedly inscrutable.

But there are clear features of this truth yet to be dealt with. The question arises early in one's thinking on the subject as to which nature forms the basis of the divine-human personality. Did the humanity of Christ take on or assume deity or was the reverse condition true? . . . We believe the truth of the matter to be that the divine nature in Christ formed the basis of His personality. The human nature in Christ could not have been the foundation of His personality, because before the union with the divine nature it was enhypostatic, without individuation. The human nature in Christ was never personalized until the miraculous conception when it was joined to the divine nature, the Logos. If the human nature had been the base of His Person He would be a man-God, not God-man, anthropotheistic, not theanthropic. Shedd notes several other reasons in favor of this position. First, the divine nature must have been the primary one, because the theanthropic personality was not destroyed when Christ died. Second, Christ's acts of power, as well as His knowledge, were regulated by the divine nature. If the Logos determined Christ was powerful and could not be apprehended; if the Logos chose Christ could be arrested, scourged, and crucified. If the Logos elected that Christ knew certain matters, He knew them, otherwise the reverse was true. The Logos always knew the hour of the Second Advent, but He did not care to vouchsafe this

We unanimously teach one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, complete as to his Godhead, and complete as to his manhood; truly God, and truly man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; consubstantial[11] with the Father as to his Godhead, and consubstantial also with us as to his manhood; like unto us in all things, yet without sin; as to his Godhead begotten of the Father before all worlds, but as to his manhood, in these last days born, for us men and

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knowledge to the human consciousness of Jesus Christ. Third, Christ's immutability is another proof of this contention. The Word states that "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb 13:8).

Although the divine nature formed the starting point of the personality of Christ, this does not mean that His human nature was any the less real or complete. In Jesus Christ true deity and true humanity were consciously and actually present in the fullest sense of the word. All that could be predicated of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as to deity could with equal justification be said of Christ. Though humbled, He was ever and always God. In fact, He could not have humbled Himself in the manner that He did, had He not been truly God. But at the same time Christ was every whit a man. All that can be attributed to unfallen humanity was true of Christ. He was without sin, but sin is not an essential feature of true humanity, for Adam was without sin in his innocent state. . . .

What are the benefits of this union? First of all, the hypostatic union gave the world an impeccable Person. This predicates of Christ, mark you, not only anamartesia, but impeccability. It is not just a matter of *posse non peccare*, but of *non posse peccare*. It is not enough to say Christ did not sin; it must be declared unequivocably that He could not sin. . . .

A second consequence of the hypostatic union was that the God-man revealed the Father. When men wanted to see God, Christ so manifested Him that He could say: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Never before nor since has God been so clearly revealed to men. But if Christ was the revealer of deity as God-man, He was likewise the revealer of true humanity. He alone of all men that ever walked the earth was utterly dependent upon God. God was in all His thoughts. In all things He pleased not Himself but the Father. He solely kept the whole law. He displayed to men what true humanity is. . . .

Yet another benefit of the union is that Christ can be a sacrifice for sin. This is well typified by the Kinsman-Redeemer who must meet certain qualifications. He must be a near kinsman; he must be able to redeem; he must be willing to redeem; he must be free from the difficulty himself. Christ answered to this description by becoming man, thus identifying Himself with the human race. The ultimate sacrifice for sin had to be a man, not bulls and goats, because man had sinned in the body here on earth and deserved death as the legitimate wages of sin. Therefore, Christ was a man. But to give this sacrifice its ineffably infinite value, in order to suffice as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, He had to be God. The true sacrifice for sin had to be a God-man; this is provided for by the hypostatic union.

A further consequence of the union was that it furnished for redeemed humanity a faithful High-Priest. As a prophet speaks for God to men, so a priest speaks for men to God. In dying for sinful man Christ fulfilled only part of His high-priestly office. It involves, furthermore, intercession and advocacy. These phases of ministry are in behalf of believers only. The Lord Jesus as God-man intercedes for His own that they may be kept from the evil one while they are in the world, though not of it. He advocates for His own after they have sinned. In order to intercede or advocate He must be God to know fully God's requirements of man and how to meet them, and He must be fully man to understand man's need and be touched by the feeling of man's infirmities. For this the hypostatic union was indispensable. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Job's plaintive cry for a Daysman who can lay hold of both God for man and man for God has been answered and gloriously so.

Finally, by the hypostatic union the Logos became the head of a new race, the new creation. Romans 5:12–21 shows clearly that as death, condemnation, and judgment came from the first Adam to the fallen race, so from the Last Adam accrue to believers the new creation in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10), life, righteousness, and justification. The Logos had to become man to undo (and "much more") what the first man had wrought. He had to be God to grant and make possible such heavenly birth, privileges, and blessings (Eph 1:3) to those who willingly follow Him by faith (cf. 1 Cor 15:45; Eph 1:22; John 15:5; 2 Cor 5:17)."

[11] Greek *homoousios*.

for our salvation, of the virgin Mary, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, known in two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without severance, and without division; the distinction of the natures being in no wise abolished by their union,[12] but the peculiarity of each nature being maintained, and both concurring in one person and hupostasis.[13] We confess not a Son divided and sundered into two persons, but one and the same Son, and Only-begotten, and God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, even as the prophets had before proclaimed concerning him, and he himself hath taught us.[14]

A somewhat more lengthy ancient Trinitarian definition is:

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Christian faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. But this is the Christian faith: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance.[15] For there is one person of the Father: another of the

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[12] It should be mentioned that the fact that Christ has a complete Divine nature and a complete human nature involves the truth that He has two wills, a Divine will (Luke 13:24; John 5:21) and a human will (Luke 22:42; John 6:38). An ancient Biblical declaration on this issue (here somewhat edited and condensed) stated that "we likewise preach two natural wills in Jesus Christ, and two natural operations undivided, inconvertible, inseparable, and unmixed; and the two natural wills are not contrary, but his human will follows the divine will, and is not resisting or reluctant, but rather subject to his divine and omnipotent will. Therefore we confess two natural wills and operations, harmoniously united for the salvation of the human race." This truth of two wills is known as *dyothelitism,* as opposed to the heretical position of only one will, *monothelitism.*

[13] Greek *hupostasis*.

[14] Since the Lord Jesus is one Person with two complete natures, a fully human nature and a fully Divine nature, what is true of either nature can be predicated of His Person. This doctrine, known as the *communicatio idiomatum* (in English, "The Communication of Properties," in Greek, the ἀντίδοσις or ἀντιμετάστασις) explains that "by reason of the Unity of [Christ's] Person, that which is proper to one nature, is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the Person denominated by the other nature" (*The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689,* 8:7). For example, John 3:13 speaks of the "the Son of man which is in heaven." The human nature of Christ was not in heaven at that time, but on the earth in the land of Israel, where the Lord was speaking to a man named Nicodemus (John 3:1-2). Nevertheless, because the Person who is the fully human "Son of man" is also fully God, and thus omnipresent (Jeremiah 23:24; Matthew 18:20), and "in heaven," on earth, and everywhere else in the universe at the same time, Scripture can connect the humanity of the Savior with omnipresence. Acts 20:28 states that "God . . . hath purchased [the church] with his own blood," although blood pertains to the human nature of Christ, not to His immaterial, incorporeal, spiritual Divine nature (John 4:24; Luke 24:39), for only one Person possesses both those two natures. Compare 1 Corinthians 2:8, where men "crucified [human nature] the Lord of glory [Divine nature]." In this manner of Scriptural speech, the properties of one nature are not applied to the other nature as such, but to the Subject, the Son of God, who possesses both natures. Christ's divine nature does not possess the properties of humanity (such as being created or localized in space), nor does His human nature possess the properties of Divinity (such as being uncreated or omnipresent), but since the Lord is one Person, whether He is named by reason of both natures together, or only of one of them, He is properly assigned the properties of either nature. It should also be noted that in a manner similar to the coinherence of the three Persons of the Trinity (see footnote #13), the two natures of Christ, while eternally and unchangeably distinct, share one common life and interpenetrate each other.

[15] In other words, the *hupostasis* of the Father, the *hupostasis* of the Son, and the *hupostasis* of the Spirit are distinct, and must not be confused the one with the other; while the three share only one essence or *ousia.* (Since this creed was originally composed in Latin, it employs the equivalents in that language (*substantia, persona*) to the Greek *ousia* and *hupostasis*.

Son: another of the Holy Ghost.[16] But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated: the Son is uncreated: the Holy Ghost is uncreated. The Father is immeasurable: the Son is immeasurable: the Holy Ghost is immeasurable. The Father is eternal: the Son eternal: the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty, and yet there are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Christian religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding. Thus there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.[17]

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16 *Holy Ghost* and *Holy Spirit* are identical phrases, both representing the Greek *Pneuma Hagion* (cf. Mark 13:11; Luke 11:13).

17 William G. T. Shedd writes, concerning the Divine consiousousness, "the Scriptures teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons independently and irrespective of creation, redemption, and sanctification. If God had never created the universe, but had existed alone from all eternity, he would be triune. And the three persons are so real and distinct from each other, that each possesses a hypostatical or trinitarian consciousness different from that of the others. The second person is conscious that he is the Son, and not the Father, when he says, "O Father, glorify thou me," John 17:5. The first person is conscious that he is the Father and not the Son, when he says, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Hebrews 1:5. The third person is conscious that he is the Spirit, and neither the Father nor the Son, when he says, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," Acts 13:2. These three hypostatical consciousnesses constitute the one self-consciousness of the Divine essence. By reason of, and as the result of these three forms of consciousness, the Divine essence is self-contemplative, self-cognitive, and self-communing. Though there are three forms of consciousness, there are not three essences, or three understandings, or three wills, in the Godhead; because, a consciousness is not an essence, or an understanding or a will. There is only one essence, having one understanding, and one will. But this unity of essence, understanding, and will, has three different forms of consciousness: namely, the Paternal, the Filial, and the Spiritual; because it has three different forms of subsistence: namely, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. If it had only one form of subsistence, as in the Sabellian scheme, it would have only one form of consciousness. It would exist only as a single subject, and would have only a corresponding consciousness. But this would not be a full and true self-consciousness, because this requires the three distinctions of subject, object, and percipient-subject, which are not given in the Sabellian triad.

It must be noticed that the Divine self-consciousness is not a fourth consciousness additional to the three hypostatical consciousnesses, but is the resultant of these three. The three hypostatical consciousnesses are the one Divine self-consciousness, and the one Divine self-consciousness is the three hypostatical consciousnesses. The three hypostatical consciousnesses in their, combination and unity constitute the one self-consciousness. The essence in being trinally conscious as Father, Son, and Holy

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly concerning the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the true faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood; who, although he be God and man: yet he is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the manhood into God;[18]

Spirit, is self-conscious. As the one Divine essence is the same thing with the three persons, and not a fourth different thing by itself, so the one Divine self-consciousness is the same thing with the three hypostatical consciousnesses, and not a fourth different thing by itself. In this way, it is evident that the three hypostatical consciousnesses are consistent with a single selfconsciousness, as the three hypostases themselves are consistent with a single essence. There are three persons, but only one essence; and three hypostatical consciousnesses, but only one self-consciousness" (*Dogmatic Theology* (sec. "Theology," Chap. 4, "Trinity in Unity," pgs. 24-25, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006). Shedd's entire discussion in "Trinity in Unity" is excellent and highly commendable as an exposition of the orthodox Trinitarian faith.

[18] "Incarnation must be distinguished from transmutation, or transubstantiation. The phrase 'became man' does not mean that the second person in the trinity ceased to be God. This would be transubstantiation. One substance, the divine, would be changed or converted into another substance, the human. . . . In saying that "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14), it is meant that the Word came to possess human characteristics in addition to his divine, which still remained as before. The properties of the divine nature cannot be either destroyed or altered. A human nature was united with the divine, in order that the resulting person might have a human form of consciousness as well as a divine. Previous to the assumption of a human nature, the Logos could not experience a human feeling because he had no human heart, but after this assumption he could; previous to the incarnation, he could not have a finite perception because he had no finite intellect, but after this event he could; previous to the incarnation, the self-consciousness of the Logos was eternal only, that is, without succession, but subsequent to the incarnation it was both eternal and temporal, with and without succession. This twofold consciousness may be illustrated by the union between the human soul and body. Prior to, or apart from its union with a material body, a man's immaterial soul cannot feel a physical sensation or a sensuous appetite; but when united with it in a personal union, it can so feel. In like manner, prior to the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity could not have human sensations and experiences; but after it he could. The unincarnate Logos could think and feel only like God; he had only one form of consciousness. The incarnate Logos can think and feel either like God, or like man; he has two modes or forms of consciousness.

When, therefore, it is said that "God became man," the meaning is that God united himself with man, not that God changed himself into man. Unification of two natures, not transmutation of one nature into another is meant. We might say of the union of soul and body, in the instance of a human person, that "spirit becomes matter;" that is, is materialized or embodied. We would not mean by this phrase, that spirit is actually changed into matter, but that it is united with matter in that intimate manner which is denominated personal union. In the incarnation, God is humanized, as in ordinary human generation, spirit is materialized or embodied. Each substance, however, still retains its own properties. In an ordinary man, spirit remains immaterial, and body remains material; and in the God-man, the divine nature remains divine in its properties, and the human remains human. . . .

The distinctive characteristic of the incarnation is the union of two diverse natures, a divine and a human, so as to constitute one single person. A single person may consist of one nature, or of two natures, or of three. A trinitarian person has only one nature: namely, the divine essence. A human person has two natures: namely, a material body, and an immaterial soul. A theanthropic person has three natures: namely, the divine essence, a human soul, and a human body. By the incarnation, not a God, not a man, but a God-man is constituted. A theanthropic person is a trinitarian person modified by union with a human nature,

> one altogether; not by confusion of substance: but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into the grave, and rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father: from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead. This is the Christian faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

The definitions given above set forth the classical Trinitarian faith believed and confessed by God's people for many centuries. Those who believe in the Triune God of the Bible should meditate upon these carefully worded[19] and thought out definitions.[20] They have

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similarly as a trinitarian person is the Divine essence modified by generation, or spiration. A theanthropic person is constituted, consequently, in the same general
manner in which an ordinary human person is: namely, by the union of diverse natures. In the case of a human individual, it is the combination of one material nature and one immaterial that makes him a person. . . . Says Hooker (V. liv.), 'the incarnation of the Son of God consisteth merely in the union of natures, which union doth add perfection to the weaker, to the nobler no alteration at all.'

The divine-human person, Jesus Christ, was produced by the union of the divine nature of the Logos with a human nature derived from a human mother. Before this union was accomplished, there was no theanthropic person. There was the divine person of the Logos existing in the Trinity before this union, and there was the unindividualized substance of Christ's human nature existing in the virgin Mary before this union; but until the two were united at the instant of the miraculous conception, there was no God-man. The trinitarian personality of the Son of God did not begin at the incarnation, but the theanthropic personality of Jesus Christ did. . . .

It is the divine nature, and not the human, which is the base of Christ's person. The second trinitarian person is the root and stock into which the human nature is grafted. The wild olive is grafted into the good olive, and partakes of its root and fatness" (William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (sec. "Christology," Chap. 1, "Christ's Theanthropic Person," pgs. 5-7, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

[19] While analogies for the Trinity from human experience, such as comparing the unity of the three Persons to the three states of water as gas, liquid, and solid, or to the human intellect, memory, and will, or to one who loves, the one loved, and the love itself, or to a father, mother, and son, etc. can have a certain value, since nothing in the earthly experience of mankind is exactly comparable to the tri-unity of God, they all of necessity fall short of an entirely accurate representation of the Biblical teaching and run the risk of misrepresenting the Trinitarian faith. This limitation must always be in mind when utilizing such illustrations.

[20] Schaff provides further helpful thoughts on the classical doctrine of the Trinity:

"There is only *one* divine *essence* or *substance* (*ousia, substantia, essentia, phusis, natura*). Father, Son, and Spirit are one in essence, or consubstantial *(homoousioi)*. They are in one another, inseparable, and cannot be conceived without each other. In this point the [classic] doctrine is thoroughly monotheistic . . . in distinction from tritheism, which is but a new form of the polytheism of the pagans.

The terms *essence* (*ousia*) and *nature* (*phusis*) . . . denote . . . against Arianism the strict divinity and essential equality of the Son and Holy Ghost with the Father. . . . [I]n the divine Trinity consubstantiality denotes not only sameness of kind, but at the same time *numerical* unity; not merely the *unum in specie*, but also the *unum in numero*. The, three persons are related to the divine substance not as three individuals to their species, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Peter, John, and Paul, to human nature; they are only one God. The divine substance is absolutely indivisible by reason of its simplicity, and absolutely inextensible and untransferable by reason of its infinity; whereas a corporeal substance can be divided, and the human nature can be multiplied by generation. Three divine substances would limit and exclude each other, and therefore could not be infinite or absolute. The whole fulness of the one undivided essence of God, with all its attributes, is in all the persons of the Trinity, though in each in his own way: in the Father as original principle, in the Son by eternal generation, in the Spirit by, eternal procession. The church teaches not *one* divine essence *and* three persons, but *one* essence *in* three persons. Father, Son, and

Spirit cannot be conceived as three separate individuals, but are in one another, and form a solidaric unity. . . . In this one divine essence there are three persons or, to use a better term, hypostases, that is, three different modes of subsistence of the one same undivided and indivisible whole, which in the Scriptures are called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These distinctions are not merely different attributes, powers, or activities of the Godhead, still less merely subjective aspects under which it presents itself to the human mind; but each person expresses the whole fulness of the divine being with all its attributes, and the three persons stand in a relation of mutual knowledge and love. . . . Here the orthodox doctrine forsook Sabellianism or modalism, which, it is true, made Father, Son, and Spirit strictly coordinate, but only as different denominations and forms of manifestation of the one God.

But, on the other hand, as we have already intimated, the term *person* must not be taken here in the sense current among men, as if the three persons were three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings. The trinitarian idea of personality lies midway between that of a mere form of manifestation, or a personation, which would lead to Sabellianism, and the idea of an independent, limited human personality, which would result in tritheism. In other words, it avoids the *monoousian* or [modalistic] trinity of a threefold conception and aspect of one and the same being, and the *triousian* or tritheistic trinity of three distinct and separate beings. In each person there is the same inseparable divine substance, united with the individual property and relation which distinguishes that person from the others. The word person is in reality only a make-shift, in the absence of a more adequate term. Our idea of God is more true and deep than our terminology, and the essence and character of God far transcends our highest ideas. . . .

Each divine person has his *property*, as it were a characteristic individuality, expressed by the Greek word *idiotes*, and the Latin *proprietas*. This is not to be confounded with attribute; for the divine attributes, eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, wisdom, holiness, love, etc., are inherent in the divine *essence*, and are the common possession of all the divine hypostases. The *idiotes*, on the contrary, is a peculiarity of the *hypostasis*, and therefore cannot be communicated or transferred from one to another.

To the first person fatherhood, or the being unbegotten *(agennesia, paternitas)*, is ascribed as his property; to the second, sonship, or the being begotten *(gennesia, genesis, generatio filiatio)*, to the Holy Ghost, procession *(ekporeusis, procesio;* also *ekpempsis, missio)*. In other words: The Father is unbegotten, but begetting; the Son is uncreated, but begotten; the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father . . . and . . . also from the Son. But these distinctions relate, as we have said, only to the hypostases, and have no force with respect to the divine essence which is the same in all, and neither begets nor is begotten, nor proceeds, nor is sent.

The divine persons are in one another, mutually interpenetrate, and form a perpetual *intercommunication* and *motion* within the divine essence; as the Lord says: "I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" and "the Father . . . dwelleth in me" [John 14:10-11; cf. John 10:38. Note in John 14:10 that the correct text is ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων, αὐτὸς ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα. The ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων emphasizes the ontic character of the coinherence. 99.5% of MSS contain this ὁ; three do not. To reject thousands of MSS and claim only three have the right text is insane.]. This perfect indwelling and vital communion was afterwards designated (by John of Damascus and the scholastics) by such terms as *enuparxis, perichoresis, inexistentia, immanentia, inhabitatio, circulatio, permeatio, intercommunio, circumincessio*, [and in English is commonly referred to as the doctrine of *coinherence*].

The [classical] doctrine . . . contains, in substance, a distinction between two trinities: an immanent [or ontological] trinity of constitution *(ad intra, tropos uparxeos)*, which existed from eternity, and an economic trinity of manifestation *(ad extra, tropos apokalupseos)* . . . for the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit are, according to the doctrine, an eternal process. The . . . [immanent] trinity of revelation [is seen] in the threefold progressive work of the creation, the redemption, and the preservation of the world, [and points] back thence to a trinity of being; for God has revealed himself as he is, and there can be no contradiction between his nature and his works. The eternal pre-existence of the Son and the Spirit is the background of the historical revelation by which they work our salvation." (*History of the Christian Church,* Philip Schaff, vol. 3, 9:130).

The Trinitiarian doctrine of coinherence is "not merely a linking or intercommunication of the distinctive properties of the three divine Presons but a complete mutual indwelling in which each Person, while remaining what he is by himself as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, is wholly in the others as the others are wholly in him" (Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith,* pg 305). Coinherence describes "the intimate mutual union of the persons . . . so as to designate thus that union by which the divine persons embrace each other

stood the test of time and the opposition of unbelief in many forms. The widespread and persistent misunderstanding of the Trinity by its supposedly Christian opponents also makes one wish that they also would carefully study these definitions, and, if they still foolishly wished to set themselves against the Scriptural doctrine set forth in them, would at least argue against the Trinity instead of against caricatures and misrepresentations of the doctrine accepted by no one besides anti-Trinitarians.

III. Anti-Trinitarian Positions on the Nature of God

Opposition to the Trinity among those who claim to derive their doctrine from the Bible falls generally into two major categories: unitarianism and modalism. While trinitarianism affirms that God is one essence and three Persons, unitarianism denies the unity of essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while modalism denies the trinity of Persons in the Godhead.[21]

The fundamental affirmation of Unitarians is that Jesus Christ is not really God. Groups that deny the Biblical doctrine of the unique and full Deity of Christ today include modern skeptics and atheists, theological liberals in a very wide array of denominations,[22] and modern cults and false religions such as Christadelphianism,

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and permeate (if it is right to say so) each other. So that although always remaining distinct, yet they are never separated from each other, but always coexist; wherever one is, there the other also really is" (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* Francis Turretin (trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr.), vol. 1, Topic 3, Question 23:13, pg. 257. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992 (orig. pub. 1696)].

Turretin, *Institutes,* vol. 1, 3:23, pgs. 253-260, gives helpful definitions of essence, nature, substance, subsistence, hupostasis, person, homoousion, perichoresis, property, relation, notion, and other words used to describe the glorious doctrine of the Trinity, along with a Biblical justification for the use of such vocabulary. See also footnotes #24, 26.

[21] This distinction in terminology, such that *Unitarianism* signifies Arianism or subordinationism, while *modalism* refers to Sabellianism or Patripassianism, will be maintained for the course of this discussion. One could argue that modalism is itself a form of Unitarianism, since it affirms, as does Arianism, a single person in the Divine essence. However, these two heresies arrive at this conclusion through very different means. Sabellianism maintains the unitary person of its Godhead is Father, Son, and Spirit, while Arianism maintains that the Father is the only One who is properly God. As defined in this work, Unitarianism denies the identity of the true God with the Son and the Spirit because it recognizes them as distinct from the Father, while modalism affirms the identity of Son and Spirit with the true God because it views the terms as synonyms of "Father."

[22] One who wishes, for some reason, to study the ungodly and often simply weird speculations and perversions of the blessed and holy Trinity by modern liberal theologians, Catholic and Protestant, is referred to pgs. 81-237 of *The Three-Personed God,* William J. Hill (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982). One noteworthy thing that can be gleaned from the mounds of

Christian Science, the Unitarian-Universalist Church, Swedenborgianism, the Local Church movement of Witness Lee, the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, the Unity School of Christianity, and the Way International of Victor Paul Wierwille. All religions that fall outside of Christiandom also reject the Lord Jesus' unique Deity, including Islam, modern Judaism, the various forms of Buddhism and Hinduism, Sikhism, other Eastern religions, Masonry, and Scientology.[23] Many modern Unitarians do not take the Bible seriously as the infallible Word of God, and therefore assert without fear that the Lord Jesus was simply either a normal man of some kind, although likely a very good one, or a prophet from God, or special in some other way, but only one that pertains to mankind. However, since nobody who believes the Scriptures are the perfect truth of God could seriously read them and conclude that Jesus is only a man, Unitarians that affirm a faith in an infallible Bible almost always assign the Lord Jesus a semi-divine status, although with a variety of twists. They often state that the Father is fully God, while the Son is a god, a sort of lesser divine being. They believe concerning the Son that "there was a time when he was not; and: he was not before he was made; and: he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or thing," or that "the Son of God is created, or changeable, or alterable."[24] Having denied the genuine Deity of the Son, modern Bible-supporting Unitarians generally proceed to allege that the Holy Spirit is neither God nor a personal Being, but an impersonal force.[25] The most prominent and zealous representative of contemporary Bible-affirming Unitarianism is the Watchtower

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nonsense in such a study is the fact that orthodox, classical Trinitarianism is under severe attack within both Catholicism and mainline Protestantism. The assumption that Bible-believing Baptist churches, the kind founded by the Lord Jesus Christ in the first century and perpetuated from that time to the present by His Almighty power (Matthew 16:18; 28:20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Ephesians 3:21) are Trinitarian because of such apostate "Christian" religions is entirely erroneous—especially since genuine Trinitarianism is itself under both Catholic and Protestant assault.

[23] See pgs. 688ff, *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions,* John Ankerberg & John Weldon, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publications, 1999, for documentation.

[24] The language quoted comes from an appendix to the ancient Nicene creed, which is related to the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed cited earlier, and was written to oppose Arianism, an ancient form of Unitarianism. The appendix correctly affirms that those who believe the views mentioned about the Son of God are *anathema,* that is, cursed by the Lord and condemned to hell (2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Galatians 1:8-9). The modern Arians in the Watchtower society declare that "Jesus never claimed to be God. Everything he said about himself indicates that he did not consider himself equal to God in any way" (*Should You Believe in the Trinity?* Section "Is God Always Superior To Jesus?")

[25] The Unitarian Arius, from whom the term *Arianism* is derived, at first affirmed the personality of the Spirit, while denying His Deity, but, as a recognition of the personality of the Spirit leads to a consequent affirmation of His Deity, Arius' followers, and modern Bible-affirming Unitarians, are generally united in their rejection of the Holy Spirit's personality.

Society, otherwise known as Jehovah's Witnesses.[26] This religion believes that the Father only is Jehovah, the Almighty and eternal God. The Son is the first and most important of created beings and a god,[27] and the Spirit is the impersonal "active force" of the Father.[28] A rejection of the Trinitarian affirmation that the Father, Son, and Spirit are

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[26] Since *Jehovah* is a Biblical name for God (Psalm 83:18), but Biblically the Father is Jehovah, the Son is Jehovah, and the Holy Spirit is Jehovah, members of the Watchtower Society, since they reject this Biblical truth, are really not witnesses for Jehovah at all; the designation "Jehovah's Witnesses" is, therefore, most inaccurate. Evangelistic Christians are Jehovah's true witnesses.

[27] They also make the odd claim that "the Bible indicates that Michael is another name for Jesus Christ, before and after his life on earth" (pg. 218 *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 2005), despite a total lack of Scripture equating the two and despite the specific affirmation that Michael is only "one of the chief princes" (Daniel 10:13), which contradicts the Watchtower notion that the Son is exalted above all other created beings. The Lord Jesus is contrasted with the angels, including Michael, in Hebrews 1:6; Colossians 2:18-19; etc. The Watchtower employs two arguments to prove that the Son of God is Michael the archangel. 1.) In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the Lord Jesus "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Supposedly this does not just mean that the archangel Michael will be with the Lord Jesus when He returns, but proves that the Son of God is actually that archangel. Unfortunately for the Watchtower, the proposition that He is Michael because He comes "with the voice of the archangel" would also prove that the Savior is a trumpet, since He comes "with the trump of God" as well. Then again, perhaps since Matthew 24:31 states that at Christ's second coming He will return with "his angels" and the sound of a trumpet, the Savior really is all the angels together, not just Michael. 2.) Since "the Bible speaks of both Michael and 'his angels' and Jesus and 'his angels,'" so that they are both over "an army of faithful angels" (pg. 219, *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*) Michael must be the Lord Jesus. Since "his angels" is also used in reference to Jehovah, and Jehovah is said to be over an army of faithful angels (Psalm 103:20-21; 104:4; 148:1-2), why does not the Watchtower follow its own argument and in this way "prove" that Michael the archangel is the one true God?

[28] The Watchtower also holds to other errors in the doctrine of God. It rejects the Biblical teaching that God perfectly foreknows the future: "The view that God's exercise of his foreknowledge is infinite [is in error]. . . Its advocates reason that God's divinity and perfection require that he be omniscient (all-knowing), not only respecting the past and present, but also regarding the future. For him not to foreknow all matters in their every detail would evidence imperfection, according to this concept. . . . The argument that God's not foreknowing all future events and circumstances in full detail would evidence imperfection on his part is, in reality, an arbitrary view of perfection . . . God chooses to exercise his infinite ability of foreknowledge in a selective way" (*The Watchtower,* 8/1/1970 pgs. 469-70). Despite its own (heretical, idolatrous) affirmation that Jehovah does not know the future perfectly, it quotes Mark 13:32, which speaks of the limited knowledge of the future of the Lord Jesus as man, and uses it to argue that the Savior is not God (*Should You Believe In the Trinity?* pg. 19). The Watchtower also rejects the Biblical teaching that God is omnipresent, affirming instead that He has a body: "Actually, by teaching that God is omnipresent Christendom has confused matters and made it more difficult for God to be real to his worshipers. How could God be present everywhere at the same time? . . . God being an individual, a Person with a spirit body, has a place where he resides, and so he could not be at any other place at the same time. . . . Jehovah God truly is a person and has a body as well as a certain location" (*Watchtower*, 2/15/81, pgs. 5-7). This place where the god of the Watchtower lives in his body was said, in the past, to be by "the constellation of the seven stars forming the Pleiades . . . The constellation of the Pleiades is a small one compared with others which scientific instruments disclose to the wondering eyes of man. But the greatness in size of other stars or planets is small when compared with the Pleiades in importance, because the Pleiades is the place of the eternal throne of God. (*Reconciliation*; 1928; p. 14), but recently they have been less specific, although, in accordance with their universal practice, never admitting any error. Their idolatrous rejection of omniscience and omnipresence directly contradicts passages such as Isaiah 45:21; 46:10; Acts 15:18; Ephesians 1:11; Jeremiah 23:24; Ephesians 1:23; Psalm 139:7-10, etc. The Watchtower also holds many

one in essence unites all Unitarian groups.

Unitarians are lost. Through their affirmation that the Son of God is not the Almighty Creator, but a created being, they are guilty of idolatry and blasphemy. By opposing His character as one who possesses a fully Divine nature (and often by rejecting His full humanity as well), they also destroy the work of redemption; the Lord Jesus cannot fully unite God and man for He does not combine both genuine humanity and Deity in His Person. No real knowledge of the Father through the Son by the Spirit is possible. The sufficiency of His cross-work to redeem man is also destroyed by a rejection of His Divinity. They oppose the Father and the Holy Spirit as well; the Father is no longer eternally Father, for there was (allegedly) a time before the Son existed, and no one can be a Father without a Son. They would strip God the Spirit of His Deity, claiming that He is either just a force similar to gravity, or (following Arius) they must make the Spirit of God a created Being. Their god is a false god, one that cannot save them. As with all idolators, they worship the devil (Deuteronomy 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:20).

Modalism denies the trinity of Persons in the one God. It is also called Sabellianism (on account of a prominent early supporter, Sabellius), Patripassianism (the Father, *Pater,* suffered, *passio,* and died on the cross),[29] Oneness theology (on account of its affirmation of only one Person in God), "Jesus only" theology (since a significant segment of modalists baptize using the name of Jesus alone, instead of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), or Monarchianism (emphasizing the *monarchia,* the "single principle" or absolute unity of the Godhead). While the Trinitarian maintains that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are eternal,

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heresies in other areas, including a rejection of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, justification by faith alone, the eternal torment of the wicked, the Lord's church (preferring instead a supposed Divine guidance of their organization as a "prophet" from God), etc. However, since this work focuses on the doctrine of the Trinity, these other grievous errors will not be further considered here. Documentation of their views (and those of many of the other pseudo-Christian, anti-Trinitarian religions mentioned earlier), along with Scriptural refutations, are found in the appropriate sections of the *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions,* John Ankerberg & John Weldon, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publications, 1999.

[29] Some modern modalists affirm that the human nature of Jesus is the Son and the Divine nature of Jesus is the Father; they would deny that the Father died, and thus would reject the *patripassian* designation.

ontological[30] and personal distinctions, the modalist believes Father, Son, and Spirit are designations for the same Person,[31] emphasizing only different modes, manifestations, or functions of the one, solitary Person of God. They deny that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three essential and eternal distinctions in the one God.[32] Modalism takes somewhat different forms; its adherents might affirm that the terms Father, Son, and Spirit refer to different ways that God acts or different roles God takes in the world, perhaps to His work as Creator, Savior, and Sanctifier. They might say that God was Father in the Old Testament, and then became the Son during the earthly life of Christ,

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30 *Ontology* deals with *being*. The Biblical truth of *ontological* personal distinctions in the Godhead means that from eternity past to eternity future the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct personalities inherent in the very *being* of God. The modalist affirms, in contrast, God is ontologically only one Person, who at different times acts like a Father, like a Son, and like a Spirit who produces holiness in us. The Trinity considered *ontologically* refers to God as He is in Himself, without regard to any works that He does in the world. The Trinity considered *economically* refers to the roles the three Persons assume for particular tasks, such as creation or redemption. The distinction between the economic Trinity (God as He acts in the world, God as He is toward us) and the ontological Trinity (God as He is in Himself) is very important, and must not be overlooked. See footnotes #15, 26.

31 Some modalists reject the use of the word Person (Greek *hupostasis*) for God.

32 Francis Turretin, in his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* vol. 1, Question 25, I-III, pgs. 265-266, helpfully defines the distinction between the one essence of God and the three Persons in the Godhead, and contrasts Trinitarianism with both modalism and tritheism: "[T]he orthodox faith is this: in the one only and most simple essence of God there are three distinct persons so distinguished from each other by incommunicable properties or modes of subsisting that one cannot be the other—although by an inexpressible circuminsession (*epherichoresin*) they always remain and exist in each other mutually. Thus the singular numerical essence is communicated to the three persons not as a species to individuals or a second substance to the first (because it is singular and undivided), nor as a whole to its parts (since it is infinite and impartible); but as a singular nature to its own act of being (*suppositis*) in which it takes on various modes of subsisting. Hence it is evident: (1) that the divine essence is principally distinguished from the persons in having communicability, while the persons are distinguished by an incommunicable property; (2) that it differs from other singular natures in this—that while they can be communicated to only one self-existent being (*supposito*) and are terminated on only one subsistence (because they are finite), the former (because infinite) can admit of more than one.

Hence it is that the three divine persons are not three gods (as among men) because the divine persons partake of the same numerical essence, and that infinite. But three men partake of the same specific essence only, not numerical. Thus the three persons of the Trinity are not to be called *synousioi* or *homoiousioi,* but *homoousioi* because they have between themselves not only a similar, but the same numerical essence (nothing like which exists in creatures). Nor do the properties by which they are mutually distinguished constitute unequal degrees (although they may designate their order as diverse modes of subsisting). By this neither is the essence divided in the persons nor are the persons separated from the essence, but they are only so distinguished that the one cannot be the other.

The question [between Trinitarians and the majority of their "Christian" opponents] is not whether God is one numerically. . . . Rather the question is whether these three names [of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] designate three distinct persons subsisting in but one, undivided essence, which the orthodox maintain and the anti-Trinitarians deny. The latter consist of both they who, with Sabellius [the modalists], recognize only one person, who in different respects puts on now the name of Father, then of Son and again of Holy Spirit . . . and they who, with the Tritheists, from three persons make up three essences [and thus three gods]. . . . Against these [and others, such as the Arians], the orthodox faith must be established.

and after the Lord Jesus's resurrection and ascension God became the Holy Spirit. They might, on the other hand, state that these three modes of God's acting as Father, Son and Spirit are simultaneous, rather than successive. Modalists often view the Father, Son, and Spirit as different relationships the solitary Person of God has with mankind; they are viewed as titles, offices, or economic[33] roles similar to Shepherd, King, Holy One, or Rock. The one Person of God might be termed "Jesus" or the "Father." Modern modalistic groups include the followers of William Branham, and the followers of Witness Lee in the Local Church cult. The most prominent contemporary advocate of modalism is the Oneness Pentecostal, Apostolic Pentecostal, or "Jesus only" movement, including the United Pentecostal Church, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the Bible Way Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the United Church of Jesus Christ, the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and the Pentecostal Churches of Apostolic Faith. Oneness Pentecostalism today holds that Jesus is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Some modern modalists believe that the word "Father" in the Bible speaks of the Divine nature of Jesus, while the term "Son" refers to the human nature of the unipersonal God.[34] The fundamental heresy of all modalists is the rejection of the three eternal, personal distinctions in the one being of God.[35]

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[33] *Economic* roles in the sense of "God as He is toward us," that is, roles taken on by God to accomplish works in the world that relate to mankind or of creation in general, as opposed to *ontological* distinctions that relate to God as He is in Himself, without consideration of the created world or mankind. See footnotes #15, 24.

[34] In this they copy the doctrine of (the very far from infallible) Pope Callistus, who held that "God in uniting himself to the flesh of Jesus acquires visibility and is called Son, but he remains Father in his invisibility—so that Father and Son are one *prosopon*" (*The Three-Personed God,* William J. Hill. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982, pg. 34).

[35] The modalist heresy developed historically out of "an attempt to fathom the depths of [the Trinitarian] mystery by a process of speculation, instead of by a comprehensive reflection upon the Biblical data for its construction. (In some instances, probably, there was a desire to explain the doctrine and relieve it of its mystery. The modaly trinity . . . is quite intelligible. It is a significant remark . . . that 'the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity is more true than plain, while the heretical doctrine of the Trinity is more plain than true.') As we examine [it], we shall perceive that the mind looked at only one side of the great truth, and dwelt upon only a single one of the several representations in the revealed word. [It] sought to affirm, and that very strongly, the doctrine of the deity of Christ; but denied his distinct personality. Christ, [modalists] held, was God the Father himself, in a particular aspect or relationship. Essence and Person were identical, for them; and as there was but one Essence there could be but one Person. [Modalists] . . . were denominated Patripassians or Monarchiane, because they asserted the Monad and denied the Triad. They asserted the deity of Christ, but held the church doctrine of three persons to be irreconcilable with that of the unity of God. Hence they affirmed that there is only one divine Person. This one only Person conceived of in his abstract simplicity and eternity was denominated God the Father; but in his

The god of modalism is not the God of the Bible; the affirmation that the Father, Son, and Spirit are the same person is a radically different view of God than the Scriptural, Trinitarian position. Modalist attempts to explain the numerous conversations between the Father and the Son in the Bible as the human and Divine natures of the Lord Jesus communicating (although a nature, unlike a person, has no consciousness and is in itself unable to communicate) make the Savior schizophrenic. The work of Christ on the cross is destroyed, for the Father cannot lay the sins of the world on His Son. By

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incarnation, he was denominated God the Son. Sometimes, a somewhat different mode of apprehension and statement was employed. God in his concealed unrevealed nature and being was denominated God the Father, and when he comes forth from the depths of his essence, creating a universe, and revealing and communicating himself to it, he therein takes on a different relation, and assumes another denomination: namely, God the Son, or the Logos.

In their Christology, the Patripassians taught that this single divine Person, in his form of Son or Logos, animated the human body of Christ; and denied the existence of a true human soul in the Person of Jesus Christ. It
was, consequently, the divine essence itself in alliance with a physical organization and nature, that suffered for the sin of mankind; and hence the term Patripassians was given to the advocates of this doctrine.

The principal Patripassians . . . [were]: 1. Praxeas of Asia Minor . . . [who taught] that the Father descended into a virgin, was himself born of her, himself suffered, and finally that the Father himself is Jesus Christ. 2. Noetus [of] Smyrna . . . [and] 3. Beryl, bishop of Bostra in Arabia. . . . [who] was convinced of his error, and renounced his Patripassianism. . . .

Sabellius . . . [understood] by the Logos and the Holy Spirit two Powers (δυνάμεις) streaming forth from the divine Essence, through which God works and reveals himself. . . . [He] approximates to the Patripassians, in denying that Christ was merely an ordinary man upon whom the divine Logos only exerted a peculiar influence, and affirming that the Logos-Power itself belonged to the proper personality of Christ, and thereby determined and shaped his personal consciousness during the period of his earthly life. The Logos entered into union with Christ's humanity, and not merely inspired it. But this more exalted view of the Person of Christ is immediately depressed again to the humanitarian level . . . by the further assertion, that this divine Logos-Power, which had thus issued forth from God, and united itself with a human body, and formed one communion of life and consciousness with it during the period of Christ's earthly existence, was at the ascension of Jesus again withdrawn into the depths of the Divine Nature. . . .

Sabellius seems to have regarded the Monad *as antithesis* to the Triad, thus introducing four factors into the problem. Whether he regarded the Father as the Monad, or supposed the Father to stand in the same relation to the Monad, that the Logos and Spirit do, is uncertain. Neander is of the opinion that Sabellius held the Father as unrevealed to be the Monad, and as revealed to be the Father properly so called. He employed the following comparison to illustrate his view of the Trinity. 'As in the sun we may distinguish its proper substance, its round shape, and its power of communicating heat and light, so in God we may distinguish his self-subsistent essence (μόνας), the illuminative power of the Logos, and the enlivening energy of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers.' . . . Sabellius employed the [orthodox] phrase, 'three Persons,' but in the sense of personifications, or characters which the one essence assumed according to various occasions. . . .

Sabellius' trinity . . . is transitory. When the purposes of its formation are accomplished, the Triad is resolved again into the Monad. Sabellius did not apply the name of Son to the Logos; but only to the Person resulting from the union of the Logos with the man Jesus. He maintains, that in the Old Testament no mention is made of the Son of God [contra Psalm 2:7, 12; Proverbs 30:4; Isaiah 9:6; Daniel 3:25, etc.] but only of the Logos" (William G. T. Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine,* vol. 1, bk. 3, chp. 2:2, "Classes of Anti-Trinitarians," pgs. 136-138; orig. pub. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889; elec. acc. *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

stripping the Persons of the Trnity of personal identity and distinct subsistence, and reducing them to mere titles, names, or offices, modalists deny the existence of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Their god is a false god, one that cannot save. As with all idolators, modalists worship the devil (Deuteronomy 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:20).

Other anti-Trinitarian positions by groups that claim to believe in the Bible exist. For example, those who follow the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong (the United Church of God, Global Church of God, Associated Church of God, etc.) believe that God is a family currently numbering two Persons, the Father and the Son, while the Holy Spirit is impersonal, being simply God's mind, power, life and love; in the future all faithful Armstrongites will join the divine family and become God themselves, so that God will consist of billions of Persons instead of the current two. Mormonism affirms that the Father, Son, and Spirit are three different gods out of an innumerable multitude of others; all the gods are people who, at one time, were faithful Mormons on planets somewhere in the universe, and all the people currently on the earth are the product of sexual union between a father god and a mother god.[36] Since Scripture is clearly utterly contrary to such revolting notions (Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 44:6, 8; 45:6, etc.), it is not surprising that both groups claim to have additional revelations that add to and effectively supplaint the Bible—Mormonism adds the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants,* and the *Pearl of Great Price,* as well as the supposedly inspired teachings of whoever is its currently living "prophet," while Armstrongism adds the allegedly inspired writings of Herbert W. Armstrong. Unitarianism and modalism are the only alternatives to Trinitarianism that have any even apparent plausibility[37] for those committed to the sole

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[36] Documentation of the Mormon and Armstrongist views, along with a refutation of their blasphemous heresies, is found in the appropriate articles in the *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions,* Ankerberg & Weldon.

[37] It is noteworthy, however, that most modern modalistic and Unitarian religious systems also provide for extra-Biblical "inspired" authorities to supplement the Bible. For example, the Unitarian Watchtower society affirms that its governing body in Brooklyn, New York receives prophetic guidance from God: "we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization [itself]" (*The Watchtower*, Feb. 15, 1981), because the Watchtower governing body is allegedly God's prophet: "This 'prophet' was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ, known at that time as International Bible Students. Today they are known as Jehovah's Christian witnesses." (*The Watchtower*, April 1, 1972). One would not come to believe in Watchtower doctrines without interpreting Scripture under the superior authority of the "inspired" literature of the Watchtower organization. Hence, "from time to time, there have arisen from

authority of the Bible.

IV. Biblical Proof for the Doctrine of the Trinity

I.) There is only one God

II.) The Father is God

III.) The Son is God

IV.) The Holy Spirit is God

V.) The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct Persons

VI.) Interpersonal relations in the Godhead

Note: The positive sections of this book have not yet been written. For evidence in favor of these propositions, please see "Are You Worshipping Jehovah?" at http://faithalonesaves.googlepages.com/salvation (note no www). Please also read *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues,* by Robert Morey (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1996).

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among the ranks of Jehovah's people those, who . . . say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago" (*The Watchtower*, August 15, 1981). That is, one who accepts the Bible alone as his authority for faith and practice leaves Unitarianism and becomes a Trinitarian.

Similarly, the largest modalistic groups are part of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement and thus accept additional "revelation" beyond the Bible, which then becomes the true ultimate authority through which the Bible is interpreted. One has not received salvation, according to Oneness Pentecostal teaching, unless one has experienced a supernatural (demonic) experience of speaking in "tongues" after receiving anti-Trinitarian baptism. The "[modalist] 'Jesus only' or 'Oneness Pentecostal' movement . . . [was] born, nurtured and matured within the ranks of Pentecostalism . . . the modern resurgence of modalism . . . began in April 1913 during a major Pentecostal camp meeting in Arroyo Seco, near Los Angeles, California. R. E. McAlister preached a sermon on Acts 2:38 where he argued that baptism was to be done in the name of Jesus only and not with a Trinitarian formula. John Scheppe was greatly influenced by the message and in prayer that night encountered a type of 'revelation' or mystical experience confirming the power of the name of Jesus . . . Scheppe adopt[ed] a modalistic view of the Godhead . . . the movement grew and attracted prominent Assemblies of God leaders who soon split from the . . . denomination in 1916[.] . . . William Branham, a false prophet who was guided by spirits and reached millions of people in the 1930s-50s, was a Oneness preacher. . . . [There was] spiritism historically in the formation of the [Oneness] church and its leaders via occult visions or 'angel' contacts and guidance" (pgs. 366-368, *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions,* John Ankerberg & John Weldon. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1999). The major modalistic groups, then, do not evaluate Scripture on its own terms, but do so in light of experiences with supernatural evil spirits masquerading as the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, God the Father, holy angels, etc. This was unquestionably the case in the development of the Oneness movement in the early twentieth century. Thus, while the major Bible-affirming modalist groups, equally with their Unitarian counterparts, regularly claim that Scripture is their sole authority, their claims are false. One who truly has Scripture as his sole authority for faith and practice will become a Trinitarian.

V. Objections to the Doctrine of the Trinity

A. Introductory Considerations

Both Unitarians and modalists set forth a number of arguments for their respective theological positions. Objections common to both heresies will be dealt with first. Then uniquely Unitarian objections will be examined. Uniquely modalistic objections will be examined last.[38]

Many heretical objections to Trinitarianism are invalidated simply by holding to a proper definition of the true doctrine. Unitarians often misrepresent the Trinity as modalism or tritheism. They then refute the idea that the Father is the same Person as the Son and as the Spirit, or then refute the idea that there are three gods, and state that they have refuted the still untouched Trinitarian position. Unitarians also often ignore the Christian doctrine that the Lord Jesus is one Person with two natures, one fully Divine and one fully human. They then take passages that deal with His human nature, demonstrate that He (as a true man of necessity does) has human attributes such as dependence upon God, and affirm that these texts, although they really have no bearing on the issue, prove the Son does not have a Divine nature. Modalists also like to misrepresent the Trinity as tritheism and confuse the Person and natures of Christ. A proper understanding of the definition of the Trinity in itself refutes many of the arguments made against it.

Anti-Trinitarians also have the burden of proof when they utilize the passages of Scripture examined below. They must, after refuting the positive arguments for the Trinity given in earlier sections of this book, show that the passages they now bring forth to state their case are absolutely incompatable and unreconcilable with the Trinitarian position. The Trinitiarian does not need to prove anything with these verses—he has not built his case for the Triune God upon them; he must simply demonstrate that one (or

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[38] Please note as well that the material below relates almost exclusively to the Unitarian objections to the Trinity. The modalistic objections, and objections that are common to both positions, are parts of this work that also has not yet been composed. Please also note that references to other footnote numbers in footnotes can often be inaccurate. This book is yet a work in progress.

more) ways exist to reconcile the anti-Trinitarian "proof-texts" with his theology. If one of these alleged proof-texts, examined on its own without any recourse to other portions of Scripture, could bear either an anti-Trinitiarian or a Trinitarian interpretation, it has failed to refute the Trinity. It will not do to force an anti-Trinitarian interpretation upon verses that do not require it, ignore or tread lightly over the masses of verses that support the Trinity, and then favor either Unitarianism or modalism—Scripture is not contradictory. Trinitarians affirm that theirs is a balanced view of Scripture—they can affirm every text in the Bible that relates to the Divine nature, while Unitarians, modalists, and all other doctrines of God must pick certain verses, emphasize those, and negelect other equally inspired texts. If anti-Trinitarians wish to establish their doctrine from the Word of God, they cannot unbalance the Bible. Finally, the anti-Trinitiarian cannot merely attempt to rip apart the Trinitarian conception; he must also build a coherent, compelling, Biblical case for his own theological alternative. The Arian must prove that Jesus Christ is the creator of everything except himself and a secondary true god underneath God the Father, not just argue against the Son being the Almighty God. He must prove that the Holy Spirit is impersonal, not just argue against His personality and Deity. The modalist must prove that Jesus is the Father and Jesus is the Holy Spirit, and prove as well (if he adopts this version of modalism) that the word *Father* refers to Christ's Divine nature and the word *Son* to His human nature; he cannot just argue against Trinitarian personal distinctions. Thus, Unitarians and modalists face two requirements if they wish to establish their views as Biblical. Negatively, they must refute all the verses given in favor of the Trinity, and provide texts of their own that do not just create doubt about Divine Tri-unity but entirely eliminate the doctrine as a possibility. Positively, they must demonstrate that their own particular alternative theology is the position of Scripture. Only if they accomplish both of these tasks have they accomplished their goal with their proof-texts and arguments.

Arian arguments against the Trinity that involve verses of Scripture may be divided into four major categories.[39] 1.) Arians misrepresent the Trinity as tritheism and

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[39] Robert Morey (pg. 492, *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues.* Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1996) gives a good description of ten basic errors made by Arian groups when they argue for their views (mis)using Scripture. They are: 1.) Taking a verse out of context. 2.) Misapplying texts. 3.) Ignoring the grammar of the original text. 4.) Reading their own ideas back into the text. 5.) Deliberately

prove monotheism, there is only one God. 2.) Arians misrepresent the Trinity as modalism and prove that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not the same Person. 3.) Arians ignore the fact that the Son of God is one Person with two distinct natures, one fully human and one fully Divine, and use verses that speak of the Lord Jesus' human nature to deny that He is also a Divine Person. Similarly, they regularly confuse the economic and ontological Trinity.[40] 4.) Arians also make certain further uncategorizable arguments. A recognition of these four categories is important for both those who believe in the living God and for Arians. A Trinitarian who knows and can refute Arian allegations is far better equipped to seek to turn those decieved by Unitarian error from darkness to light. Furthermore, an understanding of Unitarian misrepresentations of Trinitarianism enables the Christian to have, through a clearer understanding of what his God is not, a deeper knowledge of who He is. He can thus more effectively "love the Lord [his] God with all . . . [his] mind" (Matthew 22:37). Also, since Unitarians "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18), Trinitarians need to pass beyond easily decieved spiritual simplicity to a deep and sound knowledge of the truth. It is important beyond measure for Arians to know and recognize the errors of their arguments, that "God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Timothy 2:25-26)—for until an Arian repents, "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1 John 2:22-23). The four categories of objections will be examined in order. In each category, the general nature of the objection will be stated, quotations from Unitarian sources stating it will be supplied,[41] verses employed to support the objection will be listed, and a Biblical answer will be given.

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mistranslating a verse. 6.) Quoting only a part of a commentator and twisting his words to make him say the exact opposite of what he said in the context. 7.) Inventing Hebrew and Greek grammatical terms and tenses. 8.) Quoting a part of a verse in such a way as to misrepresent what it is saying. 9.) Producing a false translation of the entire Bible. 10.) Depending almost entirely upon defunct nineteenth century Unitarian arguments.

[40] These terms are defined in footnote #21.

[41] Since the Watchtower Society is the most prominent and zealous representative of contemporary Bible-affirming Unitarianism, and its arguments are representative of Arianism in general, its works will be quoted.

1.) Unitarian misrepresentations of the Trinity as tritheism and arguments for monotheism

Arians argue that the Biblical truth of monotheism requires the rejection of Tri-unity in God. Since Trinitarians affirm that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, Unitarians allege that they believe in three gods. After proving that the Bible teaches that there is only one God, Arians then affirm that they have refuted the Trinity.

Unitarians argue:

> God is one, not three. . . . The Bible teaching that God is one is called monotheism. . . . [M]onotheism . . . does not allow for a Trinity. . . . The Old Testament is strictly monotheistic.[42] . . . On this point there is no break between the Old Testament and the New. The monotheistic tradition is continued. . . . Thousands of times throughout the Bible, God is spoken of as one person. When he speaks, it is as one undivided individual. The Bible could not be any clearer on this. . . . Why would all the God-inspired Bible writers speak of God as one person if he were actually three persons? What purpose would that serve, except to mislead people? . . . God is one Person—a unique, unpartitioned Being who has no equal."[43]

Verses mentioned by Arians to support the fact that there is only one God include Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 42:8; 45:5; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; and Galatians 3:20. These references, and many others, demonstrate the truth of monotheism, that there is only one God.

Since Trinitarians are passionately committed to monotheism, this Unitarian argument is only convincing to people who are ignorant of the Trinitarian faith and who consequently believe Arians when they say that Trinitarianism is a belief in three gods.[44]

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42 It is noteworthy that, without in any way compromising their monotheism, "orthodox Jews held that the Messiah existed in eternity past. They would of course have gotten that from Micah 5:2, 'His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity,' and, His name is 'Eternal Father, …' (Isa. 9:6). The First Book of Enoch calls Him the Head of Days, 'an epithet alluding to his preexistence, or to the emergence of his name before God prior to the creation of the world.' [pg. 17, Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1979).]" (Mal Couch, "The Literary Value of the Book of Matthew," *Conservative Theological Journal* 3:10 (December 1999) pg. 329).

43 Pgs. 12-16, "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" in the Watchtower publication *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* This work is probably by far the most easily accessible and widely distributed specimen of modern Arian literature.

44 The Watchtower society's desire to represent the Trinity as three gods is illustrated in its methodological advice to its devotees as they seek to bring prospects to join the Watchtower: "Ask the student [prospect for converting to the Watchtower], 'How many Jehovahs are there?' Let him answer. The

No Trinitarian confession that presently exists, and none that has ever existed in history, has stated that there are three gods. Trinitarians believe that "The Lord our God is but one only living and true God . . . the essence [of God is] undivided," and that "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Christian faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. But this is the Christian faith: That we worship one God . . . [not] dividing the substance . . . there are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable. . . . [T]here are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. . . . [T]here are not three Gods; but one God. . . . not three Lords; but one Lord. . . . [W]e [are] forbidden by the Christian religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords. . . . He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity."[45] Someone who believes that there are three gods is not a Trinitarian. Only anti-Trinitarians say that the Trinity is a belief in three gods. According to Trinitarians, someone who believes in three gods is not a Trinitarian, nor a Christian, and is certain of damnation. The affirmation that Trinitiarians deny monotheism and believe in three gods is a vile slander, a lie originating from the father of lies (John 8:44).[46] While some Unitarians may repeat this terrible misrepresentation in ignorance, believing the lies of their leaders, many Arian teachers and producers of Arian apologetic literature intentionally twist the Trinitarian position.[47] Since tritheism is

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answer is obvious that there is only one Jehovah. When he discerns this, you have caused him to register an important fact in his mind that he might otherwise have missed. Help him to appreciate further what this means to him. Reason with him, perhaps in this way: 'If he is one Jehovah, then could he be three gods, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as the Trinitarians teach?' . . . You have . . . exposed a basic false doctrine—the doctrine of the Trinity" (*Watchtower*, April 1, 1970, pg. 210). This counsel is an excellent illustration of how false teachers are "deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). The prospective Watchtower convert is being deceived into thinking that the Trinity is a doctrine of three gods, and the already committed Watchtower member who is deceiving him is himself being deceived by the devilish lie taught in his literature.

45 Quotations from *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* and the Athanasian creed as cited above in the section, "The Definition of the Trinity."

46 Slander and false accusation are tactics Satan and his demons commonly use to oppose the truth (Matthew 26:59-61; Acts 17:7; Romans 3:8; etc.). Consider that the Greek word *diabolos,* usually translated "devil," is also used for false accusers (2 Timothy 3:3) and for slanderers (1 Timothy 3:11). Misrepresentation of the Trinity should be expected by those who are doing the devil's work, who are both "deceiving [others], and being deceived [themselves]" (2 Timothy 3:13).

47 A less blatantly slanderous version of this Unitarian argument would be, "Since God is one in essence, all personal distinctions within Him is impossible—including the tripersonality affirmed by Trinitarians." However, the oneness of God affirmed in Scripture does not require this. It should be noted that average Arian, and typical Arian apologetic literature, will rarely attempt to accurately represent the

obviously and grossly unscriptural, if Unitarians can caricature the Trinitarian faith as a belief in three gods, they can "refute the Trinity" with passages proving there is only one God. Invalid arguments and misrepresentations like this are necessary for the Unitarian who is not willing to repent—the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity cannot be refuted Biblically, because it is the revealed truth from the Triune God who Authored the Bible.

The affirmations of Scripture that God is one are exactly what one expects to find in the Bible if Trinitarianism is true. Unitarians who believe in an infallible Bible, in contrast, end up supporting a form of polytheism, where the Father becomes a greater God and the Son becomes a lesser god. While they slander Trinitarianism as a belief in three gods, they themselves believe in (at least) two gods. The ancient "Arians worshipped Christ; 'although not very God, He is God to us' [they believed]. . . . The Arians worshipped Christ, whom they regarded as a created being: therefore, the [Trinitiarians] urge[d] with one consent, they were idolaters. The idea of a created being capable of being worshipped was an Arian legacy to the Church, no doubt. But this very idea . . . marked them out as idolaters."[48] In the words of an ancient opponent of Arianism, "if . . . the Word is a creature and a work out of nothing . . . if [Arians] name Him God from regard for the Scriptures, they must of necessity say that there are two Gods," for "The Arians were in the dilemma of holding two gods or worshipping the

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Trinitarian position; e. g., the quotes mentioned in footnote # declare that God is "a unique, unpartitioned Being who has no equal," as if the Trinitarian thought that God was divided or partitioned or had someone outside of Himself who was His equal. The Triune God who has revealed Himself in Scripture is not partitioned or divided; the three *hupostases* or subsistences coinhere and share the same undivided essence.

"[T]he emphasis is made [repeatedly in Trinitarian confessions] that the essence or being of God is indivisible. There is but one being that is God. The doctrine of the Trinity safeguards this further by asserting that 'the whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three Persons' [cf. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941) pgs. 87-89]. This follows logically on the heels of asserting the indivisibility of the being of God, for if three Persons share thatone being, they must share all of that being. The Father is not just 1/3 of God—He is full Deity, just as the Son and the Spirit" ("The Trinity, the Definition of Chalcedon, and Oneness Theology," James White, elec. acc. http://www.aomin.org, Alpha and Omega Ministries). "The *homoousion* properly understood involved a 'rejection of any notion either of undifferentiated or of partitive relations between the three divine *hupostaseis* [and] carried with it the conception of eternal distinctions and internal relations in the Godhead as wholly and mutually interpenetrating one another in the one identical perfect being of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.' . . . [Classical Trinitarians] abhorred any partitive thinking of God either as he is in himself or as he is towards us." (*The Trinitarian Faith,* T. F. Torrance, pgs. 311-312, 328). See footnote #12.

[48] *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters,* Prolegomena 2:3, "The Situation After The Council of Nicea," in *Church Fathers — The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff, electronically accessed as an *Accordance Bible Software* module from OakTree Software, Inc. version 1.1.

creature."[49] Ancient Trinitarians confessed that they worshipped only the one true God: "We do not worship a creature. Far be the thought. For such an error belongs to heathens and Arians."[50] Modern Arians agree with their ancient counterparts that the Son can get "worship" as "a god."[51] Modern Trinitarians continue to affirm, with the Scriptures and against the effective denial of the doctrine by Arianism, that there is only one true God and one Lord of all, and He alone is to receive worship.

The great truth of monotheism does not undermine Trinitarianism in any way—it is part of the essence of the Trinitarian doctrine. Unitarians can only attempt to use monotheism against the Trinity by means of misrepresentation, slander, and deceit. Indeed, it is the Arian doctrine that truly undermines the essential oneness of God.

2.) Unitarian misrepresentations of the Trinity as modalism and arguments that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not the same Person

Arians argue that the Scripture presents the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three distinct entities. Since Trinitarians believe that there is only one God, Arians argue that they must believe that the Father is the same Person as the Son and as the Holy Spirit. After proving from Scripture that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different, Arians then affirm that they have refuted the Trinity.

Unitarians argue:

> Someone [Jesus] who is "with" another person cannot also be that other person [the Father]. . . . Since Jesus *had* a God, his Father, he could not at the same time *be* that God. . . . At the very outset of Jesus' ministry, when he came up out of the baptismal water, God's voice from heaven said: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." . . . Was God saying that he was his own son, that he approved himself, that he sent himself? . . . Paul also said that Christ entered "heaven itself, so that he could appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf." . . . If you appear in someone else's presence, how can you be that

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49 Athansius, "Discourse III Against the Arians," chapter 25, in *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters,* in the *Church Fathers — The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff, electronically accessed as an *Accordance Bible Software* module from OakTree Software, Inc. version 1.1.

50 Athansius, "Personal Letters," Letter 60, "To Adelphius: Bishop and Confessor: Against the Arians" in *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters,* in the *Church Fathers — The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff, electronically accessed as an *Accordance Bible Software* module from OakTree Software, Inc. version 1.1

51 The *Watchtower,* 15 Feb 1983, pg. 18.

> person? You cannot. You must be different and separate. Similarly, just before being stoned to death, the martyr Stephen . . . saw two separate individuals. . . . To whom was [Jesus] praying? To a part of himself? . . . Then, as he neared death, Jesus cried out: "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" To whom was Jesus crying out? To himself or to part of himself?[52] . . . And if Jesus were God, then by whom was he deserted?
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> John said that he had written his Gospel so that readers might come to believe that "Jesus is the Christ *the Son of God"*—not that he was *God*. . . . [T]he 144,000 have the Lamb's *"name* and *the name of his Father* written on their foreheads." . . . Could "the Lamb" be the same as "his Father"? Clearly not. In the Bible they are distinct. . . [T]he fact that the Father is a separate person [from the Son], is highlighted also in the prayers of Jesus . . . Someone who is "with" another person cannot be the same as that other person.[53]

Verses mentioned by Arians to support the fact that the Father, Son, and Spirit[54] are distinct include Revelation 14:1, 3; John 1:1b; Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 15:34; Hebrews 9:24; Acts 7:55; and many others. All verses that refute modalism also demonstrate that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct.

Since Trinitarians deny that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are the same Person, this argument is effective only with people who are ignorant of the Trinitarian faith, and who consequently believe Arians when they state that this false doctrine is Trinitarianism. No Trinitarian confession that presently exists, and none that has ever existed in history, has affirmed that the Father, Son, and Spirit are the same Person—this is the modalistic heresy. Trinitarians believe that in the one God "there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit . . . the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son . . . distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations." They affirm that "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Christian faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. But this is the Christian faith: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the

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52 See footnote #45 for the misrepresentation involved here.

53 *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* sections "What About Trinity Proof-Texts?" and "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?" (pgs. 23-29; 16-20), and the article "Who Is The Only True God?" *Awake!* Magazine, April 22, 2005.

54 Arians often focus this argument especially upon the distinction between the Father and the Son, since the majority of them depersonalize the Holy Spirit and make Him simply the Father's power, and so essentially equate and deny personal distinction between the Spirit and the Father.

Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost. . . . The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding. . . . He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity."[55] Trinitarians reject modalism, and modern modalistic groups, such as Oneness Pentecostalism, vehemently reject the Trinity.[56] Arians are just about the only ones who state that the Trinity teaches that the Father is the Son and the Son is the Holy Spirit. According to Trinitarians, someone who believes in modalism is not a Trinitarian, nor a Christian, and is certain of damnation. The Arian accusation is a slander and a lie. While some Unitarians may repeat this terrible misrepresentation in ignorance, believing the lies of their leaders, many Arian teachers and producers of Arian apologetic literature intentionally twist the Trinitarian position. Since modalism is refuted by many passages in Scripture, if Unitarians can twist the Trinitarian doctrine into it, they can "refute the Trinity" with passages proving that the Father, Son, and Spirit are different. Invalid arguments and misrepresentations like this are necessary for the Unitarian who is not willing to repent—the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity cannot be refuted Biblically, because it is the revealed truth from the Triune God who Authored the Bible.

It should be noted that this second Arian argument, that the Trinity false because modalism is false, directly contradicts the first objection, that the Trinity is false because tritheism is false. On the one hand, if Trinitarians really believed in three gods, a Father god, a Son god, and a Holy Spirit god, then to argue that someone who is "with another person cannot also be that other person"[57] would be irrelevent, since the "Trinitarian"

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55 Quotations from *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* and the Athanasian creed as cited above in the section, "The Definition of the Trinity."

56 Real modalists affirm that "Jesus is the Father . . . the Father is the Holy Ghost . . . The Deity of Jesus Christ is the Father . . . The Deity of Jesus Christ is the Holy Ghost . . . modalism is the same as the modern doctrine of Oneness . . . Oneness believers also reject trinitarianism . . . trinitarianism differs from the Bible's teaching on the Godhead" (pgs. 6; 318-319; 294, *The Oneness of God,* David K Bernard, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1995).

57 This Arian argument would also "prove" that the Father is not God, since quite a number of verses mention God and the Father as two distinct entities. Scripture speaks of "the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4); "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father" (Ephesians 5:20); "Now unto God and our Father be glory" (Philippians 4:20); "We give thanks to God and the Father" (Colossians 1:3); "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" (Colossians 2:2) "giving thanks to God and the Father" (Colossians 3:17); "God and our Father" (1 Thessalonians 1:3); "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father" (James 1:27); "God and his Father" (Revelation 1:6). If the fact that the Son is

would respond, "But I believe that the Father and Son are two different gods, not the same person." On the other hand, if Trinitarians really believed in modalism, to argue that "God is spoken of as one person. . . . all the God-inspired Bible writers speak of God as one person" would be irrelevent, since the "Trinitarian" would respond, "I believe exactly this; the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Spirit; they are the same person." Unitarians should at least pick one slander and stick to it, rather than, as the great majority of them do, employing both of these contradictory misrepresentations at the same time.[58] However, since all who do not know the true, Triune God walk "in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17-18), such incoherent and contradictory attacks upon the character of God should be expected.[59] As long as men reject the Trinity, it matters little to Satan whether they do so because they believe the doctrine is tritheistic, modalistic, or somehow both at the same time.

Unitarians employ certain other arguments that involve the misrepresentation of Trinitarianism as modalism, but with a variety of further twists. These arguments often involve other misrepresentations of Trinitarianism as well, such as confusing the one Person and two natures of the Son of God (the third category of Arian arguments, examined subsequently). The major Unitarian asservations related to misdefining the Trinity as modalism are refuted below; the believer who has that Spirit who opens eyes to understand the Scriptures (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 13) should be able to refute any other modalistic misrepresentations without specific further analysis.

Unitarians argue that nobody has seen God (John 1:18), but people have seen the Lord Jesus (John 1:14), so Jesus is not God.[60] However, John 1:18 defines the "God"

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distinguished from God proves that He is a creature, because "someone who is with another person cannot also be that other person," then the fact that the Father is distinguished from God proves that He is a creature as well. While these texts do not at all help the cause of Unitarianism, they do assist the Trinitiarian when in conflict with modalism.

[58] Note that both arguments are repeatedly and strongly urged in the piece of Arian literature produced by the Watchtower society quoted above.

[59] Compare Numbers 21:5, where rebels who did not know Jehovah complained that He did not provide them with any bread, and that they hated the bread that He had provided for them, in the same sentence.

[60] "So 'the Word,' who became flesh, lived on the earth as the man Jesus and was seen by people. Therefore, he could not have been Almighty God, regarding whom John says: "No man has seen God at

whom nobody has seen at any time as "the Father," who "the only begotten Son" has "declared."[61] Of Him the apostle John declares, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). John 1:18a simply teaches that nobody has seen the Person of the Father at any time. When the Unitarian argument from John 1:18 is cleared of its ambiguities, it means, "nobody has seen God the Father (John 1:18a-c), but people have seen the Lord Jesus (John 1:14), so Jesus is not God the Father." This form of the argument, which does indeed correspond to the teaching of the verses, is valid, but it refutes modalism rather than Trinitarianism. The anti-Trinitarian conclusion the Arian wishes to reach is, "nobody has seen God the Father, but people have seen the Lord Jesus, so Jesus is not God the Son," but this is plainly invalid.

Indeed, the teaching of John 1:18 that nobody has ever seen the Father creates major problems for the Unitarian[62] in the many passages where the Messenger or Angel of Jehovah was seen and identified as Jehovah Himself. The Trinitarian recognizes these appearances as a revelation of God the Son, and thus harmonizes these texts with John 1:18. The Unitarian has no adequate harmonization, but creates contradictions in Scripture.

Arians also argue that God cannot be tempted, but Jesus Christ was tempted, so the Lord Jesus Christ is not God. Referencing Matthew 4:1 and James 1:13, Arians ask, "Could God be tempted? . . . Jesus is spoken of as being 'tempted by the Devil.' . . . Satan was trying to cause Jesus to be disloyal to God. But what test of loyalty would that

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any time." —John 1:14, 18." (The Watchtower magazine *Awake!* April 22, 2005).

[61] The fact that the Son can "declare" the Father requires His Divinity. The word is ἐξηγήσατο, an aorist middle indicative of ἐξηγέομαι, meaning "to make something fully known by careful explanation or by clear revelation" (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida (henceforth LN)). The word was used in extra-Biblical Greek of revealing "divine secrets" and with reference to "[D]ivine beings themselves" (BDAG). This sense of ἐξηγέομαι in John 1:18 as a full and complete declaration and thus as a full revelation of the Father is similar to the aorists in Acts 10:8; 15:14; Leviticus 14:57 (LXX); Job 28:27 (LXX). 1 Clement 49:2 is a helpful comparison; the question, "Who can describe (ἐξηγέομαι) the bond of God's love?" is not, "Who can declare some truth about it?" but "Who can declare, reveal, or describe the full depths of God's love?" The Son, because He Himself shares the divine essence with the Father, can fully reveal God, something no created being could possibly do (cf. Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22).

[62] The modalist also has problems with the many passages where Jehovah has been seen, for his version of the Godhead leaves him in plain contradiction to John 1:18. Furthermore, those modalists who believe that the Father is the Divine nature of Jesus, and the Son is His human nature, cannot explain, as the Trinitarian can, Old Testament appearances of Jehovah as visions of the Son, because, on their view, He did not yet exist. Nor can they be the Father, since nobody has ever seen Him (John 1:18).

be if Jesus were God? Could God rebel against himself? No, but angels and humans could rebel against God and did. . . . So if Jesus had been God, he could not have been tempted."[63] This argument fails because the Lord Jesus Christ is one Person with two natures. In accordance with James 1:13, the Son of God, in His Divine nature, could not be tempted; He is immutably holy (Hebrews 7:26; 13:8). In contrast, the Lord Jesus' human nature was both temptable and changeable—as Man, Christ was "in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).[64] Christ was temptable because

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63 *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" pgs. 14-15.

64 Contrary to the Unitarian declaration that "Jesus could have been disloyal[,] but he remained faithful" (*Should You Believe in the Trinity?* pg. 15), Scripture teaches that the Person of Christ was impeccable, that is, unable to sin.

"The truth and self-consistence of the doctrine of Christ's impeccability appear, also, from a consideration of the constitution of his person. "Christ's person is constituted of two natures: one divine, and the other human. The divine nature is both intemptable, and impeccable. 'God cannot be tempted with evil,' James 1:13. 'It is imposible for God to lie,' Hebrews 6:18. The human nature, on the contrary, is both temptable and peccable. When these two natures are *united* in one theanthropic person, as they are in the incarnation, the divine determines and controls the human, not the human the divine. . . .The amount of energy, therefore, which the total complex person possesses to resist temptation, must be measured not by the human nature but by the divine; and the amount of energy to resist temptation determines the peccability or impeccability of the person. Jesus Christ, consequently, is as mighty to overcome Satan and sin, as his mightiest nature is. His strength to prevent a lapse from holiness is to be estimated by his divinity, not by his humanity, because the former and not the latter is the base of his personality, and dominates the whole complex person.

Consequently, what might be done by the human nature if *alone*, and by itself, cannot be done by it in this *union* with omnipotent holiness. An iron wire by itself can be bent and broken in a man's hand; but when the wire is welded into an iron bar, it can no longer be so bent and broken. And yet iron, whether in a bar or in a
wire, is a ductile and flexible metal; and human nature, whether in a God-man or a mere man, is a temptable and fallible nature. A mere man can be overcome by temptation, but a Godman cannot be. When, therefore, it is asked if the person named Jesus Christ, and constituted of two natures, was peccable, the answer must be in the negative. For in this case the divine nature comes into the account. As this is confessedly omnipotent, it imparts to the person Jesus Christ this divine characteristic. The omnipotence of the Logos preserves the finite human nature from falling, however great may be the stress of temptation to which this finite nature is exposed. Consequently, Christ while having a peccable human *nature* in his constitution, was an impeccable *person*. Impeccability characterizes the God-man as a totality, while peccability is a property of his humanity.

But it may be asked, If the properties of either nature may be attributed to the person of the God-man, why may not both peccability and impeccability be attributed to the person of the God-man. We say that Jesus Christ is both finite and infinite, passible and impassible, impotent and omnipotent, ignorant and omniscient, why may we not also say that he is both peccable and impeccable? If the union in one person of the two natures allows of the attribution of contrary characteristics to the one God-man in these former instances, why not also in this latter?

Because, in this latter instance, the divine nature cannot *innocently* and *righteously* leave the human nature to its own finiteness without any support from the divine, as it can in the other instances. When the Logos goes into union with a human nature, so as to constitute a single person with it, he becomes responsible for all that this person does through the instrumentality of this nature. The glory or the shame, the merit or the blame, as the case may be, is attributable to this one person of the God-man. If, therefore, the Logos should make no resistance to the temptation with which Satan assailed the human

He was human. This Unitarian argument assumes—it does not prove—that because the Lord is human, and thus temptable, He cannot be Divine as well. Its anti-Trinitarian conclusion requires the hidden and unproved anti-Trinitarian assumption that Christ does not have two natures. Having assumed its conclusion in its premises, it then states what it previously assumed to be true as if something had been accomplished. While this Unitarian argument proves nothing in favor of its doctrine, it is a fine example of poor exegesis and of illogic.

Unitarians also argue that since Jesus died, but God cannot die, Jesus cannot be God. The Watchtower society states, "After Jesus died, he was in the tomb for parts of three days. If he were God, then Habakkuk 1:12 is wrong when it says, 'Oh my God, my Holy One, you do not die.' But the Bible says that Jesus did die and was unconscious in the tomb. And who resurrected Jesus from the dead? If he was truly dead, he could not

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nature in the wilderness, and should permit the humanity to yield to it and commit sin, he would be implicated in the apostasy and sin. The guilt would not be confined to the human nature. It would attach to the whole theanthropic person. And since the Logos is the root and base of the person, it would attach to him in an eminent manner. Should Jesus Christ sin, incarnate God would sin; as incarnate God suffered, when Jesus Christ suffered.

In reference, therefore, to such a characteristic as *sin*, the divine nature may not desert the human nature and leave it to itself. In reference to all other characteristics, it may. The divine nature may leave the human nature alone, so that there shall be ignorance of the day of judgment, so that there shall be physical weakness and pain, so that there shall be mental limitation and sorrow, so that there shall be desertion by God and the pangs of death. There is no sin or guilt in any of these. These characteristics may all attach to the total person of the God-man without any aspersion upon his infinite purity and holines . They do, indeed, imply the humiliation of the Logos, but not his culpability. Suffering is humiliation, but not degradation or wickednes. The Logos could consent to suffer in a human nature, but not to sin in a human nature. The God-man was commissioned to suffer (John 10:18), but was not commissioned to sin.

Consequently, all the innocent defects and limitations of the finite may be attributed to Jesus Christ, but not its culpable defects and limitations. The God-man may be weak, or sorrowful, or hungry, or weary; he may be crucified, dead, and buried; but he may not be sinful and guilty. For this reason, the divine nature constantly supports the human nature under all the temptations to sin that are presented to it. It never deserts it in this case. It empowers it with an energy of resistance that renders it triumphant over the subtlest and strongest solicitations to transgress the law of God. . . .

It is objected to the doctrine of Christ's impeccability that it is inconsistent with his temptability. A person who cannot sin, it is said, cannot be tempted to sin. . . . This is not correct; any more than it would be correct to say that because an army cannot be conquered, it cannot be attacked. Temptability depends upon the constitutional *susceptibility,* while impeccability depends upon the *will.* So far as his natural susceptibility, both physical and mental, was concerned, Jesus Christ was open to all forms of human temptation excepting those that spring out of lust, or corruption of nature. But his peccability, or the possibility of beign overcome by these temptations, would depend upon the amount of voluntary resistance which he was able to bring to bear against them. Those temptations were very strong, but if the self-determination of his holy will was stronger than they, then they could not induce him to sin, and he would be impeccable. And yet plainly he would be temptable" (William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (sec. "Christology," Chap. 5, "Christ's Impeccability," pgs. 2-5, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006). Shedd's entire discussion of Impeccability is tremendous.

have resurrected himself. On the other hand, if he was not really dead, his pretended death would not have paid the price for Adam's sin. But he did pay that price in full by his genuine death. So it was 'God [who] resurrected [Jesus] by loosing the pangs of death.' (Acts 2:24) The superior, God Almighty, raised the lesser, his servant Jesus, from the dead."[65] The problems in this argument are manifold. First, since Trinitarians are not modalists, they believe that the Father and the Son are distinct Persons, and when they say with the Scripture that on the cross "God . . . purchased . . . the church . . . with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), they mean that the Son died on the cross, not the Father, or the Holy Spirit, or the entire Godhead. Second, since Trinitarians believe that the Son is one Person with two distinct natures, one fully human and one fully Divine, when they say that Jesus Christ died on the cross, they do not mean that His Divine nature died, but that His human nature died; the Divinity of the Son of God has never been, and never will be, subject to death. Third, physical death for mankind signifies the separation of the soul and spirit from the body, not the cessation of conscious or unconcious existence or annihilation.[66] The Arian argument from the Lord Jesus' death involves the invalid assumption that the death of Christ meant that He ceased to exist for three days.

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65 *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?" pg. 18.

66 Soul-sleep and annihiliationism have been ably and repeatedly refuted. See, e. g., *Avoiding the Snare of Seventh-Day Adventism,* David Cloud, Port Huron, MI: Way of Life Literature, 1999, Chapters "Heresy #3: Soul-Sleep" and "Heresy #4: Annihilation of the Wicked," *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment,* William G. T. Shedd, *Christian Library Series, vol. 18: Classic Theological Collection,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006; "Does the Bible Teach Annihlationism?" Robert A. Peterson, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156:621 (January 1999) 13-28, etc. The New Testament phrase "for ever" (εἰς+αἰών) always signifies actual eternity in its 62 appearances in the New Testament (Matthew 6:13; 21:19; Mark 3:29; 11:14; Luke 1:35, 55; John 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35, 51, 52; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 13:8; 14:16; Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:37; 1 Corinthians 8:13; 2 Corinthians 9:9; 11:31; Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:21; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 1:8; 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 13:8, 21; 1 Peter 1:23, 25; 4:11; 5:11; 2 Peter 2:17; 3:18; 1 John 2:17; 2 John 1:2; Jude 13, 25; Revelation 1:6, 18; 4:9, 10; 5:13, 14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5). The word rendered "everlasting" or "eternal" (αἰώνιος) likewise denotes actual eternity in each of its 71 appearances (Matthew 18:8; 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:29; 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 16:9; 18:18, 30; John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46, 48; Romans 2:7; 5:21; 6:22-23; 16:25-26; 2 Corinthians 4:17-5:1; Galatians 6:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2:16; 1 Timothy 1:16; 6:12, 16, 19; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2:10; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Philemon 1:15; Hebrews 5:9; 6:2; 9:12, 14-15; 13:20; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 1:11; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:7, 21; Rev 14:6). Thus, verses that speak of "everlasting fire" (Matthew 25:41), in which those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13) will be endlessly tormented, verses that employ even more emphatic terminology ("for ever and ever") for the woe of the damned, so that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night" (Revelation 14:11), and many other passages that indicate that in hell "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48) all mean exactly what they say.

Furthermore, since Scripture assigns the resurrection of the Lord Jesus not only to the Father (Acts 2:24; 3:15), and to the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 3:18), but to the Son Himself (John 2:19, 21; John 10:17-18), the contention that, death wrongly being equated with annihilation, Jesus "could not have resurrected himself," flies directly in the face of the Biblical testimony. The declaration that the Lord Jesus, in His death, only "paid the price for Adam's sin," rather than for all sin (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5), is also a fearful error. So even if Habakkuk 1:12 read "you [God] shall not die" instead of what it really says, "we [God's people] shall not die,"[67] it would be entirely irrelevent as an anti-Trinitarian text. The Unitarian argument, when stated clearly, would run as follows: "Accepting as inspired a reading not found in any Hebrew manuscript, Habakkuk 1:12 states that God cannot die. Trinitarians believe that the human nature of Jesus Christ died on the cross. Therefore Jesus Christ does not have a Divine nature and is not God." This is self-evidently invalid and a terribly poor argument.

Arians often attempt to refute Trinitarianism by confusing it with modalism and then proving that the Father, Son, and Spirit are different. This, however, is as invalid as confusing Trinitarianism with tritheism and then proving that there is only one God. Since the Trinity is a Biblical doctrine, there is no way to prove its actual affirmations erroneous with Scripture; the need for this sort of misrepresentation thus arises for those who are not willing to turn to the true God.

3.) Unitarian disregard for the Trinitarian and Christological doctrine that the Son is one

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67 This mistranslation of the Watchtower society comes from their very corrupt New World Translation (see footnote #1). The verse actually says, "*Art* thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die." The Old Testament people of God, Israel, would not be utterly destroyed by her enemies, and all true believers will not suffer the second death in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). The NWT's corruption of the verse to "you [in reference to God] shall not die" is simply not the reading of the Hebrew text. The section of the verse in question reads, *Hᵃlôʾ ʾattâ miqqeḏem Yᵉhōwāh ʾᵉlōhay? Qᵉḏōšî lōʾ nāmûṯ.* The verb נָמוּת in the verse is plainly an imperfect 1st person plural, "we shall not die," not a 2nd person singular, "you shall not die." The entire Masoretic textual tradition reads "we," not "you." There are no Hebrew manuscripts that read with the NWT. The Greek Old Testament (LXX) reads ἀποθάνωμεν, "we shall not die," as do Symmachus and the text of Habakkuk found at Qumran. The *tiqqun sopherim,* היה ראוי תמות אלא שכינה הכתוב (see the footnote to Habakkuk 1:12 in the Trinitarian Bible Society *Hebrew Old Testament,* Bomberg/Ginsburg edition, London, England: Tyndale House, 1894/1998) cannot establish the NWT reading; it is impossible that God would allow the Hebrew text to be corrupted or changed, so that every extant Hebrew MSS is wrong (Matthew 5:18; Psalm 12:6-7; Revelation 22:18-19).

Person with two natures, one fully human and one fully Divine

Arians argue that the Scripture presents the Son as subordinate to the Father. Since the Son was sent by His Father and became man, they conclude that He must, therefore, be created and inferior in His nature to the God. Many of the seemingly most convincing Unitarian arguments follow these lines. Their argument in general will first be examined, and then the particular passages that constitute the first-order of Arian Biblical argumentation will be individually examined.

Unitarians argue:

> Having been created by God, Jesus is in a secondary position in time, power, and knowledge . . . when God sent Jesus to earth as the ransom, he made Jesus to be . . . a perfect man, "lower than angels." (Hebrews 2:9; compare Psalm 8:5, 6.) How could any part of an almighty Godhead—Father, Son, or holy spirit—ever be lower than angels?[68]
>
> The Father's superiority over the Son, as well as the fact that the Father is a separate person, is highlighted also in the prayers of Jesus, such as the one before his execution: "Father, if you wish, remove this cup [that is, an ignominious death] from me. *Nevertheless, let, not my will, but yours take place."* (Luke 22:42) If God and Jesus are "one in essence," as the Trinity doctrine says, how could Jesus' will, or wish, seem different from that of his Father?[69]

Verses that indicate a form of subordination of the Son to the Father are mentioned in the quotation; others can also be used to argue for it. Texts Arians use to affirm that the Son is subordinate, as a creation by God, and which will be specifically examined in this section, are Mark 13:32; Hebrews 5:8; Revelation 1:1; John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; and 1 Corinthians 15:28.

Trinitarians believe that the "Lord Jesus Christ . . . [is] truly God, and truly man . . . consubstantial with the Father as to his Godhead, and consubstantial also with us as to his manhood; like unto us in all things, yet without sin . . . the distinction of the natures being in no wise abolished by their union, but the peculiarity of each nature being maintained, and both concurring in one person." They "believe and confess . . . [that] the Son of God, is . . . perfect God and perfect man. . . . Equal to the Father, as touching his

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68 *Should You Believe In The Trinity?* section "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" pg. 14-15. The Watchtower doctrine that the Lord Jesus is the archangel Michael, the ruler of the rest of the angels, makes one wonder, in light of their specific question here, "How can the highest angel ever be lower than the other angels?"

69 "Who Is The Only True God?" *Awake!* Magazine, April 22, 2005.

Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood; who, although he be God and man: yet he is not two, but one Christ."[70] Passages of Scripture that affirm the equality of the Father and the Son speak of their sharing the common Divine essence; passages that speak of the subordination of the Son to the Father (when not referring to the distinction between the economic and ontological Trinity) very often refer to Christ's human nature.[71] Since the Lord Jesus is fully human, Trinitarians unhesitatingly affirm the important Biblical truth that He is "inferor to the Father as touching his manhood." This fact by no means establishes Unitarianism; it is simply a necessary corollary of the genuine incarnation of the Son. The human nature of Christ did not always exist; it came into being in the first century. It is not all powerful, everywhere present, or all-knowing. It possesses none of the incommunicable Divine attributes, those that uniquely distinguish God from all of creation. The Lord Jesus Christ was a real human baby, who became a real child, who as He grew older "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). He grew tired (John 4:6) and needed to sleep (Mark 4:38). He ate (John 4:31; Luke 24:43). He wept (John 11:35). The Savior was in

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[70] Quotations from the Chalcedonian and Athanasian creeds as cited above in the section, "The Definition of the Trinity." The doctrines of the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum* are also very important when considering the Person of Christ in relation to His two natures; see footnote #11.

[71] In the words of Augustine (*On The Trinity,* 1:11), "Wherefore, having mastered this rule for interpreting the Scriptures concerning the Son of God, that we are to distinguish in them what relates to the form of God, in which He is equal to the Father, and what to the form of a servant which He took, in which He is less than the Father; we shall not be disquieted by apparently contrary and mutually repugnant sayings of the sacred books. For both the Son and the Holy Spirit, according to the form of God, are equal to the Father, because neither of them is a creature, as we have already shown: but according to the form of a servant [Christ] is less than the Father, because He Himself has said, "My Father is greater than I" [John 14:28]; and He is less than Himself, because it is said of Him, He emptied Himself" [Philippians 2:7]; and He is less than the Holy Spirit, because He Himself says, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven Him" [Matthew 12:32]. And in the Spirit too He wrought miracles, saying: "But if I with the Spirit of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" [Matthew 12:28]. And in Isaiah He says, — in the lesson which He Himself read in the synagogue, and showed without a scruple of doubt to be fulfilled concerning Himself, — "The Spirit of the Lord God," He says, "is upon me: because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek[.] He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives," [Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18-19] etc.: for the doing of which things He therefore declares Himself to be "sent," because the Spirit of God is upon Him. According to the form of God, all things were made by Him [John 1:3]; according to the form of a servant, He was Himself made of a woman, made under the law [Galatians 4:4]. According to the form of God, He and the Father are one [John 10:30]; according to the form of a servant, He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him [John 6:38]. . . . According to the form of God, "He is the True God, and eternal life;" [1 John 5:20] according to the form of a servant, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" [Philippians 2:8]. — According to the form of God, all things that the Father hath are His [John 17:15], and "All mine," He says, "are Thine, and Thine are mine" [John 17:10]; according to the form of a servant, the doctrine is not His own, but His that sent Him [John 7:16]."

every way human, for "it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren"; had He not been so, He could not have made "reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). Humans are, by definition, inferior in nature to God. Were the Lord Jesus, considered as a man, not inferor and subordinate to the Father, He would not have been truly man, and He would not have been able to substitute Himself for and redeem men, nor represent them now as their High Priest, nor serve as an effective mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5).[72] Arians regularly take passages that deal with Christ as man, or that deal with some aspect of His human nature, and claim that these prove that He has no Divine nature, and is not God. This will not do; if Unitarians prove correct the portions of Trinitarian creeds that affirm the genuine humanity of Christ, they have hardly disproved the portions that affirm His genuine Deity. That Jesus is true man does not mean He is not true God. Such Arian arguments will only convince the one who does not properly understand the Trinitarian position. "Jesus is not God because the Bible teaches He is subordinate to the Father" sounds convincing, but when clarified as, "Jesus cannot have a Divine nature because His human nature is inferior to the Father's Divine nature," it is self-evidently invalid. The Unitarian "proof" does not address the issue.

Arians ask questions like "How could any part of an almighty Godhead . . . ever be lower than angels?" . . . If God and Jesus are 'one in essence,' how could Jesus' will, or wish, seem[73] different from that of his Father?[74] They state, "Speaking of the resurrection of Jesus, Peter and those with him told the Jewish Sanhedrin: 'God exalted this one [Jesus] . . . to his right hand.' (Acts 5:31) Paul said: 'God exalted him to a

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72 Consider that the present tense nature of the Lord Jesus' mediatorial role in 1 Timothy 2:5 requires that the Son continues to have a human nature today, and He will do so to all eternity; otherwise sinners have no mediator now, and salvation is impossible. Hebrews 8:1-4 and many other texts likewise indicate the enduring character of the humanity of Christ. The Lord rose from the dead with His truly human body (John 2:18-22; Luke 24:39), and He will continue to be truly Man to all eternity future.

73 The Watchtower needs to include the word "seem" here because it affirms that the passages about the oneness of the Son and the Father, such as John 10:30, refer to a unity of will, to mutual agreement, not to unity of essence; so there really was no disagreement, according to their own doctrine, between the will of the Father and the Son. The reader is intended to ignore the word "seem" and think, "How could the Father and the Son disagree, but they be one in essence?" but the question cannot be phrased so because Arians do not usually think there really was disagreement. This Arian argument is thus based on a dogma that is rejected by the Arians who offered it.

74 "Who Is The Only True God?" *Awake!* Magazine, April 22, 2005.

superior position'[75] (Philippians 2:9). If Jesus had been God, how could Jesus have been exalted, that is, raised to a higher position than he had previously enjoyed? He would already have been an exalted part of the Trinity. If, before his exaltation, Jesus had been equal to God, exalting him any further would have made him superior to God."[76] The answer to such questions is very simple, and very Trinitarian. Jesus Christ was not lower than the angels as God, but as man. As He has two natures, so He has two wills, one human and one Divine.[77] The Lord Jesus was not exalted to the right hand of God[78] as the eternal, preexistent Son of God, but as the perfectly human Son of Man He obtained more glory than He possessed during His earthly ministry (Philippans 2:8). As God the Son He was, even while on earth, in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) and in heaven (John 3:13), and, as He was one in essence with the Father, He possessed for all of eternity past the very Divine glory of the Father's own self, and so was unable to receive a higher rank of glory (John 17:5).[79] As human, the "Son of man . . . [is] on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). As God, the Lord Jesus was omnipresent, and therefore did not need to leave the earth and ascend anywhere, but as man He had a body in a particular location and, after His resurrection, "was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19; cf. Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). Proving that Christ is fully human does no more to refute the orthodox doctrine of the Deity of Christ than does proving that there is only one God or proving that the Father and the Son are distinct.

In Mark 13:32 (cf. Hebrews 5:8, Revelation 1:1), the Lord Jesus says, "of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Commenting on this, Arians argue:

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75 The NWT's "exalted him to a superior position" does not correctly represent the Greek; the KJV literally and correctly translates the verse.

76 *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?" pg. 19

77 See footnote #9 for the classic Trinitarian statement of this doctrine.

78 To argue that the Lord Jesus must be inferior to the Father because one who holds the right-hand position is subordinate is also an exceedingly poor argument, since Psalm 16:8 states that Jehovah was at king David's right hand, and Psalm 121:5 states that Jehovah is at every saint's right hand.

79 Consider also that the Lord Jesus affirms in John 17:5 His distinct existence "before the world was" (πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι), that is, in eternity. Every place in Scripture πρό and κόσμος are associated, as they are in John 17:5, Scripture refers to eternity past (John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20). The declaration of John 17:5 requires that the Lord Jesus is the Creator of the world, not part of the creation, for He existed before there was any creation. Arianism is thus refuted. Modalism is likewise refuted, for back before the world began the Son was also "with" the Father, and so a distinct subsistence or Person from Him.

> Jesus had limited knowledge . . . had Jesus been the equal Son part[80] of a Godhead, he would have known what the Father knows. But Jesus did not know, for he was not equal to God. . . . Similarly, we read at Hebrews 5:8 that Jesus "learned obedience from the things he suffered." Can we imagine that God had to *learn* anything? No, but Jesus did, for he did not know everything that God knew. And he had to learn something that God never needs to learn—obedience. God never has to obey anyone. The difference between what God knows and what Christ knows also existed when Jesus was resurrected to heaven to be with God. Note the first words of the last book of the Bible: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him." (Revelation 1:1, *RS,* Catholic edition) If Jesus himself were part of a Godhead, would he have to be given a revelation by another part of the Godhead—God? Surely he would have known all about it, for God knew. But Jesus did not know, for he was not God.[81]

When Unitarians use Mark 13:32 to attempt to deny the omniscience of the Son of God, they contradict John 21:17, where Peter tells Jesus Christ, "Lord, thou knowest all things," and John 16:28-31, where the Lord Jesus' discusses His relation to the Father. "His disciples [therefore] said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly . . . Now are we sure that thou knowest all things." Recognizing that Christ is God, the disciples affirmed the Lord Jesus' omniscience. Since omniscience, knowing everything, is a characteristic unique to the Almighty, had Jesus not been Jehovah their declaration would have been entirely inappropriate. No created being could, without sinning, have heard such an affirmation and refrained from rejecting it in the strongest sort of language. Christ, however, accepted their faith in His omniscience; recognizing His Deity was involved in believing in Him (John 16:31; cf. 20:28-29). Since the Lord Jesus is all-knowing, He can do what is possible only for Jehovah, not for Mary, any other human, or any other created being whatsoever; He can hear and answer prayers made to and through Him simultaneously by millions all over the world at the same time (1 Corinthians 1:2;

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[80] Note again the misrepresentation of Trinitarianism as the idea that three are three "parts" to God, so that one-third of God is the Father, one-third is the Son, and one-third is the Holy Spirit, contrary to the Trinitarian affirmations, in the words of the London Baptist Confession and the Athanasian creed as quoted earlier, "the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit . . . each hav[e] the whole divine essence, yet the essence [is] undivided" for Trinitiarians are neither "confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance." No accepted Trinitarian creed has ever stated this Watchtower slander; the enemies of the one only living and true Triune God will happily propogate it, however.

[81] *Should You Believe In The Trinity?* section "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?" pg. 19. It is ironic that the Watchtower will argue that the Son is not God by attempting to prove that He is not all knowing, while it believes that the Father is not all knowing either (see footnote #22)! The Watchtower's god actually does have to learn things, for it does not perfectly know the future!

Romans 10:12-13; John 14:12-13; cf. Joel 2:32; Zephaniah 3:9; Genesis 4:26, etc.).[82] The Lord Jesus' omniscience is also evidenced in His knowing all men and all that is in men (John 2:24-25), for "only" Jehovah knows these things (1 Kings 8:39; Proverbs 15:11). Christ is He who "he which searcheth the reins and hearts" (Revelation 2:23), but such working and knowledge is peculiar to Jehovah (Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; Psalm 44:21, etc.). No human, no angel, no finite being could know every single man and absolutely everything about them—but the Son of God does, for He shares the same Divine essence as the Father and the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10).[83] Every single thing that the Father does He shows the Son (John 5:20); only if the Son were omniscient could He comprehend everything involved in sustaining and governing all in the universe, from its vast expanses to its smallest atoms, not to mention the angelic world, and all else; He has the same knowledge as the Father Himself.

If many verses testify to the omniscience of God the Son, how can Mark 13:32 say that the time of the second coming is not known by the Son? The verse itself gives the answer; "of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man . . . but the Father."[84] The contrast is between the created order and God; Mark 13:32 speaks of Christ as the Son of man, not as the Son of God.[85] As the eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus is all-knowing

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[82] The Watchtower correctly teaches that "our prayers . . . must be directed only to Jehovah God" (pg. 167, *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* 2006 ed.). If the Lord Jesus is not Jehovah, why does Scripture contain numerous examples of people praying to Him? In addition to the verses cited above, consider Acts 2:21; 7:59-60; 9:14, 21; 22:16, etc.

[83] No finite, created being could possibly "search all things," nor have the specific knowledge predicated in 1 Corinthians 2:10 of the Holy Ghost, namely, that of the very "deep things of God" (cf. Romans 11:33).

[84] οὐδεὶς οἶδεν . . . εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ; The contrast is between the created order, none of which (οὐδείς) knows the day or the hour, and God, who does. The overarching statement that no part of creation knows the time of the second coming (note that in the identical οὐδεὶς οἶδεν in Matthew 24:36, the KJV italicizes *man*) is followed by an exalted category of created beings, and the most exalted of all of creation; not just does nobody know in general, but specifically the heavenly angels and the Son of man do not know (οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ . . . οὐδὲ); only God, here referenced as the Person of the Father, does.

[85] Shedd mentions another reasonable explanation: "Omniscience is ascribed to the Son. John 21:17, 'Lord thou knowest all things.' John 16:30, 'We are sure that thou knowest all things.' John 2:24, 25, 'Jesus knew what was in man.' John 1:49, 'When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.' Revelation 2:23, 'I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.' Compare with 1 Kings 8:29, 'Thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men.' In Mark 13:32, Christ is said to be ignorant of the day of judgment. This is explained, by many, by a reference to his human nature. He was ignorant in respect to his humanity. But there is another explanation which refers it to the total theanthropic person. An *official* ignorance is meant. Augustine so explains. 'Christ as the Mediator was not authorized, at that time, to give information respecting the time of the final judgment, and this is called "ignorance" upon his part; as a ditch is sometimes called "blind" because it is hidden from the eyes of men, and not because it is really so.'

(John 16:30); as the Son of man, as true man, consubstantial with Adam's race and conceived in the womb of Mary in space and time, He is limited in knowledge.[86] Not

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Macknight interprets in the same way. This use of 'know' for 'making known,' is frequent in Scripture. Genesis 22:12, 'Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou has not withheld thine only son from me.' In 1 Corinthians 2:2, St. Paul says, 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ.' To 'know' means to 'make known,' in Matthew 11:27. 'No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will *reveal* him.' Compare John 1:18, 'The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' A particular trinitarian person is officially the one to reveal another, and in this reference the others do not officially reveal, and so are officially "ignorant." Paul (Galatians 1:16) says that 'it pleased God the Father to reveal his Son in him.' This explanation of the 'ignorance,' spoken of in Mark 13:32, as official, agrees . . . with other statements of Scripture. When it is said that 'the Father only' knows the time of the day of judgment, this must be harmonized with the truth that the Holy Spirit is omniscient, and 'searcheth the deep things of God,' 1 Corinthians 2:10. The Holy Spirit is not ignorant of the time of the day of judgment, but like the incarnate Son he is not commissioned to reveal the time. Again, it is not supposable that Christ now seated on the mediatorial throne is ignorant, even in respect to his human nature, of the time of the day of judgment, though he is not authorized to officially make it known to his church" ("Trinity in Unity," Chapter 4 in *Theology: The Doctrine of God,* in *Dogmatic Theology,* William G. T. Shedd, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

[86] T. F. Torrance (*The Trinitarian Faith,* pgs. 186-188; footnotes of original patristic sources not reproduced below) comments well on the way Trinitarians in the early church period dealt with the Arian rejection of the Deity of Christ on account of Scriptural affirmations of His human ignorance: "It is basically the same argument that is to be applied to the atoning exchange between ignorance and wisdom in Christ—a problem that was much discussed in the fourth century, for the Arians had appealed to passages in the Gospels such as those in which it was said of Jesus that he increased in wisdom and even was lacking in knowledge [Luke 2:52; Mark 13:32]. Athanasius handled this question in entire consistency with his arguments about what the Son of God had done in making himself one of us and one with us in what we actually are in order to save us. That is to say, while the Son or Word of God who is one and the same being as the Father enjoys a relation of mutual knowing between himself and the Father, nevertheless in his self-abasement in the form of a servant he had condescended, for our sakes, really to make our ignorance along with other human limitations his own, precisely in order to save us from them. 'He incorporated the ignorance of men in himself, that he might redeem their humanity from all its imperfections and cleanse and offer it perfect and holy to the Father.' The fact that Christ was both God and man, and thus acted as God and as man, led some theologians in the fourth century to make ambiguous statements about the 'economic ignorance' of Christ, and sometimes even to speak of it as unreal. Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory Nyssen, both insisted on the reality of our Lord's ignorance as essential to his humanity; but it was Cyril of Alexandria who developed the soteriological approach of Athanasius most fully. For him the ignorance of Christ was just as essential to his amazing self-abasement or κενωσις as his physical imperfections and limitations, all of which are to be predicated of his one incarnate reality (μια φυσις σεσαρκωμενη). It was an economic and vicarious ignorance on our Lord's part by way of a deliberate restraint on his divine knowledge throughout a life of continuous *kenosis* in which he refused to transgress the limits of the creaturely and earthly conditions of human nature.

As the Word or Mind of God become flesh Jesus Christ was the incarnate wisdom of God, but incarnate in such a way as really to share with us our human ignorance, so that we might share in his divine wisdom. This was not just an appearance of ignorance on his part, any more than his incarnating of the Word or Mind of God was only in appearance. Had either been in appearance only, it would have emptied the economic condescension of the Son to save and redeem of any reality. Unless the Son of God had assumed the whole nature of man, including his ignorance, man could not have been saved. The wonderful exchange that lies at the heart of the interaction of the incarnation and atonement operates right here, as at every other point in the relation between God and sinful human being, for the human mind is an absolutely essential element in creaturely being. Hence God in Christ Jesus took it up into himself along with the whole man, in order to penetrate into it and deal with the sin, alienation, misunderstanding, and darkness that had become entrenched within it. Jesus Christ came among us sharing to the full the poverty of our

only does Mark 13:32 itself indicate that *Son* in the verse means *Son of man*, but in the immediate context of Christ's discourse in Mark 13 (v. 26; cf. v. 34) the Lord refers to Himself as "Son of man." By way of contrast, the phrase *Son of God* does not appear on the lips of the Lord Jesus anywhere in Mark 13—or in the gospel of Mark—or in the synoptic gospels. As a real human boy growing up, "Jesus increased in wisdom" (Luke 2:52); He learned things that He had not known before. This was essential to His true humanity; if Christ was, in the words of the classic Trinitarian language of the creed of Chalcedon, "consubstantial also with us as to his manhood," He could not be omniscient in His human nature; a genuinely human brain simply could not contain the almost infinite information found in the totality of creation.[87] The Arian objection, "Jesus is not God, because He is not omniscient," which appears strong, is really the argument, "Jesus is not God, because He is truly man," which is very deficient. If the Lord Jesus had a "human" nature that was omniscient, He would not really have been human—and the classic Trinitarian doctrine of Christ would have been false.

Just as the affirmation of limited knowledge in Mark 13:32 relates to the Savior's

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ignorance, without ceasing to embody in himself all the riches of the wisdom of God, in order that we might be redeemed from our ignorance through sharing in his wisdom. Redemption was not accomplished just by a downright *fiat* of God, nor by a mere divine 'nod,' but by an intimate, personal movement of the Son of God himself into the heart of our creaturely being and into the inner recesses of the human mind, in order to save us from within and from below, and to restore us to undamaged relations of being and mind with himself. Thus throughout his earthly life Christ laid hold of our alienated and darkened human mind in order to heal and enlighten it in himself. In and through him our ignorant minds are brought into such a relation to God that they may be filled with divine light and truth. The redemption of man's ignorance has an essential place in the atoning exchange, for everything that we actually are in our lost and benighted condition has been taken up by Christ into himself in order that he might bring it under the saving, renewing, sanctifying, and enlightening power of his own reality as the incarnate wisdom and light of God."

[87] The comment of Lightfoot is worthy of consideration: "Christ calls himself the Son, as Messiah. Now the Messiah, as such, was the Father's servant (Isaiah 42:1), sent and deputed by him, and as such a one he refers himself often to his Father's will and command, and owns he *did nothing of himself* (John 5:19); in like manner he might be said to *know nothing of himself*. The revelation of Jesus Christ was what *God gave unto him*, Revelation 1:1. [Lightfoot] thinks, therefore, that we are to distinguish between those excellencies and perfections of [Christ], which resulted from the personal union between the divine and human nature, and those which flowed from the anointing of the Spirit; from the former flowed the infinite dignity of his person, and his perfect freedom from all sin; but from the latter flowed his power of working miracles, and his foreknowledge of things to come. What therefore (saith [Lightfoot]) was to be revealed by [Christ] to his church, he was pleased to take, not from the union of the human nature with the divine, but from the revelation of the Spirit, by which he yet knew not this, but *the Father* only knows it; that is, God only, the Deity; for (as Archbishop Tillotson explains it) it is not used here *personally*, in distinction from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but as the Father is, *Fons et Principium Deitatis--The Fountain of Deity*." (*An Exposition of the Old and New Testament* by Matthew Henry, orig. pub. 1721, note on Mark 13:28-37; elec. acc.).

human nature, so Hebrews 5:8 relates to the Lord Jesus as High Priest,[88] an office impossible apart from His genuine humanity. Like the Aaronic high priests, the Lord Jesus was "taken from among men" (Hebrews 5:1). While unlike those priests in that He never sinned, He was "compassed with infirmity" (5:2) in that He was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities; [being] in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin" (4:15). Since "no man" takes this honor to himself, He was called of God to the office (5:4-6). He was "flesh," and in the garden of Gethsemane offered up "strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death" (v. 7; cf. Luke 22:44). It was as man that the Lord Jesus "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (v. 8), and, by means of His death, resurrection, and ascension, when He as man "passed into the heavens" (4:14) became the "perfect" (5:9; cf. 2:10) Redeemer and High Priest (v. 10). The affirmation of Hebrews 5:8 that the Lord Jesus "learned" does not relate to His Divine nature at all, or somehow prove that He did not have one—it is an affirmation about His human nature.[89] Furthermore, even in relation to His humanity, Hebrews 5:8 is not an affirmation of limited cognition of facts. The verb "learned," from *manthano,* here signifies learning "less through instruction than through experience or practice" (BDAG), that is, to "learn from experience" (LN). It is not that Christ did not know how to obey and then finally figured it out,[90] but that He experienced obedience as He submitted Himself to the Father even to the death of the cross. This submission was necessary for Him to become the perfect High Priest and the "author of eternal salvation" (v. 9). Christ's obedience is imputed to the elect, so that the Father reckons them as having perfectly obeyed on account of their Substitute; His obedience was not for Himself, but for us. For an Arian to quote Hebrews 5:8 and ask, "Can we imagine that God had to

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88 The conclusion of the sentence which includes Hebrews 5:8 makes this clear: "Called of God an high priest after the order of [the man] Melchisedec" (v. 10; cf. v. 6).

89 The glorious combination of humanity and Deity in the Person of Christ in the amazing mystery of the incarnation is seen in the fact that He was by nature God's Son (ὢν υἱός), and therefore *homoousios* with the Father (cf. Hebrews 1:1-12; 5:5), yet He, as man, had to learn obedience. The "though" and "yet" of Hebrews 5:8 emphasize this amazing contrast. These words are hardly necessary were the Lord Jesus not God (cf. also v. 9; only Jehovah is the "author of eternal salvation"); what would be so amazing about a creature having to learn things?

90 When the Unitarian argument on Hebrews 5:8 is carefully analyzed, no Bible-affirming Arian would actually want to make it. To gain a denial of the Savior's omniscience, would they really dare to say that He did not know how to obey for a period of time? Or would they really say that the sinless Savior was disobedient, and then became obedient? If not, Hebrews 5:8 is removed from the Arian arsenal.

learn anything? No, but Jesus did, for he did not know everything that God knew," as if Hebrews 5:8 had to do with the Savior, in the garden of Gethsemane, discovering facts about how to obey God that He did not know before, disasterously misinterprets the verse.

For a Unitarian to quote Revelation 1:1 and ask, "If Jesus himself were part of a Godhead, would he have to be given a revelation[?] . . . Surely he would have known all about it, for God knew," is an even worse corruption of Scripture than the gross mistake of utilizing Hebrews 5:8 to argue that the Son of God has no Divine nature. Unfortunately for the Arian, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," which refers to the giving of the entire book of Revelation, obviously denotes Christ revealing Himself to man, by the sovereign ordination of the Father to Him as mediator ("which God gave unto him"),[91] not Christ having knowledge revealed to Him.[92] The very next clauses manifest the true interpretation of the verse. It is a revelation from Jesus Christ (and also about Jesus Christ)[93] to His servants of "things to come" (John 16:12-13), specifically given to the apostle John by means of an angel. To twist Revelation 1:1 into an affirmation that the Son of God did not know certain things, and so He needed to get a revelation about

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91 Consider Lightfoot's comment on this verse in footnote #86.

92 A comparison to other instances of a "revelation of" (ἀποκάλυψις followed by a genitive) is helpful. In Romans 2:5, the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God" does not mean that righteous judgment is learning something or having something revealed to it. In Romans 8:19, the "manifestation/revelation of the sons of God" is not the sons of God learning something, but being revealed. In Romans 16:25, "the revelation of the mystery" is not a mystery made into a personal being that somehow learns something. In Galatians 1:12, Paul had the gospel revealed to him from Jesus Christ; the "revelation of Jesus Christ" was not the Savior discovering what the gospel was. In 1 Peter 1:13, "the revelation of Jesus Christ" refers to Christ being revealed, not to Christ learning something by revelation. See also Luke 2:32; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7; 4:13 for the only remaining related constructions in the New Testament. Revelation 1:1 does not refer to Christ having facts revealed to Him.

However, even if Revelation 1:1 did affirm that the Father gave revelation to Christ, no denial of His Deity would follow; it would be an affirmation that the Savior has a genuine human nature; the prophetic office of Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; John 3:34; Acts 3:22; 7:37), part of His mediation between God and man, as the God-man, the *Theanthropos,* (1 Timothy 2:5), involves Him speaking the Word from God to man.

93 Whether the construction is a subjective or objective genitive (or even plenary; cf. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics,* Daniel Wallace (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), pg. 120-121) makes no difference for the question of the validity of the Arian argument; neither view permits the idea that the verse refers to Jesus Christ receiving a revelation, or having things revealed to Him by the Father. The following genitives suggest that "the revelation from Jesus Christ" is the fundamental sense, although there is no need to exclude the fact that it is also a revelation about Him, for the Lord Jesus is the one who shows things to His servants through His angel and the apostle John, and in v. 2 "word of God," "testimony of Jesus Christ," and "of all things" makes the verse look like a subjective genitive.

them, is a frightful misinterpretation.

The Son of God, having become flesh, is now one divine Person with two distinct natures, so that He is fully God and fully man. Since He is true God, He is all knowing, and Scripure testifies to His omniscience; since He is true man, His humanity is necessarily limited in knowledge, and Scripture testifies to this important aspect of His identification with the sons of Adam. Unitarians fail badly when they argue against Christ's Deity because of verses proving the Trinitarian truth that, considered as true man, the Lord Jesus is limited in knowledge.

In John 14:28, the Lord Jesus said, "my[94] Father is greater than I." Commenting on this, Unitarians argue:

> The Bible's position is clear. Not only is Almighty God, Jehovah, a personality separate from Jesus but He is at all times his superior. Jesus is always presented as separate and lesser, a humble servant of God. . . . And this is why Jesus himself said: "The Father is greater than I." The fact is that Jesus is not God and never claimed to be.[95]

Does John 14:28 establish an ontological[96] subordination,[97] an inferiority of being,[98] of the Son of God to the Father? It cannot do so, because other texts affirm that the Son is "equal with God" (Philippians 2:6; John 5:18), one worthy of equal honor to the Father

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94 ὁ πατήρ μου μείζων μού ἐστι. It should be noted that the textual corruption that removes the μου is supported by a tiny fraction of MSS, while thousands of MSS, 98% of the evidence (including ℵ), supports the Received Text. The μου is a reference to the Son's eternal ontic relation to the Father, by which He possesses the entire Divine nature, even within this attempted proof-text for the Arian heresy.

95 *Should You Believe In the Trinity?* section "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?" pg. 20.

96 See footnotes #24, 26 for the definition of ontology.

97 Arians could also attempt to use John 10:29 to prove ontological subordination in the Son. However, the verse contrasts the Father with created beings. An inequality in nature or contrast between the Father as Creator and the Son as (alleged) creature is not in view at all. Indeed, Christ affirms in v. 28 that no one has the power to pluck the elect from His hand, just as v. 29 affirms that no one has the power to pluck them from His Father's hand, and 10:30 affirms the unity of essence of the Father and the Son.

98 The *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* on John 14:28 comments on this passage, "These words, which Arians and Socinians perpetually quote as triumphant evidence against the proper Divinity of Christ, really yield no intelligible sense on their principles. Were [merely] a holy *man* on his deathbed, beholding his friends in tears at the prospect of losing him, to say, 'Ye ought rather to joy than weep for me, and would if ye really loved me,' the speech would be quite natural. But if they should ask him, *why* joy at his departure was more suitable than sorrow, would they not start back with astonishment, if not horror, were he to reply, '*Because my Father is greater than I?*' Does not this strange speech from Christ's lips, then, *presuppose such teaching* on His part as would make it extremely difficult for them to think He could gain anything by departing to the Father, and make it necessary for Him to say expressly that there was a sense in which He *could* do so? Thus, this startling explanation seems plainly intended to correct such misapprehensions as might arise from the emphatic and reiterated teaching of *His proper equality with the Father*--as if so Exalted a Person were incapable of any accession by transition from this dismal scene to a cloudless heaven and the very bosom of the Father—and by assuring them that this was *not* the case, to make them forget their own sorrow in His approaching joy.

(John 5:23), so that the Lord Jesus said, "I and *my* Father are one" (John 10:30), even as "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost . . . are one" (1 John 5:7). John 14:28 refers to the human nature of the Messiah, particularly to Christ in His pre-glorified state on earth as a servant. It fits perfectly with the Trinitarian faith that the Son is "equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood."[99] The verse itself demonstrates that the human nature of the Redeemer is in view; as the Son of man, who is limited in space to His completely human body, the Lord must "go away" and "go unto the Father" in heaven after His resurrection and ascension, and then "come again" at His second advent. As man, the Son is inferior to Father.[100] The Father who

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[99] Compare the remarks of Augustine in his *On the Trinity* (1:7):

But because, on account of the incarnation of the Word of God for the working out of our salvation . . . the man Christ Jesus might be the Mediator between God and men, many things are so said in the sacred books as to signify, or even most expressly declare, the Father to be greater than the Son; men have erred through a want of careful examination or consideration of the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and have endeavored to transfer those things which are said of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, to that substance of His which was eternal before the incarnation, and is eternal. They say, for instance, that the Son is less than the Father, because it is written that the Lord Himself said, "My Father is greater than I." But the truth shows that after the same sense the Son is less also than Himself; for how was He not made less also than Himself, who "emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant?" For He did not so take the form of a servant as that He should lose the form of God, in which He was equal to the Father. If, then, the form of a servant was so taken that the form of God was not lost, since both in the form of a servant and in the form of God He Himself is the same only-begotten Son of God the Father, in the form of God equal to the Father, in the form of a servant the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; is there any one who cannot perceive that He Himself in the form of God is also greater than Himself, but yet likewise in the form of a servant less than Himself? And not, therefore, without cause the Scripture says both the one and the other, both that the Son is equal to the Father, and that the Father is greater than the Son. For there is no confusion when the former is understood as on account of the form of God, and the latter as on account of the form of a servant. And, in truth, this rule for clearing the question through all the sacred Scriptures is set forth in one chapter of an epistle of the Apostle Paul, where this distinction is commended to us plainly enough. For he says, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and was found in fashion as a man." The Son of God, then, is equal to God the Father in nature, but less in "fashion." For in the form of a servant which He took He is less than the Father; but in the form of God, in which also He was before He took the form of a servant, He is equal to the Father. In the form of God He is the Word, "by whom all things are made;" but in the form of a servant He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." In like manner, in the form of God He made man; in the form of a servant He was made man. For if the Father alone had made man without the Son, it would not have been written, "Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Therefore, because the form of God took the form of a servant, both is God and both is man; but both God, on account of God who takes; and both man, on account of man who is taken. For neither by that taking is the one of them turned and changed into the other: the Divinity is not changed into the creature, so as to cease to be Divinity; nor the creature into Divinity, so as to cease to be creature.

[100] Even if "my Father is greater than I" referred to the Divine Person of the Son, rather than to His human nature (which the phrase does not), it would not require that the Son is lesser in nature than the Father. While the word "greater" (μείζων) can distinguish between the Creator and His creation (1 John 4:4), the word is also used to compare humans who are perfectly equal in nature but with different positions (Matthew 23:11; Luke 22:26-27), plants that are equally plants but different in size (Matthew 13:32), and

sent Him is greater in authority (John 13:16; John 14:24). The incarnate Son was on earth when He spoke John 14:28, and His Divine glory was veiled (Philippians 2:7-8) until the time of the ascension (John 14:28b,f; 17:5); the Father endured no such limitation.[101] Indeed, the Son of man was lower even than the angels during His earthly ministry (Hebrews 2:7, 9). In contrast, as the eternal Son of God, consubstantial with and equal to the Father, the Lord Jesus is omnipresent, and so does not "go" to the Father or "come" from Him: He is in heaven even while on earth (John 3:13), with no need, therefore, to ascend or descend; He "filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23); He is in the midst of two or three gathered in His name all over the world (Matthew 18:20; 28:20; Mark 16:20); He dwells within the hearts of all His people everywhere and they are all in Him (John 6:56; 14:20, 23; 17:23; Romans 8:10; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17;

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an elder or "greater" son in comparison to his equally human brother (Romans 9:12). Even if the word did refer (which it does not) to the Divine Son's place in the Godhead, rather than His incarnate humanity in the form of a servant during His earthly ministry, the distinction established would be one of rank or authority, rather than a differentiation in being; the Son would still be, in His nature, equally God with the Father, but He would have a different role, an economic (but not ontological) subordination in the Trinity (See footnotes #24, 26). Both a servant and he who sends a servant are equally human, although they have different positions or ranks (John 13:16); the Son of God, who takes the nature and office of a servant to Himself in the incarnation, and is sent by the Father for the work of redemption, is lesser in His assumed office, although equal to the Father in His Divine Person. Indeed, the Lord uses μείζων in the same discourse that contains John 14:28 to refer to distinctions of role and authority between those equal in nature (John 15:20). Unitarians must wrest John 14:28 from its context if they would gain support for their error from it.

[101] John Gill, fitly commenting on "My Father is greater than I," states, "not with respect to the divine nature, which is common to them both, and in which they are both one; and the Son is equal to the Father, having the self-same essence, perfections, and glory: nor with respect to personality, the Son is equally a divine person, as the Father is, though the one is usually called the first, the other the second person; yet this priority is not of nature, which is the same in both; nor of time, for the one did not exist before the other; nor of causality, for the Father is not the cause of the Son's existence; nor of dignity, for the one has not any excellency which is wanting in the other; but of order and manner of operation: these words are to be understood, either with regard to the human nature, in which he was going to the Father, this was prepared for him by the Father, and strengthened and supported by him, and in which he was made a little lower than the angels, and consequently must be in it inferior to his Father; or with regard to his office as Mediator, in which he was the Father's servant, was set up and sent forth by him, acted under him, and in obedience to him, and was now returning to give an account of his work and service; or rather with regard to his present state, which was a state of humiliation: he was attended with many griefs and sorrows, and exposed to many enemies, and about to undergo an accursed death; whereas his Father was in the most perfect happiness and glory, and so in this sense 'greater.' That is, more blessed and glorious than he; for this is not a comparison of natures, or of persons, but of states and conditions: now he was going to the Father to partake of the same happiness and glory with him, to be glorified with himself, with the same glory he had with him before the foundation of the world; wherefore on this account, his disciples ought to have rejoiced, and not have mourned."

Colossians 1:27; Revelation 3:20), and the saints, all over the world, are "in Christ."[102] When Christ spoke the words of John 14:28, as the Son of man He was on earth before the disciples, soon to die, rise, and ascend to heaven; as the eternal Son of God He was and perpetually is[103] "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18). Indeed, two affirmations of the omnipresence of the Person of the Son (John 14:20, 23; 15:2-7)[104] bracket the statement in John 14:28 about the Lord Jesus' human nature, its limitations in space (14:28, 31) and subjection to the Father (14:28). Unitarianism gains nothing with John 14:28.

In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul stated, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God." Commenting on this, Unitarians argue:

> Almighty God, Jehovah, [is] a personality separate from Jesus [and] is at all times his superior. Jesus is always presented as separate and lesser, a humble servant of God. That is why the Bible plainly says that "the head of the Christ is God" in the same way that "the head of every man is the Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:3).[105]

However, the phrase, "the head of Christ is God" speaks of the humanity of the Lord Jesus, not His Divine nature; it does not contradict the testimonies recorded elsewhere in 1 Corinthians to the Lord Jesus' Deity (1:2; 8:6; 10:4, 9; cf. Exodus 17:5-6; 17:2, 7; Numbers 21:5-6; Deuteronomy 6:16). 1 Corinthians speaks about Christ as the perfect man, as the second Adam and the representative of redeemed humanity (1 Corinthians 15:20-22; cf. Ephesians 4:13, 15). As man, the head of the household, represents woman

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[102] Romans 8:1; 12:5; 16:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 15:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 12:2; Galatians 1:22; 3:28; 6:15; Ephesians 1:1, 3, 10; 2:6, 13; Philippians 1:1; 4:21; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 4:16; 2 Timothy 1:9; 3:12; Philemon 23; 1 Peter 5:14; etc.

[103] Note the only begotten Son "is" in the bosom of the Father in John 1:18; He is perpetually there as a state of being; ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός, ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός.

[104] "At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me [requires Christ's omnipresence], and I in you [also omnipresence]. . . . Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him [impossible unless both the Father and Son are omnipresent] . . . Every branch in me [omnipresence] that beareth not fruit . . . Abide in me, and I in you [omnipresence]. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me [omnipresence]. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him [omnipresence] the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing [this would be a big problem if the presence of Christ's human body was required!]. If a man abide not in me [omnipresence], he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me [omnipresence], and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

[105] *Should You Believe In The Trinity?* section, "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?" pg. 20.

in Scripture, as man is the generic term for the human race,[106] and even as the first Adam represented his wife in Genesis, so does the second Adam represent His people. Identified with the perfect man, the Lord Jesus, the people of God are dead with Christ (Colossians 2:20; 3:3), buried with Christ (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), and risen with Christ (Ephesians 2:7; Colossians 3:1). The Messiah, the perfect Man, is the head of all other men (1 Corinthians 11:3b) and mediates the rule of God to man, bringing all those who are in Him underneath the rule of God, even as He is underneath that rule (1 Corinthians 11:3d). The affirmation of the full humanity of Christ found in 1 Corinthians 11:3 by no means denies His full Deity.

Furthermore, even if the headship spoken of had reference to the Son considered in His preincarnate state as God (which it does not), it would not establish an ontological subordination, but an economic differentiation in roles. The verse itself indicates that "the head of the woman is the man" (11:3c), and men are to have authority over women in the home (Ephesians 5:23), in the church (1 Timothy 2:11-3:5), and in the state (Isaiah 3:12), but both men and women are entirely equal as humans—both share in an identical human nature (Galatians 3:28). A subordination of role assumed by the Son to the Father in the work of redemption would not deny an equality of nature between them. This recognition is consistent with the use of the Greek word "head," *kephale,* elsewhere in Scripture and related contemporary literature.[107] Even if one denied the fact that the headship by God of Christ in 1 Corinthians 11:3 pertained to the Messiah as man, the Arian conclusion that the Son of God does not share the same Divine nature, but is ontologically inferior to the Father as a created being, would not follow. This verse does not help Unitarians at all.

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106 *Man*, not *woman,* is the generic term for a person, and the masculine *he,* not the feminine *she,* is used for mixed and unidentified groups in Biblical Hebrew and Greek, and even in English grammar.

107 In addition to 1 Corinthians 11:3c, the word κεφαλή or "head" is used in the New Testament of items equal or identical in nature, but of different authority or weight, in Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7 (cf. Psalm 118:22); each passage referencing stones that are entirely equal as rocks, but one is the "head" stone (representing Christ as the head of mankind, although sharing an identical and equal human nature). The living stones of the spiritual temple, the church, are also equal in nature to the human Messiah, the head stone (Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:5). In the LXX (cf. the Hebrew OT), κεφαλή is used for men equal in nature but differing in authority in Deuteronomy 28:13, 44; Judges 11:8, 9, 11, 13; Psalm 18:43; Daniel 2:38. In the apostolic patristic writings, a sense of equality of nature but difference in role for κεφαλή appears in 1 Clement 37:5 (a literal head is equally part of a body with all the rest); Barnabas 6:4 (the cornerstone metaphor spoken of in the NT); Shepherd 66:3 (the husband and his family are equally human).

1 Corinthians 15:28 reads, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Commenting on this verse, Unitarians argue:

> After his resurrection, [Jesus] continues to be in a subordinate, secondary position. . . . In the everlasting future in heaven, Jesus will continue to be a separate subordinate servant of God. . . . Jesus never claimed to be God.[108]

Does 1 Corinthians 15:28 deny that the Son is one in essence with the Father and prove that He has no Divine nature? Does the subjection mentioned in the verse prove that He is merely a creature, infinitely inferior in being, from eternity past to eternity future, to the Father—as is true of necessity for all of creation when contrasted to the Creator? Apart from the fact that such an affirmation would contradict vast numbers of passages of Scripture, it would be hard to see the contextual significance of such an affirmation in 1 Corinthians 15, with its emphasis upon the resurrection from the dead. Furthermore, if the verse speaks of a subordination of being, why is it that only when "all things shall be subdued unto him [Christ]" that "then shall the Son also himself be subject"? Why the "then" in the verse? If the apostle Paul wished to teach Unitarianism in this verse, how could he declare that only at this future period of time, only "then" in the eternal state, will the Son be subject? Is the Son equal to the Father now, but "then" He will no longer be equal? Would it not be the strangest of affirmations to declare that, at this present time, a part of creation, Christ, is equal in nature to his Creator, God, but in the future this created being will be inferior in his essence? If Arians wish to use 1 Corinthians 15:28 is to prove an ontological subordination of the Son to the Father, they would need to believe that the essence of the Son changes, so that He currently has an equal and unsubordinated Divine nature, but He will somehow surrender that nature in the future for one that is unequal and subject. Furthermore, if the Son is no longer to be Ruler of all, why do many passages of Scripture affirm that He "shall reign . . . for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end . . . of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end . . . upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. . . . All people, nations, and languages, [will] serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed. . . . the everlasting kingdom [belongs to] our Lord and

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[108] Pg. 19-20, *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section, "Is God Always Superior to Jesus?"

Saviour Jesus Christ. . . . Christ . . . shall reign for ever and ever . . . Unto the Son [the Father] *saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever" (Luke 1:33; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7:14; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 11:15; Hebrews 1:8)?[109] Ontology simply does not fit the sense of 1 Corinthians 15:28 at all; the subordination is of necessity one of role or office, an economic subordination pertaining to the Son as the Mediator. The Arian view of 1 Corinthians 15:28 contradicts the rest of the Bible and does not make sense of the verse itself in context. This should be expected, because it differs radically from the intention of the apostle who penned it, and of the Holy Spirit who gave the verse by inspiration.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28[110] deals with the mediatorial kingdom[111] of Christ, a

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[109] It is true that the saints will also reign for ever (Daniel 7:18; Revelation 22:5), but this sort of patently subordinate authority cannot be compared with the manner of the Son's kingship as Jehovah from eternity past to eternity future; it is utterly contrary to Scripture to compare the subordinate reign of the saints *within* the kingdom of God to the sovereign rule *over* the kingdom of "the Son" of whom it is said, "Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8).

[110] Wilber Wallis ("The Problem of an Intermediate Kingdom in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 18:4 (Fall 1975) p. 242) notes a chiastic structure in v. 24-28:

The end—24a
Kingdom delivered over to Father—24b
All enemies destroyed—24c
All enemies put underfoot—25 (Ps. 110:1)
Last enemy destroyed—26
All things subjected—27a (Ps. 8:6)
All things completely and finally subjected (hypotetaktai)—27b
All things subjected—28a
Son made subject—28b
"That God may be all in a11"—28c

[111] "The mediatorial kingdom may be defined . . . as the rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God; a rule which has especial reference to the human race (although it finally embraces the universe); and its mediatorial ruler is always a member of the human race" ("The Greatness of the Kingdom," Part I, Alva J. McClain, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 112:445 (Jan 1955) p. 18). In the eternal state, "When the last enemy is put down by our Lord as the mediatorial king, when even death itself is abolished and complete harmony is established, then the purpose of his mediatorial kingdom will have been fulfilled. Then the Son will deliver up his kingdom to God the Father, to be merged into the eternal kingdom, thus being perpetuated forever, but no longer as a separate entity (1 Cor 15:24–28). This does not mean the end of the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ. He only ceases to reign as the mediatorial King in history. But as the only begotten Son, very God of very God, He shares with the other Persons of the Triune God the throne of the eternal kingdom. In that final and eternal city of God, center of a redeemed new heaven and earth, there is but *one* throne. It is called. 'the throne of *God* and of the *Lamb*' (Rev 22:3–5)" ("The Greatness of the Kingdom, Part IV: The Mediatorial Kingdom from the Acts Period to the Eternal State," McClain, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 112:448 (Oct 55) p. 310]. The four parts of McClain's series on the Kingdom in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (12:445 (Jan 55) p. 11-27; 112:446 (Apr 55) p. 107-124; 112:447 (Jul 55) p. 209-224; 112:448 (Oct 55) p. 304-311) are very helpful in understanding the concept of the mediatorial kingdom and its distinction from the eternal kingdom of God.

rulership that concerns the Son as the God-man or *Theanthropos*,[112] which He fully assumed at His ascension, and which will have its manner of administration altered markedly[113] at the consumation of time spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. The passage refers of necessity to the mediatorial kingdom, not the universal kingdom of God, because v. 24 indicates that the reign in question is not in the hands of the Father—God never ceases to reign in His universal kingdom. The context of the passage strongly emphasizes the humanity of Christ; He died and rose again in His human nature, (v. 20); He is the second Adam, and the salvation of the elect requires that the Lord Jesus is as equally "man" as he who sinned in the Garden of Eden (v. 21-22); He is the head and representative of redeemed mankind (v. 23); He is the human Messiah (v. 24-26), who, as "man . . . and the son of man," has been given dominion over the creation (v. 27; Psalm 8:6, 4), and who mediates the rule of God over all the universe and puts "all things under his feet" (v. 25; Psalm 8:6-8) until the time when all evil is finally and utterly destroyed and the eternal state commences (v. 28).[114] As God, the Son reigns

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112 The "messianic or mediatorial kingdom . . . belongs to Christ, not as the Logos, but as the Son of Man, the *Theanthropos;* God manifest in the flesh. . . . Viewed as extending over all creatures, it is a kingdom of power, which, according to 1 Corinthians 15:24, he shall deliver up to God even the Father, when his mediatorial work is accomplished" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology,* 4:4:4:5, 7 (sec. "The Kingdom of Heaven" in "The Concomitants of the Second Advent" elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

113 "As eternal Son, the 2nd person doubtless shares forever, the natural and infinite dominion of the Godhead. But this Mediatorial kingdom is conferred and economical, exercised not merely in His divine nature, but by Him as *Theanthropos.* . . . the passage from 1 Corinthians 15:24 . . . [indicates] a striking change will then take place in the method of the mediatorial kingdom . . . it will consist largely in this, that Christ's power over the universe . . . will be returned to the [Triune] Godhead. But the restoration of the [saints] to the Father, as an accomplished enterprise, is to be received, not as implying a severance of Christ's headship, but as a surrendering of Himself along with it, body and head, as an aggregate. Let 1 Corinthians 3:23 be compared. . . . [T]he dominion of the God-man over wicked men and angels and inanimate nature is resorted to the Godhead, so that it may again be "all in all." (*Dabney, Systematic and Polemic Theology,* Lecture 45, "Christ's Humiliation and Exaltation," elec. acc. *Christian Library Series,* vol. 17, AGES Software).

114 John Darby (*Synopsis of the Books of the Bible,* part 2; the New Testament; comments on 1 Corinthians, pgs. 46-49 (598ff); elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 15: Classic Commentary Collection,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006) comments:

"When He has put all His enemies under His feet, and has given back the kingdom to His Father (for it is never taken from Him, nor given to another, as happens with human kingdoms), then the Son Himself is subject to Him who has put all things under Him, in order that God may be all in all. The reader should observe, that it is the counsels of God with regard to the government of all things which is here spoken of, and not His nature; and moreover it is the Son, as man, of whom these things are said. This is not an arbitrary explanation: the passage is from Psalm 8, the subject of which is the exaltation of man to the position of head of all things, God putting all things under His feet. Nothing, says the apostle, is excepted (Hebrews 2:8) save, as he adds here, that He is necessarily excepted who put all things under Him. When the man Christ, the Son of God, has in fact accomplished this subjugation, He gives back to

unchangeably from eternity past to eternity future (Hebrews 1:8) in perfect equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit; as the incarnate Mediator He was given a special rulership by God the Father (Psalm 110:1), but He will remain eternally subordinate[115] to

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God the universal power which had been committed to Him, and the mediatorial kingdom, which He held as man, ceases. He is again subject, as He was on earth. He does not cease to be one with the Father, even as He was so while living in humiliation on the earth, although saying at the same time "Before Abraham was, I am." But the mediatorial government of man has disappeared — is absorbed in the supremacy of God, to which there is no longer any opposition. Christ will take His eternal place, a Man, the Head of the whole redeemed family, being at the same time God blessed for ever, one with the Father. In Psalm 2 we see the Son of God, as born on earth, King in Zion, rejected when He presented Himself on earth; in Psalm 8 the result of His rejection, exalted as Son of man at the head of all that the hand of God has made. Then we find Him here laying down this conferred authority, and resuming the normal position of humanity, namely, that of subjection to Him who has put all things under Him; but through it all, never changing His divine nature, nor — save so far as exchanging humiliation for glory — His human nature either. But God is now all in all, and the special government of man in the Person of Jesus — a government with which the assembly is associated (see Ephesians 1:20-23, which is a quotation from the same Psalm) is merged in the immutable supremacy of God, the final and normal relationship of God with His creature. We shall find the Lamb omitted in that which is said in Revelation 21:1-8, speaking of this same period.

Thus we find in this passage [1 Corinthians 15] resurrection by man — death having entered by man; the relationship of the saints with Jesus, the source and the power of life, the consequence being His resurrection, and theirs at His coming; power over all things committed to Christ, the risen Man; afterwards the kingdom given back to God the Father, the tabernacle of God with men, and the man Christ, the second Adam, eternally a man subject to the Supreme — this last a truth of infinite value to us (the resurrection of the wicked, though supposed in the resurrection brought in by Christ, not being the direct subject of the chapter)."

[115] Then "*shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him;* which must be interpreted and understood with great care and caution; not in the Sabellian sense, of refunding of the characters of the Son, and so of the Father unto God; when they suppose these characters, which they imagine to be merely nominal, bare names, will be no more, and God shall be all; but as the Father will always remain a father, so the Son will remain a son; for, as the Son of the Highest, he will reign over his people for ever, and he the Son, as a priest, is consecrated for ever more: nor in the Eutychian sense, of the change of the human nature into the divine, in which they fancy it will be swallowed up, and God will be all; but Christ will always continue as a man; he went up to heaven as such, and he will return as a man, and be visible to all in the human nature, and in that be the object of the wonderful vision of the saints to all eternity: nor in the Arian sense, according to the divine nature, as if he was in that inferior to the Father, when he is equal with him, has all the perfections he has, and the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; it is much better and safer to understand it as it commonly is of him, as man; though in this sense, he was always subject to his Father, ever since he was incarnate, whereas this seems to respect something peculiar at this time . . . it is best, therefore to understand it of the Son's giving up the account of his mediatorial kingdom and concerns to his Father; when it will appear that he has in the whole of his conduct and administration been subject to him; that he has in all things acted in his name, done all by his power, and to his honour and glory; and now having accomplished all he undertook and was intrusted with, gives in his account, delivers up his charge, and resigns his office; all which will be plain proofs of his subjection: when I say he will resign or lay aside his office as Mediator, my meaning is not that he will cease to be God-man and Mediator; but that he will cease to administer that office as under God, in the manner he now does: he will be the prophet of the [elect], but he will not teach by his Spirit, and word, and ordinances as now, but will himself be the immediate light of the saints, he will be a priest for ever, the virtue of his sacrifice and intercession will always remain, but he will not plead and intercede as he now does; he will also reign for ever over and among his saints, but his kingdom will not be a vicarious one, or administered as it now is; nor be only in his hands as Mediator, but with God, Father, Son, and Spirit" (John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament,* orig. pub. 1809, comment on 1 Corinthians 15:28).

the One who bestowed this mediatorial kingdom upon Him.[116] The Christ's enemies will be "put down" (v. 24) or "destroyed" (v. 26), because all things must be "subject" or "subdued" to Him, that is, brought into their proper place, orderly arranged in submission to God's government.[117] Perfect harmony and union of redemed man and universe with God cannot take place until the destruction of all enemies; until then the perfect arrangement of the Son under God cannot take place, not because of an unwillingness on the part of the Messiah to be under the Father, but because the realm Christ is to bring in subjection to God is not in perfect order and submission. The Son will forever be in His proper place in God's government; as God, He is equal to the Father and consubstantial with Him; as man, He is consubstantial with humanity, and the one who unites the chosen to God through His redemptive work in human nature; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 demonstrates that this perfect harmony of the resurrected elect with the Triune God through the incarnate Son will be the the blessed state of eternity future.[118] All things

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116 Charles Hodge, in response to the question, "How does the sovereignty of Christ as Mediator differ from his sovereignity as God?" properly answers, "His sovereignty as God is essential to his nature, underived, absolute, eternal, and unchangeable. His sovereignity as mediatorial King is derived, given to him by his father as the reward of his obedience and suffering; it is special, having respect to the salvation of his own people and the administration of the provisions of the covenant of grace [and, as premillenialists recognize, it pertains to His millenial rule]; and it attaches, not to his divine nature as such, but to his person as God-man, occupying the office of Mediator" (*Outlines of Theology,* Chapter 27, "Mediatorial Kingship of Christ," Question 1.).

Similarly, Lewis Sperry Chafer ("Trinitarianism, part 7," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 98:391 (Jul 41) pg. 275), considering the relationship of the Theanthropic Person of Christ to the Father, writes, "On the divine side of His Being, the Christ of God always occupied the exalted place of fellowship with the Father on the ground of equality-notably His High Priestly prayer as recorded in John 17:1–26; and every reference to His Deity implies this equality and oneness. On the human side of His being, that which is inherently the creature's relation to the Creator is expressed to perfection, namely, perfect submission to the Father's will. The complete obedience of Christ to the Father has been made the occasion of doubt as to His equality with the Father. Strong emphasis is needed at this point which enforces the truth that His subservient attitude is altogether the function of His humanity. There was that in His own divine nature which was first *willing* to be the obedient One. He *willingly* left the glory, and that exercise of His volition preceded His incarnation (Heb 10:4–7). In like manner, He will exercise authority in all future ages by the appointment of the Father. He reigns forever and ever, but on the ground of the truth that all authority is committed unto Him of the Father (Matt 28:18; John 5:27; 1 Cor 15:24–28)."

117 Note the analysis of *hupotasso* below.

118 Charles Hodge comments, with excellent insight, on 1 Corinthians 15:28: "When the work of redemption has been accomplished, the dead raised, the judgment held, the enemies of Christ all subdued, then, and not till then, will the Son also himself be subject to him who put all things under him. This passage is evidently parallel with that in v. 24. The subjection of the Son to the Father here means precisely what is there meant by his delivering up the kingdom to God even the Father. The thing done, and the person who does it, are the same. The subjection here spoken of is not predicated of the eternal Logos, the second person of the Trinity, any more than the kingdom spoken of in v. 24 is the dominion which belongs essentially to Christ as God. As there the word *Christ* designates the Theanthropos, so does the word *Son* here designate, not the Logos as such, but the Logos as incarnate. And as the delivery of the kingdom or

royal authority over the universe committed to Christ after his resurrection, is consistent at once with his continued dominion as God over all creatures, and with his continued headship over his people; so is the subjection here spoken of consistent with his eternal equality with the Father. It is not the subjection of the Son as Son, but of the Son as Theanthropos of which the apostle here speaks. The doctrine of the true and proper divinity of our Lord is so clearly revealed in Scripture, and is so inwrought into the faith of his people, that such passages as these, though adduced with so much confidence by the impugners of that doctrine, give believers no more trouble than the ascription of the limitations of our nature to God. When the Bible says that God repents, we know that it is consistent with his immutability; and when it says the Son is subject or inferior to the Father, we know that it is consistent with their equality, as certainly as we know that saying that man is immortal is consistent with saying he is mortal. We know that both of the last-mentioned propositions are true: because mortality is predicated of man in one aspect, and immortality in another aspect. In one sense he is mortal, in another sense he is immortal. In like manner we know that the verbally inconsistent propositions, the Son is subject to the Father, and, the Son is equal with the Father, are both true. In one sense he is subject, in another sense he is equal. The son of a king may be the equal of his father in every attribute of his nature, though officially inferior. So the eternal Son of God may be coequal with the Father, though officially subordinate. What difficulty is there in this? What shade does it cast over the full Godhead of our adorable Redeemer? The subordination, however, here spoken of, is not that of the human nature of Christ separately considered, as when he is said to suffer, or to die, or to be ignorant; but it is the official subordination of the incarnate Son to God as God. The words αὐτός ὁ υἱός, *the Son himself*, here designate, as in so many other places, not the second person of the Trinity as such, but that person as clothed in our nature. And the subjection spoken of, is not of the former, but of the latter, i.e. not of the Son as Son, but of the Son as incarnate; and the subjection itself is official and therefore perfectly consistent with equality of nature.

There is another difficulty connected with this verse which it may be well to notice. According to the Scriptures and the creeds of all the great historical churches . . . the term Son, as applied to Christ, designates his divine nature. It is a term of nature and not of office. He was from eternity the Son of God. Yet it is of the Son that subjection is here predicated. This is urged as an argument against his eternal sonship. The fact, however, is, that the person of Christ may be designated from one nature, when the predicate belongs either to the opposite nature or to the whole person [the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*]. That is, he may be called God when what is said of him is true only of his human nature or of his complex person as God and man; and he may be called man, when what is said is true only of his divine nature. Thus he is called the Son of Man when omnipresence and omniscience are ascribed to him; and he is called God, the Son of God, the Lord of glory when he is said to die. These passages do not prove that the human nature of Christ is every where present; or that his divine nature suffered and died. Neither do such expressions as that in the text prove that the Son as such is inferior to the Father, nor that the term Son is not a scriptural designation of his divine nature. The principle here adverted to is so important, and serves to explain so many passages of Scripture, that it will bear to be often repeated.

That God may be all in all. Before the ascension of Christ, God reigned as God; after that event he reigned and still reigns through the Theanthropos; when the end comes, the Theanthropos will deliver up this administrative kingdom, and God again be all in all. Such is the representation of Scripture, and such seems to be the simple meaning of this passage. When our Lord ascended up on high all power in heaven and earth was given to him. It was given to him then, and therefore not possessed before. He is to retain this delegated power in his character of Mediator, God-man, until his enemies are put under his feet. Then he, the God-man, is to deliver it up. And God as God will reign supreme. The phrase here used, τὰ πάντα . . . ἐν πᾶσιν, *all in all*, depends (as is the case with all similar formulas), for its precise meaning on the connection. . . Paul is speaking simply of the continuance of the mediatorial dominion of Christ over the universe. That dominion was given to him for a specific purpose; when that purpose is accomplished, he will give it up, and God, instead of reigning through Christ, will be recognized as the immediate sovereign of the universe; his co-equal, co-eternal Son, clothed in our nature, being, as the everlasting head of the redeemed, officially subordinate to him. In other words, the whole question, so to speak, is whose hands are to hold the reins of universal dominion. They are now in the hands of Christ; hereafter they are to be in the hands of God as such. The passage does not teach us the design of redemption, but what is to happen when the redemption of God's people is accomplished. Then the Messianic reign is to cease, and God is to rule supreme over a universe reduced to order, the people of God being saved, and the finally impenitent shut

will be in harmony in the eternal state. All redeemed humanity and the redeemed creation (which is under man, and so ultimately under the Man of men, the Messiah, as in Psalm 8) will be subject in He who is Son of God and Son of Man to the one Triune God,[119] who will reign eternally[120] as the "all in all."[121]

This mediatorial rule of Christ as the God-man is explicated elsewhere in Scripture as well. Hebrews 2:5-17 indicates that The Divine-human Messiah will have the world to come put in subjection to Him (v. 5). At this time, the Son of Man is exalted greatly, having received current dominion at His ascension (1 Peter 3:22), especially over the church (Ephesians 1:20-23), and the certain prospect of future absolute rule over all, but all creation it is not at this time completely subjected to Him (v. 6-9; Psalm 8:4-6). Those who are united by faith to the *Theanthropos,* He who assumed a completely human nature to redeem them by His substitutionary death, (v. 16-17) will partake of His glory (v. 10-15), being united to God through Him who is both God and man and made sons of

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up with Satan and his angels in the prison of despair" (*An Exposition of 1 Corinthians,* elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 15: Classic Commentary Collection,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

[119] Note the single throne of God and the Lamb in Revelation 22:3.

[120] "God's original purpose was to manifest His absolute authority and this purpose is realized when Christ unites the earthly theocracy with the eternal kingdom of God. Thus, while Christ's earthly theocratic rule is limited to one thousand years, which is sufficient time to manifest God's perfect theocracy on earth, His reign is eternal" (*Things To Come,* J. Dwight Pentecost. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1965, pgs. 492-493).

[121] *That God may be all in all;* for by God is not meant the Father personally, but God essentially considered, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one true and living God; to whom all the saints will have immediate access, in whose presence they will be, and with whom they shall have uninterrupted fellowship, without the use of such mediums as they now enjoy; all the three divine Persons will have equal power and government in and over all the saints; they will sit upon one and the same throne; there will be no more acting by a delegated power, or a derived authority: God will be all things to all his saints, immediately without the use of means; he will be that to their bodies as meat and clothes are, without the use of them; and all light, glory, and happiness to their souls, without the use of ordinances, or any means; he will then be all perfection and bliss, to all the elect, and in them all, which he now is not; some are dead in trespasses and sins, and under the power of Satan; the number of them in conversion is not yet completed; and, of those that are called many are in a state of imperfection, and have flesh as well as spirit in them; and of those who are fallen asleep in Christ, though their separate spirits are happy with him, yet their bodies lie in the grave, and under the power of corruption and death; but then all being called by grace, and all being raised, and glorified in soul and body, God will be all in all: this phrase expresses both the perfect government of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, over the saints to all eternity, and their perfect happiness in soul and body, the glory of all which will be ascribed to God; and it will be then seen that all that the Father has done in election, in the council and covenant of peace, were all to the glory of his grace; and that all that the Son has done in the salvation of his people, is all to the glory of the divine perfections: and that all that the Spirit of God has wrought in the saints, and all that they have done under his grace and influence, are all to the praise and glory of God, which will in the most perfect manner be given to the eternal Three in One (John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament,* orig. pub. 1809, comment on 1 Corinthians 15:28).

God through Christ, the Captain of their salvation (v. 10). It is a shame that Arians, in ignorance of or hostility to the sublime and glorious beauty of the mediatorial kingdom of the Son as the God-man and the wonderful union the elect enjoy with Him and with the the Triune God through Him, will desecrate 1 Corinthians 15:28 to support their idolatry.

Even if the affirmation of 1 Corinthians 15:28 that "the Son also himself [shall] be subject unto him that put all things under him" referred to the Divine nature of God the Son (which it certainly does not), rather than to Him as the Mediator and God-man, the Arian dogma that the Son is a creature, a part of the created order, and therefore infinitely inferior in nature to His Father, would not be established. The word translated *be subject* in the verse, *hupotasso,* is "a Greek military term meaning 'to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader.' In non-military use, it was 'a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.'"[122] The verb is defined as, in the active voice, "to cause to be in a submissive relationship," and in the passive voice employed in 1 Corinthians 15:28,[123] to "become subject . . . subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey" (BDAG); these considerations suit a reference to an economic subordination of role, rather than an ontological subordination of being, in 1 Corinthians 15:28. The etymological deriviation of the word from the verb *tasso,* "to bring about an order of things by arranging, arrange, put in place" (BDAG), which in combination with *hupo* ("under") gives a sense of "to arrange under," also supports the idea of economic subordination rather than inferiority of being.[124] Conclusively, *hupotasso* is used many times elsewhere in Scripture for a subordination of role, one generally voluntary, of entities not at all inferior in being to those to whom they submit.[125] Even if one granted the invalid Arian assumption that the

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122 *Greek English Lexicon,* Joseph Henry Thayer, elec. acc. in Hamel, Ken, *The Online Bible for Mac,* version 3.0.

123 ὑποταγήσεται.

124 Note the economic subordination in association with ontic equality among humans in Luke 7:8, where the concept of being "under authority" is associated with *hupo* and *tasso:* καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν τασσόμενος, ἔχων ὑπ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ, Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται· καὶ ἄλλῳ, Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται· καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ. Compare also the association of *tasso* and *hupotasso* in Romans 13:1; 1 Corinthians 16:15-16.

125 In Luke 2:51, Christ is "subject" to His earthly parents, but He certainly was not inferior in His being to them—even the most rabid Arian would admit he was superior in His being to Joseph and Mary! The Lord voluntarily assumed a subordinate role. In Luke 10:17, 20 fallen angels are subject to the disciples (admittedly involuntarily), although humans have a nature inferior to angels (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7). In 1 Corinthians 14:34, women are subject in their role to men, although they are equal in nature.

question of the essential nature of the Son was in view in 1 Corinthians 15:28, nothing in the Greek word employed requires the affirmation of the Unitarian dogma of His intrinsic inferiority of being—only a submission in role would be supported. The verse provides no support whatever for Arianism.

Jesus Christ is not just fully God, but also fully Man—this is orthodox Trinitiarian doctrine, a belief that Trinitarians properly recognize is essential to man's salvation. Christ's genuine humanity is clearly proven in Scripture, and is rejoiced in by Trinitarians. Unitarian attempts to deny the Trinity with verses that deal with the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 13:32; Hebrews 5:8; Revelation 1:1; John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28) entirely miss the point.

4.) Miscellaneous Unitarian arguments

Unitarians advance a number of allegedly Biblical arguments that cannot be neatly classified underneath the first three headings. Those that, on the surface, seem the most plausible argue that the Son was the first created being, based on Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14; and Proverbs 8:22. Associated with the argument from Proverbs 8:22 is the Unitarian affirmation that the designation of Christ as the "only-begotten" proves His status as a creature. If these Unitarian arguments fail to establish their doctrine of the Person of Christ, they have no even apparently formidable Biblical attempts left, and their Christological objections to the Trinity are found to be without merit.

Colossians 1:15b calls the Lord Jesus Christ "the firstborn of every creature." Commenting on this, Arians argue:

Similarly, wives are subject to their husbands, although equal in nature (Ephesians 5:22, 24; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, 5). In 1 Corinthians 16:16, submission by believers to Paul's fellowlaborers is enjoined; certainly this is a voluntary submission of role, not an affirmation that those working with Paul were somehow a higher class of being, super-humans that normal men were inferior to. In 1 Peter 5:5, the younger are to submit to those who are older (but identical in nature) to them. Titus 2:9 and 1 Peter 2:18 command servants to be submissive to their equally human masters. In Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Peter 5:5, all believers are to mutually submit to each other—they can hardly all be inferior in nature to one another! A voluntary assumption of a subordinate role is far more naturally the sense of the Son's subjection in 1 Corinthians 15:28 than is an inferiority of being.

Luke 2:51; 10:17, 20; Romans 8:7, 20; 10:3; 13:1, 5; 1 Corinthians 14:32, 34; 15:27-28; 16:16; Ephesians 1:22; 5:21-22, 24; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5, 9; 3:1; Hebrews 2:5, 8; 12:9; James 4:7; 1 Peter 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 22; 5:5; constitute the New Testament appearances of ὑποτάσσω.

> Jesus had an existence in heaven before coming to the earth. But was it as one of the persons in an almighty, eternal triune Godhead? No, for the Bible plainly states that in his prehuman existence, Jesus was a created spirit being, just as angels were spirit beings created by God. Neither the angels nor Jesus had existed before their creation. . . . Having been created by God, Jesus is in a secondary position in time, power, and knowledge. . . . Jesus, in his prehuman existence, was "the first-born of all creation." (Colossians 1:15) . . . Yes, Jesus was created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations.[126]

Is the title "firstborn" for Christ equivalent to "first-created," thereby proving that the first thing the Father created was the Son? Since, immediately after calling the Lord Jesus "firstborn," Paul declares that "by him [the Son of God] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17), one immediately suspects that "firstborn" is no equivalent to "first-created." Paul would hardly in the same sentence affirm that Christ was Himself created, then, in an absolute contradiction, declare that "by him were all things created . . . all things were created by him" (v. 16; cf. John 1:3). Also, since creation exists to please God (Revelation 4:11), unless Jesus Christ is God, all things could not be created "for him" (v. 16), nor could "all" be created "for him" if He was Himself created! Nor could the Son be before all created things (v. 17a), nor could He sustain all creation (v. 17b), nor be distinguished from "all things" (v. 20), if He was Himself a created thing. The phrases immediately following the ascription of the title "firstborn" to Christ make it impossible to contend that the word is a synonym for "first-created."[127] Indeed, the very reason He is firstborn

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126 Pg. 14, "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" in *Should You Believe In the Trinity?*

127 The Watchtower Society, recognizing that Colossians 1:16-20 destroys its doctrine that the Son of God is a creature, brazenly corrupts God's Word in its *New World Translation* by adding the word "other" to the inspired text, so that a Watchtower society member, reading its own "translation" of the "Bible," will read that Christ created all "other" things and is before all "other" things. This is such a blatant corruption that one hesitates to deal with it, lest people who are ignorant of Greek think that there is some chance that it should be taken seriously (nobody who knows Greek would take it seriously). No Greek manuscript in the world has the word "other," and no other Bible version, ancient or modern, has ever been bold enough to corrupt Scripture in this way. As if this did not settle the issue, or rather, this corruption that is so obvious that it is a total non-issue, one notes that "create" (κτίζω) and "all things" (τὰ πάντα) are associated in the New Testament, in addition to Colossians 1:16, only in Ephesians 3:9 and Revelation 4:11, which affirm that "God . . . created all things" and that the "Lord [God] . . . created all things." Does the Watchtower wish to say that God is a created being, who did not create everything, but only all "other" things? Of course, nothing that could reasonably support their corruption appears with *ktidzo* and *panta* in the LXX, the apostolic patristic writers, or anywhere else (cf. LXX Psalm 88:48; Hosea 13:4; Haggai 2:9; Malachi 2:10; Isaiah 45:7; Daniel 4:37; 14:5; 3 Maccabees 2:3; Wisdom 1:14; Sirach 18:1; 23:20; 39:21,

(v. 15) is that He is not created, but the Creator (v. 16-17)![128] Furthermore, the Greek language has a specific word for "first-created" (*protoktistos*);[129] why would Paul use "firstborn" (*prototokos*)[130] instead, if he really wished to convey the idea that the Son was the first creature God made out of nothing?[131] Both the context of Colossians 1:15b, and the word choice itself in the passage, demonstrate the bankrupcy of the the Unitarian argument from "firstborn."

In Israel, "the right of the firstborn"[132] was "a double portion" of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17); the firstborn son had privileges over his siblings. The "firstborn," as "the chief of all [his household's] strength" (Psalm 105:36; 78:51), possessed "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power" (Genesis 49:3). The firstborn son of the monarch inherited the kingdom of Israel (1 Chronicles 3:10ff.; 2 Chronicles 21:3; cf. 2 Kings 3:27), except in the extraordinary situation where God by a specific revelation instructed otherwise (1 Chronicles 3:5; 28:5) and transferred the authority of the firstborn.[133] Scripture employs the word *firstborn* to refer to one who is first in rank, in a position of special authority, exaltation, or blessing, rather than using the word for birth

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29; also Didache 10:3; Shepherd 26:1; 58:2; 59:5; 66:4, etc—note that references such as Sirach 1:4; Shepherd 8:1; 12:1 are unrelated, since they do not have the subject-*ktidzo-ta panta* [direct object] pattern of Colossians 1:16). See footnote #1 for more on the corruption of the *New World Translation*.

128 Note the "for" (ὅτι; "because" or "since") that begins v. 16. He is firstborn because "by him were all things created . . . all things were created by him, and for him."

129 πρωτόκτιστος, "first created," Lidell, H. G. & Scott, R. *Greek-English Lexicon*.

130 πρωτότοκος.

131 "[Based on] πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, Colossians 1:15 . . . the Arians inferred that Christ himself is a κτίσις of God, to wit, the first creature of all. But πρωτότοκος is not equivalent to πρωτόκτιστος or πρωτόπλαστος ["first-formed," cf. Wisdom 7:1; 10:1]: on the contrary, Christ is by this very term distinguished from the creation. . . . A creature cannot possibly be the source of life for all creatures. . . . The text indicates the distinction between the eternal generation of the Son from the essence of the Father, and the temporal creation of the world out of nothing by the Son. Yet there is a difference between μονογενής and πρωτότοκος, which Athanasius himself makes: the former referring to the relation of the Son to the Father, the latter, to his relation to the world" (*History of the Christian Church,* Philip Schaff, 3:9:124).

132 The בְּכֹרָה (cf. Genesis 25:34; 1 Chronicles 5:2), related to the Hebrew word *firstborn,* בְּכוֹר (cf. πρωτοτόκια, *birthright,* Hebrews 12:16, in relation to πρωτότοκος, *firstborn,* and πρωτοτόκευω, "right of the firstborn," Deuteronomy 21:16, LXX). The language of a "right" pertaining to the firstborn itself supports the connection of *firstborn* and privilege. Compare "the firstborn according to his birthright," הַבְּכֹר כִּבְכֹרָתוֹ, (Genesis 43:33).

133 This exception itself illustrates the connection of the firstborn privilege with authority, rather than simply with primogeniture; the order in which children are born is irrevocable, but the authority of the firstborn can be transferred. Of course, in ordinary cases the eldest child also possessed the authority of the firstborn.

order only.[134] The uses of the word outside of the realm of human and animal birth to refer to things that are in a heightened, exalted, or extreme state, rather than the first appearance of such things temporally, supports this fact (Isaiah 14:30; Job 18:30). Further evidence comes from Jacob's receipt of the firstborn position and the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant over his elder brother Esau (Genesis 25:23, 31-34; 27:29, 36-37; Romans 9:11-13), Ephraim's receiving the position of firstborn and the position of one "greater" than the older Manasseh (Genesis 48:14-20; Deuteronomy 33:17), and Joseph's receiving firstborn status over his elder brother Reuben (Genesis 49:3-4, 22-26; cf. 48:5; 1 Chronicles 5:1). 1 Chronicles 26:10 makes the connection between rule and firstborn status explicit: "Hosah, of the children of Merai, had sons; [of which] Simri [was] the chief, (for *though* he was not the firstborn [in time], yet his father made him the chief."[135] Deuteronomy 21:16 indicates that a father practicing polygamy was not to, of his own volition, choose to "make [the son of a preferred wife] firstborn"[136] and so give the favored child greater inheritance rights. A father obviously could not change the physical order in which children were born to make another child the firstborn, but a position, and rights, can be transferred. Also, Jehovah, who is sovereign over all nations (Deuteronomy 4:19; Psalm 22:28; 86:9), had brought great numbers of them into existence for many centuries before He founded Israel (Genesis 10)—nevertheless, He said, "Israel *is* . . . my firstborn" (Exodus 4:22; cf. Jeremiah 31:9), because of the special position and privilege bestowed on her as "a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth" (Deuteronomy 14:2). Such uses provides helpful Biblical background to the designation of the Son of God as "firstborn."[137]

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134 "Examples [of this usage of firstborn as] . . . first rank . . . can also be adduced from the cuneiform documents from Mesopotamia, particularly from Nuzi" ("The Term 'Son of God' in the Light of Old Testament Idiom," S. Herbert Bess, *Grace Journal,* 6:2 (Spring 1965) pg. 20; examples are given in S. Herbert Bess, *Systems of Land Tenure in Ancient Israel* (University of Michigan, 1963), pgs. 26-35.

135 The actual eldest son was not fit to be the chief, either because of his death and the cessation of his line, or for some other reason. Regardless of the reason for Simri's exaltation, the natural connection between rule and firstborn status is clear.

136 וּמֹכֵל לְבַכֵּר

137 Consider also the following usages of πρωτότοκος in the LXX: ἠγάπα αὐτόν ὅτι πρωτότοκος αὐτοῦ ἦν, "he loved him, for he was his first-born," 2 Samuel 13:21; καὶ ἀπεκρίθη ἀνὴρ Ισραηλ τῷ ἀνδρὶ Ιουδα καὶ εἶπεν δέκα χεῖρές μοι ἐν τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ πρωτότοκος ἐγὼ ἢ σύ καί γε ἐν τῷ Δαυιδ εἰμὶ ὑπὲρ σέ καὶ ἵνα τί τοῦτο ὕβρισάς με, "And the men of Israel answered the men of Juda, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we are [lit. I am] firstborn over you, we have also an interest in David above you: and why have ye thus insulted us," 2 Samuel 19:43. Consider also the

The word "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15, rather than teaching that the Son was part of creation, emphasizes His authority over[138] the created order.[139] The term signifies

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references in the apostolic patristic writers: ὅς ἂν μεθοδεύῃ τὰ λόγια τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας καὶ λέγῃ μήτε ἀνάστασιν μήτε κρίσιν, οὗτος πρωτότοκός ἐστι τοῦ σατανᾶ, Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians 7:1; also Επιγινώσκω, ἐπιγινώσκω τὸν πρωτότοκον τοῦ σατανᾶ, Marytrdom of Polycarp 23:3.

[138] The Son is "firstborn of every creature" (πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως) in the sense of "firstborn over every creature/all creation." The genitive "of [every] creature" is a genitive of subordination, specifying "that which is subordinated to or under the dominion of the head noun [here "firstborn"] . . . [for] *of* supply the gloss *over* or something like it that suggests dominion or priority" (pg. 103, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics,* Daniel Wallace). Other examples include Matthew 9:34, "the prince of [over] the devils" (τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων); "King of [over] kings, and Lord of [over] lords" (Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ Κύριος κυρίων); Mark 15:32 (ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ); 2 Corinthians 4:4 (ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου); John 12:31 (ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου), etc. Commenting specifically on Colossians 1:15's πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, Wallace writes, "the firstborn over all creation . . . both due to the lexical field of 'firstborn' including 'preeminent over' (and not just a literal chronological birth order) and the following causal clause ('for [ὅτι] in him all things were created')—which makes little sense if mere chronological order is in view, it is far more likely that this [passage] expresses subordination [of the creation to the firstborn than it is likely that a partitive genitive is in view]. . . . The resultant meaning seems to bea an early confession of Christ's lordship and hence, implicitly, his deity" (pg. 104, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*).

[139] An alternative theologically orthodox view of this passage affirms that Christ is πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως in that He existed before all creatures or creation; any temporal notion in the verse would affirm that the Son existed in the eternity before time, when only God existed, and therefore is Divine. The sovereignty Christ possesses as the *prototokos* would be consequent upon His eternality. Marvin Vincent (*New Testament Word Studies,* comment on Colossians 1:15, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 15: Classic Commentary Collection,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006) is representative: "As *image* points to *revelation,* so *first-born* points to *preexistence*. . . . The true sense is, *born before the creation*. Compare *before all things,* v. 17. This fact of priority implies *sovereignty.* He is exalted above all thrones, etc., and all things are *unto* (εἰς) *Him,* as they are elsewhere declared to be unto God. Compare Psalm 89:27; Hebrews 1:2." Philip Schaff (*History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1, 11:71) writes, "The eternal *pre-existence* of Christ . . . *before the creation* is expressly asserted, Col. 1:15 . . . an existence *before* all creation must be an uncreated, therefore a divine or eternal existence which has no beginning as well as no end. (John carefully distinguishes between the eternal ἦν of the pre-existent Logos, and the temporal ἐγένετο of the incarnate Logos, John 1:1, 14; comp. 8:58. This is not inconsistent with the designation of Christ as "the first-born of all creation," Col. 1:15; for πρωτότοκος is different from πρωτόκτιστος (*first created*), as the Nicene fathers already remarked, in opposition to Arius, who inferred from the passage that Christ was the first *creature* of God and the *creator* of all other creatures. The word first-born corresponds to the Johannean μονογενής, *only-begotten.* 'Both express,' as Lightfoot says ((xi) Com. on Col.) 'the same eternal fact; but while μονογενής states it in itself, πρωτότοκος places it in relation to the universe.' We may also compare the προτόγονος, *first-begotten,* which Philo applies to the Logos, as including the original archetypal idea of the created world. 'The first-born,' used absolutely (πρωτότοκος בְּכוֹר Ps. 89:28), became a recognized title of the Messiah. Moreover, the genitive πάσης κτίσεως is not the partitive, but the comparative genitive: the first-born as compared with, that is, *before,* every creature. So Justin Martyr (πρὸ πάντων τῶν κτισμάτων), Meyer, and Bp. Lightfoot, in loc.; also Weiss, *Bibl. Theol. d. N. T.,* p. 431 (who refutes the opposite view of Usteri, Reuss, and Baur, and says: "*Da* πάσης κρίσεως *jede einzelne Creatur bezeichnet, so kann der Genii. nur comparativ genommen werden, und nur besagen, dass er im Vergleich mit jeden Creatur der Erstgeborne war*"). The words immediately following, John 1:16, 17, exclude the possibility of regarding Christ himself as a creature. Lightfoot, in his masterly Comm. (p. 212 sq.), very fully explains the term as teaching the absolute pre-existence of the Son, his priority to and sovereignty over all creation."

"pertaining to existing superior to all else of the same or related class—'superior to, above all" (LN), or "to having special status associated with a firstborn . . . [derived from] the special status enjoyed by a firstborn son as heir apparent in Israel" (BDAG; cf. Deuteronomy 21:17). Rather than affirming that the Son of God is part of the created order, the title *firstborn* signifies his authority (cf. Romans 8:29; Revelation 1:5) over the entire creation, as the Creator Himself (cf. Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).[140] He is "firstborn . . . that in all *things* he might have the preeminance" (Colossians 1:18). He is worshipped as God because He is the firstborn, the one with absolute authority over all created beings (Hebrews 1:6).

The Messianic prophecy that Christ would be the "firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27) should control our understanding of "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15, as Paul evidently refers to this Old Testament text. Psalm 89:27 indicates that the Messiah would have supreme authority over creation, being exalted above all subordinate rulers, including "the kings of the earth." There is absolutely nothing in the psalm to validate the Unitarian contention that "firstborn" means that the Messiah was the first being God created. On the contrary, Psalm 89:27 validates His Lordship and true

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Whether *prototokos* is considered as a designation of the Son's authority or temporality (or both), it does nothing to establish Unitarianism. If Christ is first-born temporally, He existed before all the creation, and therefore was never created, but possesses the uncaused and eternal self-existence unique to God (Exodus 3:14; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 57:15). If Christ is first-born in authority, Colossians 1:15 cannot in any way assist the Arian in his quest to prove that the Son was created out of nothing. The fact that Christ is distinguished from the created order as the firstborn (v. 15), and the specific and repeated declarations that He created absolutely everything in vv. 16-17, devastate the Unitarian contention concerning the significance of *prototokos.*

[140] "In relation to the universe, Christ is "the firstborn over all creation." . . . "Firstborn" (*prototokos*) . . . may denote either priority in time . . . or supremacy in rank. . . . In the present passage perhaps we should see both meanings. Christ is *before* all creation in time; he is also *over* it in rank and dignity. The major stress, however, seems to be on the idea of supremacy.

Some see in the word an allusion to the ancient custom whereby the firstborn in a family was accorded rights and privileges not shared by the other offspring. He was his father's representative and heir, and to him the management of the household was committed. Following this line of interpretation, we may understand the passage to teach that Christ is his Father's representative and heir and has the management of the divine household (all creation) committed to him. He is thus Lord over all God's creation. . . .

A superficial reading of the KJV . . . might lead one to conclude that Christ is a part of creation, the first of God's created beings. Such a reading of the phrase, however, is not in keeping with the context, which in the sharpest manner distinguishes Christ from creation. Nor is that understanding of the phrase demanded by the grammar. κτίσεως (*ktiseos,* "creation") might be construed either as an ablative of comparison ("before creation") or as a genitive. In the latter case, it is either a genitive of reference ("with reference to creation") or an objective genitive ("over creation"), which is the . . . interpretation [of the translation of the commentary]" (comment on Colossians 1:15, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelein, ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990, elec. acc. in an *Accordance Bible Software* module from OakTree Software, Inc.).

Divinity.[141]

When Arians argue that Christ was created because He is called "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15, they must, among other serious difficulties, overlook the lexical distinction between the Greek words "firstborn" and "first-created," the overwhelming contextual evidence that the Son is Creator, not a creature, the significance of *firstborn* as a position of authority in both the Old and New Testaments, and the prophecy of the Messiah as firstborn in Psalm 89:27. An accurate understanding of the Lord Jesus as the firstborn over the creation powerfully validates His Deity, rather than denying it.

A related objection by Arians to the Deity of Christ concerns His status as the only-begotten Son. Unitarians argue:

> The Bible calls Jesus the "only-begotten Son" of God. . . . [H]ow can a person be a son and at the same time be as old as his father? Trinitarians claim that in the case of Jesus, "only-begotten" is not the same as the dictionary definition of "begetting," which is "to procreate as the father." . . . They say that in Jesus' case it means "the sense of unoriginated relationship," a sort of only son relationship without the begetting. . . . Does that sound logical to you? Can a man father a son without begetting him? . . . Jesus said that he had a prehuman existence, having been created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations. . . . So Jesus, the only-begotten Son, had a beginning to his life. And Almighty God can rightly be called his Begetter, or Father, in the same sense that an earthly father . . . begets a son. . . . Hence, when the Bible speaks of God as the "Father" of Jesus, it means what it says—that they are two separate individuals. God is the senior. Jesus is the junior—in time, position, power, and knowledge.[142]

This Unitarian rhetoric may be divided into two main facets: 1.) Human fathers are older than their sons, so God the Father must be older that His Son, and "only begotten" must, for Christ, mean "created" ("God can be called [the Son's] Begetter, or Father, in the same sense that an earthly father begets a son."). 2.) Misrepresentation and ridicule of the Trinitarian doctrine of eternal generation ("Not the same as the dictionary definition of begetting . . . in Jesus' case [Trinitarians say] it means . . . a sort of only son relationship without the begetting. . . . Does that sound logical to you?") along with standard misrepresentations of the Trinity (such as modalism: "the [Father and the Son]

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[141] The word "higher" (עֶלְיוֹן), used in Psalm 89:27 for the firstborn Messiah, is used elsewhere in the Psalter only for God (and frequently with Him): see 7:17; 9:2; 18:13; 21:7; 46:4; 47:2; 50:14; 57:2; 73:11; 77:10; 78:17, 35, 56; 82:6; 83:18; 87:5; 89:27; 91:1, 9; 92:1; 97:9; 107:111. It therefore supports the Deity of Christ, as do other texts in the book (Psalm 2 (cf. Hebrews 1:5; Matthew 14:33); 45:6 (cf. Hebrews 1:8); 102:12, 25-27 (cf. Hebrews 1:10-12); 110:1 (cf. Matthew 22:44; Hebrews 1:13), etc.).

[142] *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section, "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" pgs. 15-16.

are two [and] separate" is supposed to refute the Trinity). The fact that human fathers are older than their sons, combined with the misrepresentation and ridicule, is supposed to establish the Arian doctrine (which is not really positively presented; it is essentially assumed as true once the Trinitarian position has been attacked) that the Son was "created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations," so that the Father created the Son, and then the Son created everything else. Arians use the word *only begotten* to establish that "there was a time when [the Son] was not; and: he was not before he was made; and: he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or thing."[143]

The Biblical, Trinitarian doctrine that "the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son"[144] has already been exposited and established in an earlier section of this composition.[145] At this point, the problems with the Arian attack, and with the Arian alternative that *only begotten* means that the Son was created by the Father, will be the focus of analysis.

Unitarians contend that their equation of *only begotten* with *created* is taking language literally. Whether or not they know what the Trinitarian doctrine is,[146] the Unitarian assertion is that eternal generation, as affirmed by Trinitarians, is not literal, and therefore is false. However, Arians themselves, when they think of God, do not "literally" press "only begotten" as "to procreate as Father." Their argument would assist them only if they embraced the revolting notions of Greek and Roman paganism, and affirmed that the Biblical God was Father of the Son because He was not a Spirit (John 4:24; Luke 24:39), but had a fleshly body, enabling him to have sexual relations with a

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143 The classical Arian doctrine; cf. footnote #19.

144 *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689,* 2:1, 3.

145 This section of this book has not yet been written. However, a good amount of evidence is contained in the refutation below.

146 Anyone who believed that the Son is only begotten because of "a sort of only son relationship without the begetting" would indeed believe something ridiculous. Of course, this has absolutely nothing to do with the Trinitarian contention that the Son is eternally begotten. As with the slanders that Trinitarians believe in three gods, and Trinitarians believe that the Father is the Son and the Son is the Holy Spirit, only Arians and the simple, ignorant people they often prey upon think this is Trinitarian doctrine. Such "deceiving, and being deceived," characteristic of "evil men and seducers" (2 Timothy 3:13) successfully furthers the purposes of the god of this world, the object of Arian and all other idolatrous worship (2 Corinthians 4:4), but to someone who actually is acquainted with the doctrine of the Trinity, an Arian who would equate such nonsense with Trinitarianism is exposed as either devilishly deceptive, or brainlessly ignorant—if not both.

mother god, who then become pregnant and gave birth some time later to a little baby son god. Human children are begotten through marital relations and the union of a sperm and an egg, a very different concept than the Unitarian dogma that the Father created the Son out of nothing. The Arian contention of literalness also breaks down since human fathers do not actually create anything—creation is a work of God alone (Isaiah 44:24)—so human begetting is hardly identical to the alleged creation of the Son by God. Not only is the Arian "literal" comparison of human relationships to the relation between the Father and the Son not literal, it is very selective. Human fathers are older than human sons, so God the Father must have created His Son out of nothing in time, Arians contend—although this conclusion is never drawn or implied in Scripture—for this is taking *Father* and *Son* "literally." Why not press "literal" human relationships in other ways as well? Human fathers have their own fathers—so why not "prove" through this "literal" use of the language of *Father* for God that there is a grandfather god that created God the Father? Why not prove that, since human fathers have aunts and uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, toddlers, teenagers, and all sorts of other relatives, that there is a big family of gods, from the Aunt Matilda god to the Uncle Joe god? Certainly the word *only begotten* does not justify the Unitarian's selectively seeking to drag the transcendent, high, and holy mystery of the personal relations between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit down to the earthly level of human relationships.

There are very serious exegetical problems with the Unitarian affirmation that *beget* is a synonym with *create*, so that the Son's being begotten proves His creation out of nothing. First, *beget* and *create* are simply different words with different significations.[147] Second, Hebrews 1:5 asks, "unto which of the angels said [the Father] at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" The dogma that *beget* means *create* requires Unitarians to affirm one of two impossible consequences. One way, on Arian presuppositions, that Paul could ask the question in Hebrews 1:5 would be if the Father did not create or beget the angels—in which case they are not "sons of God" because the Father created them. If the Father did not create the angels, then Christ

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[147] "Arius . . . identified *gennetos* [γεννητός], meaning "begotten," with the distinct Greek term *genetos,* meaning 'created.'" (pg. 43, *The Three-Personed God,* William J. Hill). The identification of the two word groups is certainly erroneous, as a study of relevant Greek literature demonstrates their distinction. Nor does μονογενής simply mean *unique* rather than *only begotten,* for the alternative Greek word μοναδικος has existed from at least the days of Plato to express the former idea.

created the angles—and thus angels are only "sons of God" if Christ is God, which is the end of Unitarianism. Alternatively, Unitarians could answer the question of Hebrews 1:5, "why, the Father could call all the angels "sons" in this way, for He has begotten or created every one of them." They then must disembowel the context of Hebrews 1:5 and turn the verse into nonsense. Third, if Arians wish to make the two synonyms, the only-begotten Son would become, not a "created" Son only, but the "only-created" Son. Arians would thus, in their attempt to support the unique Deity of the Father, be driven to the position that He only created the Son, while the Son created everything else—they must rob God of the uniquely Divine work of creation[148] (as they must the uniquely Divine prerogative of worship,[149] and even the title *God!*) and give it to one they affirm is a creature.

No verse whatever affirms or hints that God only created one thing, while many

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[148] The Hebrew verb "to create" (בָּרָא) is used only of the action of the one God in all of its 48 appearances in 41 verses; see Genesis 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3-4; 5:1-2; 6:7; Exodus 34:10; Numbers 16:30; Deuteronomy 4:32; Psalm 51:12; 89:13, 48; 102:19; 104:30; 148:5; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 4:5; 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7-8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17-18; Jeremiah 31:22; Ezekiel 21:35; 28:13, 15; Amos 4:13; Malachi 2:10. The OT word "is a specifically theological term, the subject of which is invariably God" (*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* (KB) Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, trans. & ed. M.E.J. Richardson. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2000). The verb "to create" (κτίζω) is only used in the New Testament for God, that is, for the members of the Trinity (including not the Father only (Ephesians 3:9), but the Son, Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 1:16, etc.), for the verb is "in the NT, used exclusively of God's activity in creation" (Louw & Nida on κτίζω); see Mark 13:19; Romans 1:25; 1 Corinthians 11:9; Ephesians 2:10,15; 3:9; 4:24; Colossians 1:16; 3:10; 1 Timothy 4:3; Revelation 4:11; 10:6. The overwhelming majority usage of κτίζω in the LXX pertains to God: see Genesis 14:19, 22; Exodus 9:18; Leviticus 16:16; Deuteronomy 4:32; 32:6; Psalms 32:9; 50:12; 88:13, 48; 101:19; 103:30; 148:5; Proverbs 8:22; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 22:11; 45:7-8; 46:11; 54:16; Jeremiah 38:22; Ezekiel 28:13,15; Daniel 4:37; 14:5; Hosea 13:4; Amos 4:13; Malachi 2:10; 1 Esdras 6:12; Judith 13:18; 3 Maccabees 2:3, 9; Ode 2:6; Wisdom 1:14; 2:23; 10:1; 11:17; 13:3; Sirach 1:4, 9; 7:15; 10:18; 17:1; 18:1; 23:20; 24:8-9; 31:13, 27; 33:10; 38:1, 4, 12; 39:21 ,25, 28-29; 40:1, 10; 44:2; 49:14; Solomon 18:11-12 (but cf. Haggai 2:9; 1 Esdras 4:53). The collection of the apostolic patristic writings follows the New Testament usage to ascribe the work of creation (using κτίζω) to God, that is, the Trinity, alone—note that these writings specifically designate as Creator not the Father alone, but the Son ("God . . . [sent not] to men some subordinate, or angel or ruler or one of those who manage earthly matters, or one of those entrusted with the administration of things in heaven, but the Designer and Creator of the universe himself, by whom he created the heavens, by whom he enclosed the sea within its proper bounds, whose mysteries all the elements faithfully observe, from whom the sun has received the measure of the daily courses to keep, whom the moon obeys as he commands it to shine by night, whom the stars obey as they follow the course of the moon, by whom all things have been ordered and determined and placed in subjection, including the heavens and the things in the heavens, the earth and the things in the earth, the sea and the things in the sea, fire, air, abyss, the things in the heights, the things in the depths, the things in between—this one he sent to them!" Diogenes 7:2) and the Holy Spirit ("The preexistent Holy Spirit, which created the whole creation, God caused to live in the flesh that he wished," Shepherd 59:5) also.

[149] Yet Scripture condemns those who worship creatures rather than God the Creator (Romans 1:25) as idolators.

verses state plainly that "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), "every living creature" (Genesis 1:21), "man" (Genesis 1:27), and "all things" (Revelation 4:11; 10:6; Genesis 2:3 + Genesis 1; Isaiah 42:5; Mark 13:19; etc.).[150] No secondary, non-Divine agency was involved: "God himself . . . created . . . formed . . . made . . . [and] established" (Isaiah 45:18) the created order. If the use of such an abundance of synonymns, both here and elsewhere throughout the Bible, does not prove to the Arian that God alone is, in every sense, the Creator, one wonders what the Holy Spirit could have written in the Bible that would convince him. When Unitarians are driven to the position that the Father created only one thing, they should be asked, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, [is] the Creator" (Isaiah 40:28)? "Hath not one God created us" (Malachi 2:10)?

Furthermore, to equate *only begotten* with *only-created* requires Arians to abandon their contention that Christ is called Son for the same reason that the unfallen angels, and Adam, are called sons of God, namely, that they were created by God—for if Christ is Son because He was created, and the angels and Adam are sons of God because they were created,[151] there are myriads upon myriads of beings in heaven whose existence contradicts the idea that the Son was the only-created Son. To reply that *only-created* really means something like *only-directly-created (and everything else was indirectly created),* can by no stretch of language be considered a "literal" interpretation of *only begotten,* even apart from the fact that *beget* does not mean *create* and God alone

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150 Note as well that Revelation 5:13 states that "every creature" in every location (πᾶν κτίσμα) ascribes the same sort of praise and worship to the Father and to the Lamb. This is noteworthy because: a.) No creature is worthy of the same honor as the one God—to put creatures and the Creator on the same level is abominable idolatry (Romans 1:25). b.) If "every creature" ascribes glory to the Lamb, the Lamb cannot be a creature, but must be One who is outside of the created order, namely, God.

151 This is the Arian contention; however, it should be noted that Adam is never called υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, "son of God," in Scripture. Luke 3:38 simply says he was "of God," τοῦ Θεοῦ, hence the KJV italics. The reference to angels as "sons of God" is both only in the plural, and only a title found in the Old Testament. Nor, since the angelic references (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) set the unfallen or elect angels (1 Timothy 5:21) in contrast to those that sinned and fell (Job 1:6), is it clear that their "sonship" is one of creation, rather than one of grace or reward. The fallen angels were equally created by God, but they are not called "sons of God." Thus, there is no clear reference in either Testament to beings as "sons of God" because of their status as created beings—and certainly to compare an unstated sonship of Adam or the angels by creation to Christ's nature as the Father's only-begotten is to make entirely unwarranted assumptions. This is not to say that there are no instances of fatherly images describing God as the Creator (cf. Psalm 90:2, ילד and חיל; Acts 17:28, γένος . . . ὑπάρχοντες τοῦ Θεοῦ). It is a great leap, however, to convert such imagery into the Arian assertion that "the Son of God" or even "sons of God" signifies "being/beings created by God."

is the sole Creator of all things.

Nobody could honestly read the gospels and conclude that Christ's "my Father"[152] signified "my Creator," or anything at all similar to it. The apostle John explains that when the Lord Jesus "said . . . that God was his Father, [He was] making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). His disciples worshipped Him because He was the Son of God (Matthew 14:33). As human fathers and sons possess an identical and equal human nature, so the Lord Jesus is the Son of God in that He possesses the Divine nature in absolute equality[153] with His Father—and since there is only one God and thus the Divine nature is necessarily unitary, His Sonship and equality as Deity requires His consubstantiality with the Father. The radical distinction between Christ's ontological Sonship, His Sonship of nature and being, and the adoptive sonship of believers[154] is apparent in the careful Biblical distinction between Christ's "my Father" and the "our"[155]

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[152] The New Testament references are: Matthew 7:21; 10:32-33; 11:27; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 19, 35; 20:23; 24:36; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53; Luke 2:49; 10:22; 22:29; 24:49; John 2:16; 5:17, 36-37, 43; 6:32, 65; 8:18-19, 28, 38, 49, 54; 10:18, 25, 29, 32, 37; 14:2, 7, 12, 20-21, 23, 28; 15:1, 8, 10, 15, 23-24; 20:17; Revelation 2:27; 3:5, 21. To substitute "my Creator" for Christ's "my Father" in these passages is patently ridiculous. The truth is that every "my Father" from the Son of God affirms His eternal generation, and therefore His consubstantiality.

[153] "The term 'father' does not denote a higher grade of being, but exactly the same grade as the term 'son' does. A human son is as truly man, as a human father. He is constituted of human nature as fully and entirely as his father is. Augustine (Sermo 140, § 5) remarks that 'if the Son were not equal to the Father, he would not be the *son* of God.' The substance or constitutional nature determines the grade of being. A person having a human nature is *ipso facto* human; whether he comes by it by the act of creation, as Adam and Eve did, or by propagation, as Cain and Abel did. So a person who possesses the Divine nature is *ipso facto* divine, whether possessing it by paternity, or filiation, or procession. Christ asserts that 'as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son to have life in himself,' John 5:26. But 'life in himself' is self-existence. As the Father has self-existence, so he has given to the Son to have self-existence. The difference in the manner in which self-existence is possessed by the Father and Son, makes no difference with the fact. The Son has self-existence by communication of that essence of which self-existence is an attribute. The Father has self-existence without communication of it, because he has the essence without communication of it" ("Trinity in Unity," Chapter 4 in *Theology: The Doctrine of God,* in *Dogmatic Theology,* William G. T. Shedd, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006).

[154] Note the explicit contrast in Galatians 4:4, 6-7: Christ is "His [the Father's] Son" (*the* Son of Him [God], ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ), while believers are plural "sons," (υἱοί) and the individual believer is referred to without the Greek article as "a son" (υἱός). This is consistent with the rest of Scripture; believers are "sons" (Matthew 5:9, 45; 17:26; Luke 20:36; Romans 8:14, 19, 9:26; Galatians 3:26; cf. Luke 6:35; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 2:10; also Luke 16:8; John 12:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:5) and one believer is "a son" (Hebrews 12:5-8), while Christ is *the* Son.

[155] Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; 4:20; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 3; 3:11, 13; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2; 2:16; 1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 1:3.

or "your Father"[156] of the redeemed. The Lord Jesus never equates His Sonship with that of God's people by uniting Himself with them in a common "our Father."[157] Believers are referred to in the plural as "sons of God" by adoption (Romans 8:15, 23; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5), and an individual believer is *a* "son of God." In contrast, the Lord Jesus is *the*[158] Son of God,[159] *the* Person of *the* Son[160] in the Trinity,[161] the unique

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156 Matthew 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1; 6:4, 6, 8, 14-15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11; 10:20, 29; 18:14; 23:9; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 6:36; 11:13; 12:30, 32; John 20:17.

157 John 20:17 (the only reference in the Johannine literature) to "your Father" specifically distinguishes the Fathership and Godship of the Father to the Son as *Theanthropos* from that of the Fathership and Godship of the Father to the saints; Christ does not say, "I ascend unto our Father and our God," but "I ascend unto my Father [by nature], and your Father [by adoption]; and *to* my God [as the Theanthropic Mediator], and your God [as one of His forgiven people]." Cf. also the radical differences between the prayer Christ commands the saints to pray ("Our Father, which art in heaven," etc. Matthew 6:9-13) but He cannot Himself pray ("forgive us our debts . . . and lead us not into temptation"), and the prayer He prays but the saints can by no means copy (John 17).

158 Note that while the ontic character of the Lord Jesus's Sonship is spoken of with the article in the large majority of instances in the NT, He is referred to a few times as simply Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ; cf. John 10:36; Mark 1:1; Hebrews 1:2; 3:6; 5:8; 7:28; Luke 1:35. This does not undermine the character of Christ as *the* Son of God for the following reasons. 1.) The converse, that no one other than Christ is designated in Scripture as "the Son of God" or any equivalent, is what is affirmed, and what supports His unique Sonship. 2.) The syntactical structure noun + τοῦ Θεοῦ (as in Mark 1:1 with υἱός), which appears 362 times in the New Testament, has a definite head noun, whether or not an article is present, in the overwhelming majority of instances, and in not even one case is the head noun clearly indefinite. The structure noun + Θεοῦ is similar—out of 106 examples in the Greek Testament, the overwhelming majority are definite, perhaps a small fraction are qualitiative, and none are certainly indefinite. 3.) In each of the few non-articular υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ verses, Christ's unique ontic Sonship is set forth; no instance is truly indefinite, but each is either definite or qualitative (and the quality required is ontological, not adoptive, Sonship). For example, in John 10:36, Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, since it preceeds the verb, is not indefinite, but definite or qualitative, in accordance with Colwell's rule and construction (see pgs. 256-271, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics,* Wallace); John 19:7 is a slander of the Lord's enemies; Hebrews 1:2 is a generic qualitative, not an indefinite, use of "Son," which is defined using the the powerfully ontological language of v. 3, further explicated as His relation to the Father in v. 5, and climaxed with the affirmation that He is Jehovah Himself because He is the Son, v. 8-10. Hebrews 3:6 employs *son* analogically to demonstrate Christ's position as heir and ruler in contrast with Moses' position as *servant* (θεράπων). In Hebrews 5:8, "The absence of the article qualifies. Its absence emphasizes nature, quality, essence. . . . [An] expanded translation should read, 'Though He were Son as to His essence.' The thought of the writer is that in spite of the fact that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, coparticipant eternally with the Father and the Spirit in the divine essence and therefore God, He learned obedience. . . . while in the omniscience of His deity He knew what obedience was, in His humanity He learned what it was experientially" (pg. 31, "The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament, Part IV: The Greek Article in New Testament Interpretation," Kenneth S. Wuest. *Bibliotheca Sacra,* 118:469 (Jan 61), 27-35). The idea of Hebrews 5:8, καίπερ ὢν υἱός, "although being Son," is that Christ is Son in the sense of being the only begotten, the eternally begotten ontological Son, as declared in v. 5, yet He learned obedience, etc. Hebrews 7:28 contrasts the Lord's superior, eternal and necessary Sonship with the blessings bestowed on "men," and speaks of Him as Son in the sense of Psalm 2:7 (cf. Psalm 110). "The expression 'Son of God' . . . is monadic . . . a [monadic] noun does not, of course, require the article to be definite" (pg. 248, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*). The plain υἱὸς Θεοῦ of Luke 1:35 is cited as an example of this monadic construction; furthermore, the text would be definite based on Apollonius' Corollary (Wallace, pgs. 250ff.). Thus, syntax and context support the ontic Sonship of Christ, in contrast to the

beloved of the Father,[162] and is so by nature, as a consequence of of His eternal generation. As the only begotten Son (Hebrews 1:5), He possesses the entire Divine nature (Hebrews 1:3), and is Himself worshipped (Hebrews 1:6) as Jehovah,[163] the true

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adoptive sonship of the saints, even in those passages without the specific use of the article. Jesus Christ is *the* Son of God, the only and eternal Son by His very nature, unlike believers, who are only adopted sons.

The closest comparison in language between the saint's sonship and the Lord Jesus' Sonship is Revelation 21:7, ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει πάντα, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ Θεός, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι ὁ υἱός, where, uniquely in the New Testament, the believer is called ὁ υἱός (Note even here the removal of the article found in the *Textus Receptus* (and therefore in the autographa because of Scriptural promises of verbal preservation) in the UBS/CT and Byzantine/Majority Greek platforms, leaving the believer as nonarticular υἱός.). However, in Revelation 21:7 also the context makes it exceedingly clear that the saints' sonship is that of adoption, to become "[God's] people, [so that] God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God" (Revelation 21:3), a blessing received by all who are "athirst [and therefore drink] of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Revelation 21:6). The sonship of the saint in the resurrected and glorified state in the New Jerusalem, referenced in Revelation 21:7, when he has received "the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of [his] body" (Romans 8:23), is contrasted with the everlasting rejection and torment of those who do not take the water of life and receive adoption into the family of God, and so have their portion, "their part" (τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν, cf. Matthew 24:51; Luke 12:46; 15:12; Revelation 20:6; 22:19) or inheritance, in the lake of fire with their father the devil as children of wrath (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:3). Furthermore, since in Revelation 20:11-15 Christ is the One sitting (20:11, τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ [θρόνον]) on the throne, the ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου of 21:5 appears to be the Son of God, who is Himself also called Θεός in Revelation 20:12. Further support for this is found from the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" titles of 21:6, which are used elsewhere in Revelation for the Son (Revelation 1:8; 11; 3:14; 22:13). Thus, in Revelation 21:7, the believer is not called ὁ υἱός because of His relationship to God the Father, but because of His relationship to God the Son (cf. Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 2:13).

Even if one concluded that the language of Revelation 21:7 refers to God the Father to the exclusion of the Son (but note in 22:1 the Father and the Son share the same throne), as the God of the believer, the fact that the believer is the Father's adopted son is still radically different from the relation of the Son to the Father. As the incarnate Messiah, the submissive and subordinate Man, God was Christ's God, but as the eternal, only begotten Son who possesses the identical nature with He who begat Him, God was His Father, not His God. Another consideration, on the assumption that the Father is the subject in view in 21:7, is that the articular υἱός might relate to the ineffable union, brought in the New Jerusalem to its eternal fruition, of the Son of God with His elect, so that they could be called, as one with Him, ὁ υἱός. The contrast between Christ as *the* Son of God by nature, and believers as sons by adoption, is not set aside by Revelation 21:7.

159 ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. This is the confession of all His people (John 1:34, 49; 11:27; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 20) and His own confession (John 5:25; 9:35; 11:4; Revelation 2:18), validated even by His human (Matthew 26:63; Luke 22:70) and angelic (Mark 3:11 Luke 4:9; 4:41) enemies.

160 ὁ υἱός, John 3:35, 36; 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 6:40; 8:35, 36; 14:13; 17:1; 2 John 9.

161 Matthew 28:19 shows that He is *the* Son in His Divine *hupostasis* or Person, as *the* Father and *the* Holy Spirit are.

162 The Father calls Him "my beloved Son/the beloved Son of me" (ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός), Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 20:13; 2 Peter 1:17; cf. Colossians 1:12-13; Ephesians 1:6. He is "the Son of [the living] God" (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος).

163 Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes Psalm 102:25-27, where Jehovah is the one addressed by the psalmist. Thus, Paul's application of this passage to Christ is an affirmation that He is Jehovah. The quotation has yet more power. The "thou, Lord" of Hebrews 1:10 is not found in Psalm 102:25-27—Paul reaches back to Psalm 102:12, "But thou, O LORD [*Jehovah*]," and then picks up the quotation of v. 25-27. The apostle

God (Hebrews 1:8).

The eternal generation of the Person of the Son by the Person of the Father[164] is attested Scripturally through multiple strands of evidence. First, a unique verb form, not used for human generation, is used for the begetting of the Son by the Father in the New Testament.[165] Second, the fact that both the Father and the Son are equally eternal and

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does not just deliberately and intentionally take a passage speaking of Jehovah and apply it to the Lord Jesus Christ, but he emphasizes pointedly that he is doing so.

164 "The orthodox doctrine, expressed in traditional language, teaches that it is the Person of the Son, not the essence of the Son, that is generated. There is not a second and generated essence. Nor is it the essence that does the generating. The generation is a generation of a Person by a Person" (pg. 113, *The Trinity,* Gordon Clark, 2nd. ed. Jefferson, MR: Trinity Foundation, 1990). The attempt to support the heretical docrine of the generation of the essence of the Son is based on the corruption μονογενὴς θεός, unfortunately adopted in many modern Bible versions, for the inspired μονογενὴς υἱός in John 1:18. This textual corruption, and the Arianism derived from it, have significant problems.

Considering internal evidences, following the Arian allegation that μονογενὴς means "only-created," John 1:18 would call Christ "the only created God/god." They thus not only deny that God alone is the Creator (as documented in footnote #148), but their corruption makes the one true God Himself into a created being, or creates a polytheism (strictly a henotheism) of two gods, with one greater god that created a lesser god (which then went on to create angels, that are also supposedly gods in the sense Christ is a god—but nonetheless, this second lesser god is the "only created god."). Such notions have no support whatever in Scripture. Furthermore, the contextual connection John established between John 1:18 and 34 in his gospel, based upon the inspiration of "Son" in v. 18, is eliminated by the Arian alteration.

The external evidence against the "begotten god" reading is overwhelming. "It is doubtful that the author would have written μονογενὴς θεός, which may be a primitive, transcriptional error [$\overline{\text{γc}}/\overline{\text{θc}}$)] in the Alexandrian tradition" (Allen Wikgren (an editor of the United Bible Society Greek New Testament), cited in *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament,* 2nd ed. New York, NY: American Bible Societies, 1994, note on John 1:18). "Instead of 'the only begotten Son (as in over 99.5% of the Grek manuscripts), some five manuscripts (of inferior quality, objectively so) have "an only begotten god," while another two (also inferior) have "the only begotten god.' . . . [W]hy follow seven manuscripts of demonstrably inferior quality against [99.5%]? The original and therefore true reading is certainly 'the only begotten Son'" (*The Gospel According to John,* trans. & comm. Wilbur N. Pickering. Brasilia, 2006; elec. acc.). The reading "only begotten Son" is "witnessed to by every Greek manuscript (2,000+, and as many lectionaries) except seven (only p66, p75, Aleph, B, C, L, and the cursive 33 have anything else). . . . Dean Burgon notes that the first mention of the only-begotten God is in Excerpts from Theodotus, a fragment, where it is attributed to Valentinus (c. A. D. 150), the Gnostic heretic, who sought to make a distinction between the Word and the Son. The Gnostics then saw the Word and the Son as two persons (the Word was seen as God supreme, and the Son as a lesser god - but spiritual only, for to the Gnostics the flesh was evil. So they taught that Christ was a man only in appearance. The change from Son to God preserved their doctrine that God was a pure Spirit, and the only-begotten God being in the Father's bosom also was uncontaminated by flesh). The Excerpts were definitely for Son. . . . It is noteworthy that the only manuscripts which have only-begotten God are from Egypt, the only country where the Gnostics were able to dominate. . . . For the Versions . . . the Old Latin, the Vulgate, the Georgian, and the Slavonic have Son. . . . Tertullian, Hippolytus of Rome, (both third century), Athanasius, and Chrysostom [only employ the reading "Son"] . . . Irenaeus . . . Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, [and] Basil of Caesarea [also testify to the existence of the reading "Son"]" (*Textual and Translational Notes on the Gospels,* Jay P. Green, Sr. elec. acc. in the Online Bible software program of Ken Hamel. Note on John 1:18).

165 The common tense in the New Testament for human fathers begetting children is the aorist. This is also used at times of the new birth. The aorist is employed 71 times in 44 verses: Matthew 1:2-16, 20; 2:1; 19:12; 26:24; Mark 14:21; Luke 1:57; 23:29; John 1:13; 3:3-5, 7; 9:2, 19-20, 34; 16:21; Acts 2:8; 7:8, 20, 29; Romans 9:11; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Galatians 4:29; Philemon 10; Hebrews 11:12, 23; 1 John 5:1, 18.

unchanging requires that their relation must also be eternal; the Son existed in glory with the Father before the creation of any finite beings (John 17:1, 5). The Arian position requires that God was not always the Father, for if there was a time when He had no Son, He was not then Father. And if both Father and Son are eternal, what is their relation, if the one does not beget, and the other is not begotten? Christ was the Son before He entered the world (John 3:16); before He was sent (1 John 4:9; Romans 8:3); and from "everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Third, the noun *monogenes,* "only-begotten,"[166] supports the doctrine of eternal generation. Since he who is begotten possesses the same nature as he

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The birth of men, and descriptions of them as recipients of the new birth, are sometimes indicated with the perfect passive (18 times in 15 verses: John 3:6, 8; 8:41; 9:32; 18:37; Acts 22:3, 28; Galatians 4:23; 2 Peter 2:12; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). The present and future tenses of γεννάω appear in Matthew 2:4; Luke 1:13, 35; Galatians 4:24; & 2 Timothy 2:23. However, the eternal generation of the Son of God by the Father uniquely employs the perfect active indicative of γεννάω (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; cf. Psalm 2:7, LXX). While one would not expect this distinction concerning the glorious doctrine of the Son of God's generation to be maintained in uninspired Koiné, it is not contradicted by it; the writings of the apostolic patristic writers do not employ the perfect active of γεννάω, although the verb in other forms is found 21 times, and the LXX, in 251 uses of the verb, does not employ a perfect active indicative of anything other than the Son's generation in Psalm 2:7 (although Jeremiah 16:3 employs a perfect active participle—but note the common use of the participle, without any uses whatsoever of the perfect indicative, in Josephus: Antiquities 1:315; 3:236; 7:192, 198; 8:109; 12:203; 16:67, 69, 96, 211, 248, 324, 391; War 1:622).

Perhaps the signficance of the perfect tense for the ineffable act of the Son's eternal generation is that this generation "began" with the "today" of the eternal state (cf. Prov 8:24-25) and continues now, as it will to all eternity. John Gill, commenting on Hebrews 1:5, states, "today, designs eternity, as in Isaiah 43:13, which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time and case, in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his transfiguration on the Mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as in Acts 13:33; Romans 1:4; and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made Lord and Christ, and his divine Sonship more manifestly appeared."

166 μονογενής is derived from μονός, "only," and γεννάω [cf. γεννητός], "to beget." The modernistic concept that μονογενής simply means that the Son is "unique" is false. The fact that the classical derivation is at least as natural as its upstart alternative which derives the noun from γίνομαι or γένος, that the verb γεννάω (which is unquestionably "to beget") is clearly employed in Scripture for the Son's relation to the Father, not the noun μονογενής only, the existence of the alternative noun μοναδικος to express the idea of "unique," and the consent of other passages of Scripture that teach eternal generation (Micah 5:2, etc.) demonstrate that the old derivation is correct. Furthermore, "even if *genes* comes from *genos*, the family relationship concept may be maintained. . . . meanings for *genos* [include] . . . ancestral stock, *descendant* . . . a relatively small group with common ancestry, *family*, *relatives* . . . a relatively large people group, *nation*, *people* . . . This family relationship concept can be seen, for example, in Revelation 22:16 where our Lord describes Himself as the "offspring of David." The word translated "offspring" is *genos*" ("The translation 'only-begotten' referring to the Son of God," in "What I Would Like To See in A Bible Version for Study Purposes," Myron J. Houghton, *Faith Pulpit,* Ankeny, IA: Faith Theological Seminary, July/August 2006)—and could not one derive γεννάω itself from γένος or γίνομαι? Those who contend that μονογενής simply means "unique" should consider the fact that century after century of Greek patristic writers, who thought, spoke, and wrote in Greek from their youth, unanimously affirmed, based on μονογενής, that the Son is "only-begotten" and eternally generated. How many of the modern opponents to eternal generation fluently speak—not to mention think—in Greek? Is their Greek really so much better than that of the delegates to the Council of Nicea and the other ancient Councils, so that they can correct their affirmation of the eternal generation of the Son?

who begets, the Son possesses the entire Divine nature as a consequence of being begotten by the Father. Since God is one, the Divine nature is necessarily one, so the Son is one in essence with the Father on account of being begotten by Him. Since the Divine nature is also necessarily eternal, the Son is as eternal as the Father, and His begetting must express His eternal relation to His Father.

Another severe problem for the Arian contention that *only begotten* does not teach the Trinitarian doctrine of eternal generation, but means that the Son was the first created being, is that no verse connects His begetting and the beginning of creation. Christ was in a particular manner declared or set forth as the Son of God at His incarnation (Luke 1:35), His baptism (Matthew 3:17), His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5) and His resurrection (Acts 13:35; Romans 1:4). His Sonship is mentioned in conjunction with other events and Scriptural declarations (Psalm 2:7; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5). The Lord Jesus is repeatedly called "only begotten" (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). The copious references to the Son's being begotten on many occasions and in connection with various acts of God is natural if He is indeed eternally generated, as Trinitarianism affirms—since the Son's "goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2), the Father's "Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5) is true of any and every day, as it has been true from eternity past and will be true for the eternity to come. Christ's many works manifest that He is in truth the eternally begotten Son. However, not one verse connects the Son's generation with the beginning of the creation of the world. If *only begotten* really meant *created, only-created, first-created,* or some other similar Arian conception, one would expect that all—or at least a large number—or at least a handful—or certainly at least one verse would connect His being begotten with the beginning of creation, and affirm that His creation out of nothing at the beginning of time was the reason He is denominated *only begotten.* However, no verse like this is found in Scripture. Unitarians, having no exegetical basis for their contention, simply declare out of nothing that the word *only begotten* means that the Son was the first created being.

Unitarians attempt to use Hebrews 11:17 to support their contention that *only begotten* establishes that Christ is a created being. They ask, "why does the Bible use the

very same Greek word for 'only-begotten' (as Vine admits without any explanation)[167] to describe the relationship of Isaac to Abraham? Hebrews 11:17 speaks of Isaac as Abraham's 'only-begotten son.' There can be no question that in Isaac's case, he was only-begotten in the normal sense, not equal in time or position to his father."[168] However, this verse does not in any wise establish the Arian contention. The union and process that fathers and mothers are involved in to produce sons is a very different than the alleged creation of the Son out of nothing by the Father, a Spirit without a body or parts. The use of "only-begotten" for Isaac certainly does not mean that Abraham usurped the uniquely Divine role of Creator and formed Isaac out of nothing, so that he was Abraham's "only-created." One notes that the Arian quotation affirms that Isaac was not "equal in time or position" to Abraham, but leaves out "nature," the essential point in question,[169] because Isaac was entirely and absolutely equal in his humanity to Abraham. All the sons of Adam are equally human, receiving their humanity by the very act of generation from their fathers. Every time *monogenes* is used in Scripture for relations besides that of God the Father and God the Son,[170] an absolute equality of nature is involved. Indeed, the equality of nature of the one begotten to the one who begets is the entire point in question with the use of the word *only begotten*—and the fact that the Lord Jesus is indeed true Son of the Father, as the Father's only begotten, establishes the Son's equality of nature. The "normal sense"[171] of *only begotten* establishes the Son's absolute

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167 The implication of this parenthesis is that Trinitarians are somehow embarrassed and afraid of Hebrews 11:17, so Vine, as their representative, ignores or refuses comment upon it. While such fast and loose playing with the evidence is consistent with the hermeneutical gymnastics of the Watchtower society and other Unitarian cults, the fact that hundreds, or rather, many thousands of Trinitarians who have written on the relation of the Son to the Father, or have commented on the book of Hebrews, have fully and carefully commented on this text, exposes the fact that Vine does not explain the text in one citation in one place in one book is entirely irrelevant.

168 *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section, "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" pg. 15-16.

169 Even if *monogenes* affirmed the Arian contention that the Father is superior in "position," that is, role, to the Son (which the word by no means establishes), it would not deny to the Son the Divine essence, any more than the superior position or role the husband has in the marital relation establishes that he is somehow more human or superior in nature to his wife. Cf. the discussion of the Unitarian argument from 1 Corinthians 11:3.

170 The word is used for human generation in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Hebrews 11:17, and of the relation of the Father and the Son in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9.

171 The assumption, inherent in the Unitarian apologetics on the question, that the descriptive *only begotten* for the relation of the Son to the Father should be interpreted in light of a fundamental or "normal" meaning of the word derived from mankind is also most questionable. Would it not be better to view the

Deity—the Arians who try to change the word to *only-directly-created* or some other such nonsense are the ones who refuse to accept the true and plain signification of the term.[172]

The Arian argument from Hebrews 11:17 thus requires one to ignore the equality of nature that is the central idea of the word *only begotten*.[173] It reduces to "Abraham was born before Isaac was, so Jesus Christ is not God because He was begotten." It is very obvious that in human generation fathers are older than their sons, but this does not help the Unitarian unless he now wishes to affirm that the Greek *only begotten* really means *younger* instead of *only-created*. The fact that human fathers are older than their children is a necessary consequence of human nature, which is very incompletely comparable to the Divine nature. Since human nature is finite, weak and limited, changeable, and bound by time, the human nature communicated to children by the temporal begetting of their parents is finite, weak and limited, changeable, and time-bound; for this reason, human children are younger than their parents. Since the Son of God is begotten eternally by the Father, the Divine nature communicated to Him is necessarily eternal, omnipotent, self-existent, and immutable, possessing all the Divine

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human father-son relation, and the words used in Scripture to describe it, as a secondary or derived sense that reflects the fundament of the Father-Son relation in the Trinity? Did not God, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and whose creation reflects His eternal power and Godhead, both inspire every word of Scripture and ordain at creation the means of human generation in accordance with His own eternal and sovereign good pleasure? Why would the words of the eternal relation of Father and Son be derived, then, from temporal human generation, rather than *vice versa*?

172 The fact that the all the arguments Arians derive from their "proof-texts" totally fall apart when analyzed carefully illuminates the common practice in the Watchtower Society's *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* of quoting a "proof-text" and then asking confusing or deceptive questions, instead of attempting to show with direct statements how the verse is supposed to establish the Watchtower form of Unitarianism ("Jesus is Michael the archangel"), or deny the Deity of Christ ("This verse states that Jesus Christ does not possess the Divine nature") or affirm that Christ was created ("This verse proves that Jesus Christ was created out of nothing for the following reasons."). Unitarian heresy cannot be derived from Scripture by sound exegesis, so it is not surprising that its proselityzing literature regularly does not attempt to logically derive its dogmas by declarative statements that follow from each other, but instead assumes the much easier task of planting doubts with beguiling questions in the minds of those not grounded in Scripture (cf. Genesis 3:1, "Now . . . the serpent . . . said . . . Yea, hath God said[?]").

173 "As all generation indicates a communication of essence on the part of the begetter to the begotten (by which the begotten becomes like the begetter and partakes of the same nature with him), so this wonderful generation [of the Son by the Father] is rightly expressed as a communication [or "sharing"] of essence from the Father (by which the Son possesses indivisibly the same essence with him and is made perfectly like him). . . This generation was 1.) made without time; not in time, but from eternity. Therefore not priority or posteriority of duration can be observed here, although there may be priority of order according to which the Son is from the Father, although not after the Father." (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* Francis Turretin, 3:29:4-5).

attributes of His Father. Furthermore, since there is of necessity but one Divine nature and God is one (Galatians 3:20), the communication of the Divine nature to the Son by the Father requires the consubstantiality of the Begotten with the Begetter. Besides, the nature of the Son's begetting is a high and holy mystery beyond human comprehension. All the Arians wish to derive from Hebrews 11:17 stems from the requirements of human nature, and thus is inapplicable to a generation by God. Arians who wish to confound the human processes by which babies are born with the Father's begetting of His Son should also argue that the declarations that God rests (Genesis 2:3), remembers (Exodus 2:24), repents (1 Samuel 15:35), bows down His ear (Psalm 31:2), and causes men to rest under the shadow of His wings (Psalm 36:7) prove that absurdities that God gets tired, is forgetful, is a sinner, is hard of hearing, and has feathers.

The Unitarian contention on Hebrews 11:17 is entirely unfounded. What, then, is the contextual reason that Isaac is called Abraham's only begotten in the verse? First, Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac (Hebrews 11:17-19; Genesis 22) is a Biblical figure (imperfect, of course, as are all Old Testament types and figures) of God the Father's offering up of His own Son for the sins of the world. Isaac is called *only begotten* because he pictures the Father's true only begotten Son. But how does this designation for Isaac fit at all—did not Abraham also beget Ishmael (Genesis 16:16), who was born before Isaac and was to live for many years after Isaac's birth? Did not Abraham beget many sons with Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2)?[174] How then can Isaac be Abraham's "only son" (Genesis 22:2, 12, 16)[175]? Isaac's unique relation to Abraham as the only child of Sarah, one who was begotten differently than Abraham's other sons through miraculous intervention (Genesis 18:10-14; 21:1-8), and one who was the heir of the covenant promises (Genesis 17:19-21), explains Isaac's receipt of the *only begotten*[176]

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174 Note that the Arian contention that Isaac was *only begotten* because Abraham brought him into existence or created him also has difficulty accounting for these other children. If Isaac was *only begotten* because he was the only one Abraham brought into existence, where did these other children come from?

175 His יָחִיד; note that this word is used of Christ in Zechariah 12:10.

176 Josephus, in *Antiquities* 20:2:1:17ff., narrates that Monobazus, the king of Adiabene, on account of a miraculous event (20:2:1:18), viewed his son Izates as "only begotten," and, although Izates had an elder brother by the same wife, and other brothers besides, Monobazus made him the recipient of great favor and exaltation. Izates had an "elder brother, by Helena also, as [Monobazus] had other sons by other wives besides. Yet did he openly place all his affections on this his only begotten son Izates, which was the origin of that envy which his other brethren, by the same father, bare to him; while on this account they hated him more and more, and were all under great affliction that their father should prefer Izates before

title.[177] In this Isaac was a fit picture of the Son of God, who bears an absolutely unique relation to His Father as eternally begotten of Him and one in essence with Him, and, incarnate, is the One in whom all the "all the promises of God . . . *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Just about the only[178] serious attempt a Unitarian could make to find a Biblical basis for the contention that the Son was the first created being as the only begotten would rest upon Proverbs 8:22,[179] which, in the LXX, reads, "The Lord made [or

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them all" (20:2:1:20-21, τούτου πρεσβύτερος ἐκ τῆς Ἑλένης γενόμενος ἄλλοι τε παῖδες ἐξ ἑτέρων γυναικῶν τὴν μέντοι πᾶσαν εὔνοιαν ὡς εἰς μονογενῆ τὸν Ἰζάτην ἔχων φανερὸς ἦν φθόνος δὲ τοὐντεῦθεν τῷ παιδὶ παρὰ τῶν ὁμοπατρίων ἀδελφῶν ἐφύετο κἀκ τούτου μῖσος ηὔξετο λυπουμένων ἁπάντων ὅτι τὸν Ἰζάτην αὐτῶν ὁ πατὴρ προτιμᾷη).

[177] "In what sense Isaac is said to be the only-begotten of Abraham, who had one son before him and many after him, is declared partly in the following words, 'Concerning whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' He is that only son in whom the promise of the seed shall be accomplished. Further to clear the reason of this expression, it may be observed, [1.] That the sons of Abraham by Keturah were not yet born. [2.] Ishmael, who was born, was before this, by the command of God himself, put out of his family, as one that should not be the heir of his family, by whom his seed should be reckoned. [3.] He was his only-begotten by Sarah, who was concerned in all this affair between God and him no less than himself. [4.] The Holy Ghost taketh into consideration the whole state of things between God and Abraham, in his call, in his separation from the world, in the covenant made with him, in what he was designed unto in the promise made unto him concerning the blessed Seed; in all which Isaac alone had any concernment; and if he had failed, though Abraham had had an hundred children, they must have all fallen to the ground. Therefore, as Abraham was placed in these circumstances, he was his only-begotten son. [5.] This expression is used in the Scripture sometimes for as much as peculiarly and entirely beloved, above all others, Proverbs 4:3; and there is great respect had hereunto" (John Owen, *Exposition of Hebrews,* 11:17-19, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 9: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2005). "Isaac was Abraham's 'only-begotten son' in respect of Sarah and the promises: he sent away his other sons, by other wives (Ge 25:6). Abraham is a type of the Father not sparing His only-begotten Son to fulfil the divine purpose of love. God nowhere in the Mosaic law allowed human sacrifices, though He claimed the first-born of Israel as His" (*A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments,* R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset D. Brown, orig. pub. Hartford, S.S. Scranton, 1871, elec. acc. in Hamel, Ken, *The Online Bible for Mac,* version 3.0). "No one (he says) could allege, that he had another son, and expected the promise to be fulfilled from him, and therefore confidently offered up this one. 'And' (his words are) 'he offered up his only-begotten, who had received the promises.' Why sayest thou 'only-begotten'? What then? Of whom was Ishmael sprung? I mean 'only-begotten' (he would say) so far as relates to the word of the promise. Therefore after saying, 'Only-begotten,' showing that he says it for this reason, he added, 'of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called'" (Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, XXV).

[178] Revelation 3:14 is also advanced in favor of this position. The verse is examined below.

[179] The phrase in Hebrews 3:1-2, Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτόν, ὡς καὶ Μωσῆς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, "Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house," could potentially also be alleged by an Arian to teach Christ is a creature, since ποιέω is regularly translated "made," and thus the verse could be (mis)used to argue that the Son was "made" or created by the Father. However, it is perfectly clear that Christ's office and work as *Theanthropos,* as incarnate Man and Mediator, not His essence or nature as the eternal Son, are in view in this passage. Furthermore, in Hebrews 3:2 ποιέω is used in the sense of "appoint," as it is in Hebrews 1:2, ὃν ἔθηκε κληρονόμον πάντων, "whom [God] hath appointed heir of all things," or Acts 2:36, Κύριον καὶ Χριστὸν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίησε, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Consider also 1 Samuel 12:6, which treats of Moses' office as alluded to in Hebrews 3:2: "*It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and

"created"][180] me [Wisdom] the beginning of his ways for his works." Since Proverbs eight speaks of the Divine wisdom, and Christ is the Wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24; cf. Colossians 2:2-3),[181] Proverbs 8:22 is set forth as proof that the Son was begotten or (as Arians contend) created as the first (and only) being made by the Father Himself.

This Arian attempt to support the doctrine of the Son's creation is demolished by the fact that the Hebrew text simply does not say "created," as the Greek translation does, but "possessed," *qanah*.[182] No Hebrew manuscript reads "created" (*bara*)[183] in Proverbs 8:22. The semantic range of *qanah* in the OT includes "acquire," "buy," and "possess," but it never means "create" in any of its 85 appearances in 75 OT verses.[184] It is possible that the rather unusual[185] mistranslation of Proverbs 8:22 in current copies of the LXX is

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Aaron," יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן, κύριος ὁ ποιήσας τὸν Μωυσῆν καὶ τὸν Ααρων (LXX).

180 ἔκτισέν, from κτίζω, to create.

181 "Proverbs 8:22, 23 [refers to the] personal Wisdom (חָכְמָה). . . . That this is not a personified attribute is proved, 1. By the length of the description, and the large number of details. Personification is brief, and does not go into particulars. 2. By the ascription of personal actions, and a personal utterance of them: 'I was by him; I was daily his delight; when he prepared the heavens, I was there; my delights were with the sons of men; now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; blessed is the man that heareth me.' A personification occurs, generally, in the midst of a narrative. But this occurs in the midst of maxims and didactic utterances. 'In this passage,' says Nitzsch, 'we have an unmistakable germ of the ontological self-distinction of the Godhead'" ("Trinity in Unity," Chapter 4 in *Theology: The Doctrine of God,* in *Dogmatic Theology,* William G. T. Shedd, elec. acc. in *Christian Library Series, vol. 17: Systematic Theologies,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006). Note also that Christ apparently indicates His identitiy with the Wisdom of Proverbs 8:22ff through His use, in Revelation 3:14 (cf. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13), of the descriptive ἀρχή (ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν [κυριοῦ] εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ, Proverbs 8:22, LXX).

182 "The LORD possessed me," יְהוָה קָנָנִי, from the verb קָנָה.

183 בָּרָא.

184 Genesis 4:1; 14:19, 22; 25:10; 33:19; 39:1; 47:19-20, 22-23; 49:30; 50:13; Exodus 15:16; 21:2; Leviticus 22:11; 25:14-15, 28, 30, 44-45, 50; 27:24; Deuteronomy 28:68; 32:6; Joshua 24:32; Ruth 4:4-5, 8-10; 2 Samuel 12:3; 24:21, 24; 1 Kings 16:24; 2 Kings 12:13; 22:6; 1 Chronicles 21:24; 2 Chronicles 34:11; Nehemiah 5:8, 16; Psalm 74:2; 78:54; 139:13; Proverbs 1:5; 4:5, 7; 8:22; 15:32; 16:16; 17:16; 18:15; 19:8; 20:14; 23:23; Ecclesiastes 2:7; Isaiah 1:3; 11:11; 24:2; 43:24; Jeremiah 13:1-2, 4; 19:1; 32:7-9, 15, 25, 43-44; Ezekiel 7:12; Amos 8:6; Zechariah 11:5; 13:5.

185 The rendition of קָנָה as κτίζω is also a unique or at least unusual mistranslation in the LXX—the other 66 times κτίζω appears in the Greek Old Testament (including 37 in Apocryphal books; the verb appears 30 times in books found in the Hebrew canon) it is never a formal equivalent for the Hebrew קָנָה (although in Genesis 14:19, 22 the Hebrew participle קֹנֵה, "possessor," is changed to the LXX phrase ὃς ἔκτισεν, [He] who created"; the other 28 (or 64 total in the LXX) times κτίζω appears it does not bear any relation to קָנָה at all. The most common translation of קָנָה is a form of κτάομαι, to get/acquire/possess, the word that should also have been used in Proverbs 8:22.

a scribal error[186] arising from Sirach 24:9 in the Apocrypha, where wisdom, the personified representation of "the book of the covenant of the most high God, even the law which Moses commanded for an heritage unto the congregations of Jacob" (24:23), said "[God] created me from the beginning before the world, and I shall never fail."[187] Origen's Hexapla[188] gives strong evidence for the Hebrew "possessed" instead of "created." The Greek word *ektesato*,[189] the correct translation for the Hebrew *qanah*, "possessed," is the translation given by the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian,[190] and therefore appears in every column of the Hexapla[191] except that for that of the Seventy.[192] Origen also takes the unusual step of commenting on the LXX translation *ektise,* "created," that the Hebrew has *qanah,* supporting the view that he also knew that *create* was a mistranslation in the LXX of his day.[193] The inspired text of Scripture simply does not say that the Son was "created" in Proverbs 8:22.[194]

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[186] Intriguingly, Gregory of Nyssa wrote concerning the LXX "we have ourselves read in more ancient copies 'possessed' instead of 'created'" (*Against Eunomius,* II:2:10), evidencing that there were copies of the LXX itself (since his comment does not pertain to the alternative versions of Aquila, etc.) in his day that followed the Hebrew rendering.

[187] πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ἔκτισέν με καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπω.

[188] Cited from Fridericus Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum : quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totus Vetus Testamentum fragmenta,* vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1875.

[189] ἐκτήσατο, from κτάομαι, signifying to "procure for oneself, get, acquire . . . [and esp. in the perfect and pluperfect, but perhaps in the aorist] possess." Louw-Nida defines the verb as "to acquire possession of something" (57.58). BDAG defines it as "to gain possession of, procure for oneself, acquire, get."

[190] Cf. the Latin Vulgate, *Dominus possedit me*.

[191] The patristics evidence this dominance of "possessed" in all Greek Old Testament alternatives to the LXX: "They say, in tact, that 'the Lord created me' is a proof that our Lord is a creature, as if the Only-begotten Himself in that word confessed it. But we need not heed such an argument. They [are not] . . . able to show that the idea of the word in the Hebrew leads to this and no other meaning, seeing that the other translators have rendered it by 'possessed' or 'constituted'" (Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* II:1:22).

[192] That is, columns A, Σ, and Θ all read ἐκτήσατο, not ἔκτισέν.

[193] That is, column O reads, κύριος ἔκτισέ με (῾Εβρ. ἀδωναὶ κανανὶ) ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.

[194] Even if the mistranslation of the current LXX were correct, it would not require that the Son is a creature. Athanasius (incorrectly, as one with no significant knowledge of Hebrew), accepting the LXX reading as valid, argues that it "has a very apposite [meaning]; for it is true to say that the Son was created too, but this took place when He became man; for creation belongs to man. And any one may find this sense duly given in the divine oracles, who, instead of accounting their study a secondary matter, investigates the time and characters, and the object, and thus studies and ponders what he reads. Now as to the season spoken of, he will find for certain that, whereas the Lord always is, at length in fulness of the ages He became man; and whereas He is Son of God, He became Son of man also. And as to the object he will understand, that, wishing to annul our death, He took on Himself a body from the Virgin Mary; that by offering this unto the Father a sacrifice for all, He might deliver us all, who by fear of death were all our life through subject to bondage. And as to the character, it is indeed the Saviour's, but is said of Him when

Proverbs eight actually supports the doctrine of the eternal existence and the eternal generation of the Son in the strongest manner. The type of the Son as Wisdom makes this plain. Who can imagine that God was not always wise, that His Wisdom was not always with Him? In eternity past the Father did not have any wisdom? The specific declarations in Proverbs 8:22-31 powerfully manifest the Son's eternality. He was already "possessed" by the Father "in the beginning of his way,[195] before his works of old" (v. 22)—so the Son belonged to the Father, as the Father did to the Son, and the Spirit to each, as their precious possession and treasure, from eternity. The Son is "from everlasting,[196] from the beginning,[197] or ever the earth was" (v. 23). He was with the

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He took a body and said, 'The Lord created me a beginning of His ways unto His works.' For as it properly belongs to God's Son to be everlasting and in the Father's bosom, so on His becoming man, the words befitted Him, 'The Lord created me.' For then it is said of Him, as also that He hungered, and thirsted, and asked where Lazarus lay, and suffered, and rose again. And as, when we hear of Him as Lord and God and true Light, we understand Him as being from the Father, so on hearing, 'The Lord created,' and 'Servant,' and 'He suffered,' we shall justly ascribe this, not to the Godhead, for it is irrelevant, but we must interpret it by that flesh which He bore for our sakes: for to it these things are proper, and this flesh was none other's than the Word's. And if we wish to know the object: attained by this, we shall find it to be as follows: that the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and that we partaking of His Spirit, might be [saved and made like Him], a gift which we could not otherwise have gained than by His clothing Himself in our created body, for hence we derive our name of 'men of God' and 'men in Christ.' But as we, by receiving the Spirit, do not lose our own proper substance, so the Lord, when made man for us, and bearing a body, was no less God; for He was not lessened by the envelopment of the body, but rather . . . rendered it immortal" (*De Decretis* (Defence of the Nicene Definition), Chapter 3). Many other Trinitarian patristic writers dealt at length with this passage and with the LXX rendering, e. g., Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius,* II:3:2; Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 30:2, Hilary of Poiters, *On the Trinity,* 12:35ff., etc.

[195] The beginning of the Father's way is eternity past, "before" the creation, the "works of old."

[196] מֵעוֹלָם. This Hebrew term is not restricted to a designation of absolute eternality (cf. Joshua 24:2, etc.), but is often used in this sense in Scripture: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever (מִן־הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעֹלָם). And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD" (1 Chronicles 16:36); "Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed *be* thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever (מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם)" (1 Chronicles 29:10); "Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever (מִן־הָעוֹלָם עַד־הָעוֹלָם): and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise" (Nehemiah 9:5); "thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting (מֵעוֹלָם)" (Isaiah 63:16); "I cause you to dwell . . . in the land . . . for ever and ever (לְמִן־עוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם)" (Jeremiah 7:7—this includes eternity on the new earth, Revelation 21:1); "Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old (כִּי מֵעוֹלָם הֵמָּה)" (Psalm 25:6); "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting (מֵהָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם)" (Psalm 41:13); "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting (מֵעוֹלָם עַד־עוֹלָם), thou *art* God" (Psalm 90:2); "Thy throne *is* established of old: thou *art* from everlasting (מֵעוֹלָם)" (Psalm 93:2); "But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting (מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם) upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17); "Blessed *be* the LORD God

Father "before the mountains were settled," and "before the hills . . .while as yet he had not made the earth" (v. 25-26), just as God exists "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever [He] formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). When there were "no depths . . . no fountains . . . fields . . . world . . . heavens . . . clouds . . . sea . . . foundations of the earth" (v. 24-29), then the Son testifies that He was "by him [the Father], *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him" (v. 30). Proverbs eight testifies of this ineffable joy, delight, and love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father (cf. John 17:24), and their joy in the redemption of the elect (Proverbs 8:31; cf. John 17:3, 6; Ephesians 1:4).

In the eternity past spoken of in Proverbs eight, the Son was begotten, or "brought forth"[198] (v. 24, 25). The verb in this Hebrew tense[199] signifies "to be brought forth through labour pains."[200] Psalm 51:5a and Job 15:7b, the only other comparable references,[201] both also speak of the begetting or bearing process.[202] The Son's eternal existence as God, and His eternal generation by the Father, are beautifully taught in

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of Israel from everlasting to everlasting (מִן־הָעוֹלָם ׀ וְעַד הָעוֹלָם): and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 106:48).

197 When מֵרֹאשׁ is in an absolute or unmodified state, as in Proverbs 8:23, it designates eternity in its other Old Testament references (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 40:21; 41:4; 41:26). When modifiers are attached to it, or it is in a construct state, it naturally has a variety of other significations; "from the beginning" is a very different time designation than "from the beginning of the week," etc.; cf. Leviticus 13:12; Numbers 23:9; etc.; but note the absolute form in 2 Samuel 16:1, although "of the hill" (as in the KJV) is implied). Since the Son was already extant in the beginning, He is eternal, as eternal as the Father. The difference between מֵעוֹלָם and מֵרֹאשׁ is that the former "points backwards into the infinite distance" and the latter indicates that the Son existed before "the beginning of the world" (*Commentary on the Old Testament,* C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, orig. pub. T & T Clark, Edinburgh, elec. acc. in the *Christian Library Series, vol. 15: Classic Commentary Collection,* AGES Library, Rio, WI: 2006, on Proverbs 8:23).

198 "'Was begotten,' as the Targum and Syriac version; the Septuagint is, 'he begot me'; and so it is to be understood of the eternal generation and sonship of Christ; for the word חוללתי is used of generation, Job 15:7 Ps 51:5. Christ is the firstborn of every creature, begotten, born, and brought forth before any creature was in being. . . . [T]his [is] a matter of infinite moment and concern, and deserving of the strictest attention and observation . . . the eternal generation of Christ [is] an article of faith most surely to be believed." (John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, on Proverbs 8:24-25).

199 חוֹלָלְתִּי, Polal perfect 1 common singular of חיל, both in v. 24 and v. 25.

200 KB.

201 Both verses also have a polal perfect 1 common singular verb. No other references to חיל in the Polal are found in the Old Testament.

202 Note the translation γεννᾷ, present active indicative of γεννάω, "to bear or beget," for "brought forth" in Proverbs 8:25, LXX. The Greek Old Testament supports the Son's eternally being begotten (consider the present tense) in this text. It is noteworthy that the LXX also renders the קָנָה of v. 24 with γεννάω in Zechariah 13:5.

Proverbs eight. He is by no means a creature, a temporal creation of the Father, but His "goings forth[203] *have been* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2)—from before the origin of time, the Son existed (Isaiah 48:16);[204] from all eternity He has been, and is being now, and will be to all eternity future, begotten by the Father.

The Unitarian dogma that *only-begotten* means *created* runs into various other problems as well. It requires that God the Father, Jehovah, who "changeth not" (Malachi 3:6), was not always Father—indeed, for all of eternity past, until He supposedly decided to create the Son, He was not the Father. Furthermore, contrary to the Biblical, Trinitarian doctrine, the Arian god had nobody "rejoicing always before him" (Proverbs 8:30), but was isolated and solitary, with no ability to exercise love or engage in communion. He needed to create the world in order to manifest these attributes. In contrast, the Trinitarian God is entirely self-sufficient, able to fully exercise His love in the everlasting communion among the Father, Son, and Spirit.

The fact that the Son is the Father's *only begotten* does nothing to advance the Arian dogma that Christ is a creature. On the contrary, it firmly fixes the absolute and equal Deity of the Son of God with His Father, and thus strongly favors the classical doctrine of the Trinity.

Revelation 3:14 is used by Unitarians to affirm that the Son was the first creature

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[203] The *hapax legomenon* מוֹצָאָה, "goings forth," here denotes "the act of going out. . . . [The possibility of this] meaning . . . is placed beyond all doubt by Hosea 6:3; 1 Kings 10:28; Ezekiel 12:4; and 2 Samuel 3:25. . . . The [sense of the place, rather than the act of going out] . . . does not suit the predicate מִימֵי עוֹלָם here, since the *days* of eternity cannot be called *places* of departure. . . . [T]he meaning 'times of going forth' cannot be supported by a single passage. . . . Both קֶדֶם and יְמֵי עוֹלָם are used to denote hoary antiquity . . . both words are . . . used in Proverbs 8:22 and 23 to denote the eternity preceding the creation of the world" (*Commentary on the Old Testament,* C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, on Micah 5:2 (v. 1, Heb.)). The fact that the plural form, "goings forth," is used in Micah 5:2 suggests that this going was an eternal process, not a point action, and thus supports the eternal generation of the Son. The plural does not require a reference to two different actions; compare the plural of the related, masculine form of מוֹצָאָה, מוֹצָא, used of a singular act in Ezekiel 12:4.

The LXX has the plural ἔξοδοι, from ἔξοδος, for מוֹצָאָה in Micah 5:2. The definition of this word in Lidell-Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* includes "going out . . . procession . . . emission." Sirach 40:1 employs ἔξοδος of the birth process.

[204] מֵעֵת הֱיוֹתָהּ שָׁם אָנִי, translated as "from the time that it was, there *am* I" in the KJV, and signifying "'before the time that it was, there was I'; Christ existed before his incarnation, before he appeared as the great Prophet in Israel; he existed as the Word and Son of God from all eternity, and was with God his Father from everlasting; he was by him, and brought up with him, and lay in his bosom so early" (John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, on Isaiah 48:16).

made by the Father. They argue,

> The Bible plainly states that in his prehuman existence, Jesus was a created spirit being, just as angels were spirit beings created by God. Neither the angels nor Jesus had existed before their creation. Jesus, in his prehuman existence, was . . . "the beginning of God's creation" (Revelation 3:14) . . . Yes, Jesus was created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations.[205]

Thus, Arians use the reference to Christ as "the beginning of the creation of God"[206] to establish their dogma that the Son was the first being created out of nothing by the true God. They equate "beginning" with the passive "one begun," and affirm that this phrase is equivalent to "the first creature created by God," thus supporting Unitarianism. However, Arians must overlook the context of this statement, the lexical definitions of the word here rendered "beginning,"[207] the other uses of this word in Scripture, the background of the Greek Old Testament, and the evidence of ancient Christian literature to come to their conclusion.

The context of the declaration of the Son of God to the church at Laodicea plainly affirms His Deity. Immediately after Revelation 3:14, Christ states, "I know thy works" (3:15). For Christ to know all the works of all the members of the church at Laodicea, and the other churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3 (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8) indicates His omniscience. The Lord Jesus states, "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Revelation 2:23)—but searching and knowing the heart is a work that pertains to Jehovah alone (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:17; 2 Chronicles 6:30; Psalm 7:9; 44:21; Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; 20:10, 12; Acts 1:24; Romans 8:27; Hebrews 4:13), just as is the work of being Judge of all men (Psalm 62:12; Romans 2:5-11; 14:12; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:12). It would be very strange if the Lord Jesus were to deny His Deity in Revelation 3:14, but then affirm it in the very next verse. Furthermore, Christ's declaration in Revelation 3:19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" also indicates His nature as Jehovah, for the Lord Jesus alludes to the many other Scriptural passages that affirm that the one God is the loving Chastener of His people (Deuteronomy 8:5; 2 Samuel 7:14; Job 5:17; Psalm 6:1; 29:11; 94:10; Proverbs 3:11-12; Jeremiah 2:30; 7:28; 10:28; 30:11; 31:18; Zephaniah 3:2;

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[205] *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section "What Does the Bible Teach About God and Jesus?" pg. 14.

[206] ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.

[207] ἀρχή.

1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:5-9). Furthermore, for Christ to be in the presence of and fellowship with all those who seek Him (Revelation 3:20) requires His Deity. No Being that is not omnipresent and omniscient can know about and commune with "any man" worldwide who seeks for His fellowship.[208] Since Jesus Christ affirms His Deity (at least) three times[209] in His message to the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:15, 19, 20), a Unitarian who takes Revelation 3:14 as an affirmation that Christ is a creature makes the Lord repeatedly contradict Himself.

Greek lexica demonstrate that *arche*, "beginning" in Revelation 3:14, affirms that Christ is the origin or source of the creation, not the first created being. The Greek word in this verse means "one who or that which constitutes an initial cause—'first cause, origin,'"[210] or "beginning, origin . . . one with whom a process begins, beginning . . . the first cause, the beginning,"[211] or "beginning, origin . . . source,"[212] or "beginning, origin . . . the person . . . that commences . . . that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause."[213] The Arian who uses Revelation 3:14 to prove his Christological dogma must prove that "beginning" does not mean "origin," a common definition of the word according to all standard Greek lexica.[214] The phrase "the beginning of the creation of

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208 One can see from this how grievously Roman Catholicism errs in its practice of prayers to dead people. Assuming that a dead person, like Mary, is able to hear and answer, or have fellowship with, the millions who at every moment are praying to her worldwide, ascribes to such a person the Divine attributes of omniscience and omnipresence. Even if dead people in heaven wanted men on earth to pray to them (which they do not), and they did nothing else all day and night than try to listen to the prayers of each one on earth who petitioned them, the sheer fact of the continuing humanity of the dead would require that the overwhelming majority of such prayers would not be answered. If, say, 10,000,000 people (a very conservative estimate—it is only c. 0.1% of the population of the world) were praying to Mary at any given moment, she would only be able to understand what one, or maybe two or three, of them would be saying at a time. Without divinizing Mary, 99.99% of those who call on her are certain of a busy signal. However, there are a great many devils idolatrous worshippers can have fellowship with (1 Corinthians 10:20) while they believe they are communing with God or the saints. God alone is the One "that hearest prayer" (Psalm 65:2).

209 As we will see, the phrase in question in Revelation 3:14 is itself an affirmation of the Deity of the Son; thus, at least four declarations of this doctrine are found in the discourse to the Laodicean church.

210 *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida (LN), 89:16.

211 Danker, Frederick William (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd. ed. (BDAG).

212 Lidell, H. G. & Scott, R. *Greek-English Lexicon,* 9th ed.

213 *Greek English Lexicon,* Joseph Henry Thayer, elec. acc. in Hamel, Ken, *The Online Bible for Mac,* version 3.0.

214 This is not to say that the semantic range of ἀρχή includes nothing besides the idea of origin or source. The word can also, for example, mean "the first place, principality . . . magistracy" (Thayer), "an

God"[215] is an objective genitive followed by a subjective genitive, signifying "the beginner/originator of God's creation."[216] Revelation 3:14, rather than teaching that the Lord Jesus is a creature, actually strongly affirms His Deity (in accordance with the context of Revelation 3:14-22) as the Creator.

The context of the other uses of *arche* in the book of Revelation very strongly supports a signification of "beginning" in the sense of orgin or source, rather than the Unitarian interpretation of "one begun," in Revelation 3:14. The word appears in three other verses in the Revelation (1:8; 21:6; 22:13). In Revelation 1:8, Christ, the speaker (see v. 7, 17-18),[217] declares "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning [*arche*] and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."[218] The status of *arche*, through its connection with the titles of Alpha and Omega, the fact that He who has this title is, and was, and is to come, and the affirmation that He who is

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authority figure who initiates activity or process, ruler, authority" (BDAG), "first place or power, sovereignity" (Lidell-Scott), or "one who rules or governs — 'ruler, governor'" (Louw-Nida). This sense would convey the idea in Revelation 3:14 that Christ is the ruler or sovereign over the creation of God, again distinguishing Him from the creation and affirming His eternality and Deity. To properly gain exegetical legitimacy for their position, Unitarians must prove that in Revelation 3:14 ἀρχή means neither origin or source of the creation, nor ruler or sovereign over the creation, since both possibilities place the Son of God outside the realm of the created order to affirm His Divinity. Such proof never has been, nor ever will be, forthcoming.

[215] τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.

[216] Alternatively, if one takes ἀρχή to signify *sovereign/ruler* [of God's creation], τῆς κτίσεως is a genitive of subordination, so that "the genitive substantive specifies that which is subordinated to or under the dominion of the head noun. . . [the] *of* [means] . . . *over* or something like it that suggest dominion or priority" (pg. 103, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*). The subjective genitive τοῦ Θεοῦ is unchanged. Note that in Colossians 1:15's πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως the genitive of κτίσις in relation to Christ is a genitive of subordination (cf. also 1:18). This is significant since the church at Laodicea, addressed in Revelation 3:14-22, was certainly familiar with the epistle to the Colossians, including its Christological declarations (Colossians 4:16).

[217] "Is the spokesman [of v. 8] God the Father or God the Son? Persuasive evidence has been advanced in favor of the latter identification. ἐγώ εἰμι (*Ego eimi,* 'I am'), the words with which the verse begins, is a frequent self-designation appropriated by Jesus in the NT, especially in the gospel of John (e. g., John 8:58). . . 'The Alpha and the Omega' is a self-description by Jesus in Revelation 22:13. It more probably carried the same force in this verse. Jesus Christ has been the central figure in vv. 1-7. A switch to God the Father in v. 8 is improbable because it is so abrupt[.] [T]he case is further strengthened by a comparison of this verse with Rev. 1:17-18, where similar titles are without question applied to Christ[.] Lastly, because *erchetai* in v. 7 clearly refers to Christ's coming, the same must be the case with ὁ ἐρχόμενος (*ho erchomenos,* "the coming one") in v. 8. The evidence in favor of seeing Christ as the speaker is impressive" (*Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary,* Robert L. Thomas. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992, comment on Revelation 1:8).

[218] The Received Text reading ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος is supported by many Greek MSS, the Latin Vulgate, codex Sinaiaticus, etc. The reading ὁ Κύριος, rather than κύριος ὁ Θεός, is also correct. The common, classical, traditional Greek Bible, the Received Text, in all its readings, is inerrant and autographical.

these things is "the Almighty," clearly manifests that Christ is "the beginning" in the sense that He is the Creator or source of all. A creature might be the "beta," but no creature is the "Alpha and Omega," nor the self-existent He who "is," nor "the Almighty."[219] In Revelation 21:6, God[220] states that He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Here again "the beginning" is the Originator or Beginner of all, not one who is Himself begun or originated. In Revelation 22:12-13, the Son says, "I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Here again "the beginning" is paralleled with being the "Alpha" and "the first." A creature made by God could be "the second," but God alone is "the first." The other uses of "the beginning" in Revelation by no means support the Unitarian affirmation that in Revelation 3:14 Christ is "the beginning" in the sense that He is "one begun." Rather, Revelation 3:14's ascription to Christ of the title "the beginning" harmonizes with the other uses of the word *arche* in the book to reveal the Son as the Creator and Originator of all creation, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the One who always was, who of Himself is, and who always will be, the Almighty.

Not only does a simple word study of *arche* in Revelation demonstrate that Christ is Beginning in that He is Source and Originator of creation, but the anaphoric[221] article[222] in Revelation 3:14 ties the use of "beginning" back to the use in 1:8, just as the

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219 Arians universally deny the reference of this verse to the Lord Jesus, despite the context of v. 7, for they cannot accept that He is "the Almighty" (even apart from their difficulties with the other titles of the verse). However, even if one granted the (invalid, anti-contextual) Unitarian asservation that God the Father is in view in Revelation 1:8, the point that ἀρχή signifies origin or source, not "one begun," is unassailable, unless Unitarians wish to argue that the Father is a created being because He is the ἀρχή.

220 Indeed, the Son appears to be the God on the throne in this text, as He is the One who executes the judgment of 20:11-15 on His throne. See the discussion in footnote #154. Arians would be loath to admit that the Son is He who speaks in 21:6, for the speaker is plainly the one God in 21:7. But ascribing the declaration of 21:6 to the Father drives them to the fact that if God is "the beginning," the title refers to the uncreated Originator of all things.

221 "The anaphoric article is the article denoting previous reference. (It derives its name from the Greek verb ἀναφέρειν, 'to bring back, to bring up.') The first mention of the substantive is usually anarthrous because it is merely being introduced. But subsequent mentions of it use the article, for the article is now pointing back to *the* substantive previously mentioned. The anaphoric article has, by nature, then, a pointing force to it, reminding the reader of who or what was mentioned previously. It is the most common use of the article and the easiest usage to identify" (pg. 217-218, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*).

222 ἡ ἀρχή.

other titles in 3:14 connect back to previous mentions of these titles for Christ.[223] Thus, Greek grammar indicates that Christ is "the beginning" in 3:14 because He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, . . . the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

The fact that the church at Laodicea was familiar with the epistle to the Colossians also contributes to the understanding of the Lord Jesus as "the beginning" in Revelation 3:14. The Colossean church had sent a copy of their Pauline epistle to the nearby[224] Laodicean church (Colossians 4:16). There are definite similarities in terminology in the message to the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14-22) and the book of Colossians.[225] The Christological declaration in Colossians 1:15ff[226] that the Lord Jesus Christ is the firstborn, the first in rank, over every creature (v. 15) and the beginning (*arche*, v. 18) because He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (v. 16-17) supports the Trinitarian recognition that Revelation 3:14 teaches that the Son is not a creature but the Originator and Source of creation.[227] In Colossians 1:18, Christ is the *arche* in the same sense that He is *arche* in the four uses in the book of Revelation (1:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). As the Creator and Sustainer (Colossians 1:16-17) who is over every creature (Colossians 1:15), He is the Beginning (Colossians 1:18), the Source or Origin of the

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223 3:14, "the Amen" (ὁ Ἀμήν), 1:18, "I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen" (καὶ ὁ ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρός, καὶ ἰδού, ζῶν εἰμὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν); 3:14, "the faithful and true witness" (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός), 1:5, "Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness," (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός) and "He that is true" (ὁ ἀληθινός, 3:7). In 3:14, the articles on each title are anaphoric.

224 Only c. 20 miles separated the cities of Colossae and Laodicea.

225 cf. Revelation 3:21/Colossians 3:1 (cf. Ephesians 2:6); Revelation 3:17-19/Colossians 1:27; 2:8, 18, 23; 2:2, 3.

226 Compare the discussion of Colossians 1:15, and Christ's position as firstborn, above.

227 "The view that takes *arche* in the active sense to mean 'beginner,' 'originator,' or 'initiator' is clearly preferable [to the passive sense of *arche* as 'one begun.']. . . . This . . . is the meaning that corresponds with Paul's response to the doctrinal error that had arisen earlier in nearby Colosse and perhaps already existed in Laodicea because of the close communications that existed between churches in the two cities. . . . Paul uses very similar terminology [to that of Revelation 3:14] in Colossians 1:15 where he calls Christ 'the first begotten of all creation' and in Colossians 1:18 where he calls Him 'the beginning (ἀρχή).' . . . At that point in Colossians, he was developing Christ's uniqueness as creator and counteracting an error regarding the Person of Christ that reduced Him to the level of a hierarchy of mediating powers . . . this is probably the point of ['the beginning of the creation of God'] in Revelation 3:14. . . . Christ is unique and therefore pre-eminent. He has supreme authority and power to execute His word, including the warnings and promises in the message to follow[.] The words *tes ktiseos tou Theou* ("the creation of God") require a sense that is inclusive of all creation. The meaning is the same as that of πάντα (*panta,* 'all things') in John 1:3 and τὰ πάντα (*ta panta,* 'all things') in Colossians 1:16. [That is, the phrase speaks of] His creatorship of the whole universe" (*Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary,* Robert L. Thomas, on Revelation 3:14).

entire created order and all things whatsoever (v. 18c). The Lord Jesus, who is also the source,[228] founder, sustainer (John 1:35-37; 3:29; Matthew 16:18),[229] and life-giver[230] for the church, is of right her head[231] and ruler (v. 18a-b). As the source and origin and thus the ruler of all, He is the first in rank, the firstborn, over the dead (v. 18d), and possesses "in all *things* . . . the preeminence" (v. 18e).[232] The Arian dogma that Christ is *arche* as the first created being is impossible in Colossians 1:18. It is plainly negated in v.16-17, which shows the Son is the Creator, not a creature. Only God has the preeminence in all things (v. 18e; Isaiah 48:11). No creature, of whatever greatness, could do what Christ does for the church, or be at all an effective head of every one of His assemblies worldwide. No creature could have all fulness (Colossians 1:19) dwell in Him, especially not the "fulness of the Godhead" (Colossians 2:9). The fact that the church at Laodicea would have been familiar with the designation of Christ as Beginning, in the sense that He was true God, Origin and Source of all, in Colossians 1:18, supports the same sense in Revelation 3:14. The comparison of the message to Laodicea and to Colossae further

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228 One might alternatively interpret the ἀρχή of Colossians 1:18 in the sense of *ruler;* this would likewise give no support for the Unitarian dogma that Christ is a creature on account of Revelation 3:14. It is true that His headship or rule over the church is in view in Colossians 1:18, but this rule is on account of His position as ἀρχή; He rules because He is the source (ἀρχή) of the creation (v. 16-17), the One who is before all things, who created all things, and sustains all things.

229 The Lord Jesus originated the church during His earthly ministry; otherwise verses such as Matthew 16:18; 18:20 would have been a great cause of confusion. The church was "added unto," not founded, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41, 47). Christ sang in the church (Hebrews 2:12 & Matthew 26:30), His bride (John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-33) and gave the church the ordinances (1 Corinthians 11:2) of baptism (John 4:1ff.; Matthew 28:18-20) and the Supper (Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:18, 22ff.) long before Pentecost.

230 Christ brings spiritual life to the church by rising from the dead and conquering death and sin for her (Colossians 1:18; 2:13-14), as well as by nourishing and cherishing her as the Head of the body (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:29-30).

231 The emphatic αὐτός for the Lord Jesus' headship over the church conveys the "meaning . . . that Christ alone—Christ and no other—is Head of the church." This unique headship makes sense if the Son is God—if He were merely a creature, one would wonder how the Lord Jesus could be Head of something in this preeminent way. Would not God be over Christ as the real Head of the church? Furthermore, if the ὅς "in this context is almost equivalent to 'because he is'" then Christ's Headship of the church is rooted in His position as her ἀρχή, so that the "meaning then is that Christ is the origin and source of the life of the church, the fount of its being" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary,* Colossians 1:18).

232 The αὐτός in v. 18e is unneeded grammatically (as in v. 18a) and "is normally not expressed in Greek because it is implied in the personal ending of the verb. Here, however, it is expressed, suggesting that preeminence is the exclusive right of Christ. 'He himself' or 'he alone' is the idea. 'Have supremacy [KJV, preeminence]' literally means 'have the first place'; or perhaps better still, 'become first.' C.F.D. Moule takes the whole phrase to mean: '"that he might be alone supreme among all"—sole head of all things'" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Colossians 1:18). This sort of supremacy is consistent only with Christ's absolute Deity.

demonstrates the anti-contextual nature of the Arian reading of Revelation 3:14.

Amazingly, Arians argue that the word "beginning" in Revelation 3:14 "cannot rightly be interpreted to mean that Jesus was the 'beginner' of God's creation . . . [in light of the fact that] John uses various forms of the Greek word [*arche*] more than 20 times, and these always have the common [anti-Trinitiarian] meaning . . . Jesus was created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations."[233] The other uses of *arche* in the book of Revelation, inspired by God through the apostle John, have already been analyzed and been shown to powerfully verify that Revelation 3:14 teaches that Christ originates creation, so much so that the dishonesty of claiming Johannine usage in support of the Unitarian position on Revelation 3:14 is blatant. The Unitarian claim also runs afoul of the rest of John's writings. John's gospel affirms that the Son of God already "was," already existed, "in the beginning [*arche*]" (John 1:1, 2), so He existed before all time-bound beings and is eternal.[234] 1 John 1:1 likewise affirms that the Son already "was" from all eternity and thus predates all temporal "beginning." 1 John 2:13-14 twice calls the Son of God the One who is "from the beginning," again identifying Him as the eternal God. John 6:64 likewise employs *arche* to affirm the eternal existence of the Lord Jesus by indicating that He knew from before the start of creation who the elect and non-elect were—obviously He could only have knowledge from eternity if He existed from that time. To conclude that John's use of *arche* in some way supports Arianism is wildly inaccurate.[235]

The uses of this common word[236] elsewhere in the New Testament also

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233 *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* section "What Does the Bible Teach About God and Jesus?" pg. 14.

234 Compare ἀρχή in Genesis 1:1 (LXX) and in John 1:1-2: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν (Genesis 1:1); Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. (John 1:1-2).

235 The other appearances of ἀρχή in John's writings are John 2:11; 8:25, 44; 15:27; 16:4; 1 John 2:7, 24; 3:8, 11. These references prove nothing one way or another about the status of the Lord Jesus as Creator or creature. It should be noted that the Johannine uses of ἀρχή are not all temporal—origin or source is clearly attested (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13-14). It should also be noted that ἀρχή after a preposition does not necessarily denote a reference to the beginning of the created order; the start of Christ's ministry (John 15:27), the start of the rebellion of Satan (1 John 3:8), the first hearing of the Christian message (1 John 2:24), etc. are also attested Johnannine uses.

236 Since ἀρχή appears 58 times in the New Testament, and most of the uses are not Christologically significant, comment on each of these appearances will not be undertaken. The word commonly means "ruler" or something similar (cf. Colossians 2:10; Titus 3:1. Such uses provide no support for Arianism, for the Son as "ruler of the creation of God" gives Unitarians less than nothing). The word is found in

demonstrates that Unitarians have greatly overreached in their attempt to find support for their dogma in Revelation 3:14. Hebrews 7:3 teaches that the Son of God "has neither beginning [*arche*] of days, nor end of life." Although Unitarians say, "So Jesus . . . had a beginning to his life,"[237] the Bible says the Lord Jesus "has neither beginning of days, nor end of life." Hebrews 1:10, speaking of Christ, declares, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning [*arche*] hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." This passage with *arche* validates that the Son of God existed as Jehovah[238] before the creation of the world, and is Himself the Creator of all. The New Testament use of *arche,* "beginning" in Revelation 3:14, provides no support at all for Unitarian dogma.

The Greek Old Testament[239] validates the use of *arche* as "source" or "origin,"[240] supporting the Trinitarian interpretation of Revelation 3:14. Numerous verses[241] validate this sense of *beginning*: "For the worshipping of idols not to be named is the beginning [*arche*], the cause, and the end, of all evil."[242] "Reason is the beginning [*arche*] of every work, and counsel precedes every undertaking."[243] "The fear of the Lord is the beginning [*arche*] of wisdom."[244] "For pride is the beginning [*arche*] of sin, and he that hath it shall

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various genitive constructions, including both the objective genitive Trinitarians hold is found in Revelation 3:14 ("the creation's origin/the Originator of creation) and the partitive genitive that Arianism assumes for the verse. It is not surprising that the common partitive genitive would be employed among the numerous NT references to ἀρχή. Unitarianism is required to prove, not assume, that this category is employed in Revelation 3:14, if it wishes to use the verse as a proof-text—but this it cannot do.

237 *Should You Believe In the Trinity?* section "What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?" pg. 16.

238 See footnote #164.

239 Brenton's version of the LXX is cited, unless otherwise mentioned, for the canonical Greek OT. For the Apocrypha, the King James Version is used unless another translation is specifically mentioned.

240 Of course, not all of the 215 appearance of the word in the LXX are this usage. The view, consistent with the Deity of Christ, that *arche* in Revelation 3:14 means "ruler" also finds ample parallels in the LXX (Genesis 34:2; 42:6; 49:10; Leviticus 4:22; Numbers 2:5, 7, 10; Judges 4:2; 1 Chronicles 29:12; *et alii*). Clear uses of ἀρχή + genitive that fit this interpretation are also found; note the genitives of subordination in Exodus 6:25; Numbers 3:24, 30, 32, 16:2, etc. Job 40:19 (LXX, 40:14) even refers to the "chief of the creation of the Lord" (ἀρχὴ πλάσματος κυρίου). Numerous further significations of ἀρχή are likewise represented.

241 Good examples of this use, other than those listed below, are found in Proverbs 16:7; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Wisdom 6:17, 22; 7:5, 17, 18; 12:16; 14:12; Sirach 25:24.

242 Wisdom 14:27 (ἡ γὰρ τῶν ἀνωνύμων εἰδώλων θρησκεία παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας ἐστίν). The connection of *arche* and "source" is explicit.

243 Sirach 37:16 (RSV Apocrypha). ἀρχὴ παντὸς ἔργου λόγος καὶ πρὸ πάσης πράξεως βουλή.

244 Psalm 110:10 (ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου). Also Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Sirach 1:14.

pour out abomination."[245] "For the devising of idols was the beginning [*arche*] of spiritual fornication, and the invention of them the corruption of life."[246] Furthermore, God, in language very similar to that of the book of Revelation, is explicitly called *arche* in connection with His character as the self-existent I AM: "Who has wrought and done these things? He has called it who called it from the generations of old; I God, the first [*arche*] and to *all* futurity, I AM" (Isaiah 41:4).[247] The Greek Old Testament background for the use of *arche* in Revelation 3:14 does not help the Arians.

Instances of *arche* as *source* or *origin*[248] are also found in apostolic patristic writers who are almost contemporary with the composition of the book of the Revelation: "Flee from divisions, as the beginning [*arche*] of evils."[249] "The love of money is the beginning [*arche*] of all troubles."[250] Furthermore, Christ is "he who was from the beginning [*arche*], who appeared as new yet proved to be old, and is always young as he is born in the hearts of saints. This is the Eternal One, who today is accounted a Son, through whom the church is enriched and grace is unfolded and multiplied among the saints, grace which gives understanding, reveals mysteries, announces seasons, rejoices over the faithful, [and] is given to those who seek."[251] The apostolic patristic writers

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[245] Sirach 10:13 (ὅτι ἀρχὴ ὑπερηφανίας ἁμαρτία καὶ ὁ κρατῶν αὐτῆς ἐξομβρήσει βδέλυγμα). Note also Sirach 10:12: "The beginning [*arche*] of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker" (ἀρχὴ ὑπερηφανίας ἀνθρώπου ἀφίστασθαι ἀπὸ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ποιήσαντος αὐτὸν ἀπέστη ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ).

[246] Wisdom 14:12 (ἀρχὴ γὰρ πορνείας ἐπίνοια εἰδώλων εὕρεσις δὲ αὐτῶν φθορὰ ζωῆς).

[247] τίς ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐποίησεν ταῦτα ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὴν ὁ καλῶν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ γενεῶν ἀρχῆς ἐγὼ θεὸς πρῶτος καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐπερχόμενα ἐγώ εἰμι.

[248] The use of the word for "ruler" is also found; cf. Martyrdom of Polycarp 10:2: "The proconsul said: 'Persuade the people.' But Polycarp said: 'You I might have considered worthy of a reply, for we have been taught to pay proper respect to rulers [*archais*] and authorities appointed by God, as long as it does us no harm; but as for these, I do not think they are worthy, that I should have to defend myself before them'" (ἔφη ὁ ἀνθύπατος· Πεῖσον τὸν δῆμον. ὁ δὲ Πολύκαρπος εἶπεν· Σὲ μὲν κἂν λόγου ἠξίωσα, δεδιδάγμεθα γὰρ ἀρχαῖς καὶ ἐξουσίαις ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναις τιμὴν κατὰ τὸ προσῆκον τὴν μὴ βλάπτουσαν ἡμᾶς, ἀπονέμειν· ἐκείνους δὲ οὐκ ἀξίους ἡγοῦμαι τοῦ ἀπολογεῖσθαι αὐτοῖς).

[249] Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans 8:1 (Τοὺς δὲ μερισμοὺς φεύγετε, ὡς ἀρχὴν κακῶν).

[250] Polycarp to the Philippians 4:1 (Ἀρχὴ δὲ πάντων χαλεπῶν φιλαργυρία). Polycarp is alluding to 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (ῥίζα γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστὶν ἡ φιλαργυρία). Polycarp's substitution of *arche* for the apostle Paul's "root" clearly evidences a use of ἀρχή for source or origin. Note also Barnabas 1:6.

[251] The Epistle to Diognetus 11:4-5 (οὗτος ὁ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, ὁ καινὸς φανεὶς καὶ παλαιὸς εὑρεθεὶς καὶ πάντοτε νέος ἐν ἁγίων καρδίαις γεννώμενος. οὗτος ὁ ἀεί, ὁ σήμερον υἱὸς λογισθείς, δι᾽ οὗ πλουτίζεται ἡ ἐκκλησία καὶ χάρις ἁπλουμένη ἐν ἁγίοις πληθύνεται, παρέχουσα νοῦν, φανεροῦσα μυστήρια, διαγγέλλουσα καιρούς, χαίρουσα ἐπὶ πιστοῖς, ἐπιζητοῦσι δωρουμένη).

affirmed Christ is the "beginning" because He "is the Eternal One." The use of *arche* in the most ancient Christian literature supports the Trinitarian contention that Christ is "beginning" as God, not "one begun" as a creature.

In Revelation 3:14, Christ is "the beginning of the creation" because He is the source or origin of all things, the One who began the creation. The phrase establishes the Deity of Christ. The Unitarian who wishes to use the phrase as a proof-text that the Son of God was created must engage in serious mutilation of the Scriptural and Koiné Greek context. The verse fails as an Arian proof-text because of the context of Christ's declaration to the church at Laodicea, the context of the book of Revelation, the contextual comparison to the epistle to the Colossians, the context of John's usage of "beginning," and the context of the word in the rest of the New Testament. It fails because of the lexical significance of the word "beginning [*arche*]." It fails because of the evidence of the Greek Old Testament and the apostolic patristic writings. It is like all other Arian proof-texts—it miserably fails to undermine the doctrine of the Trinity in any way.

All Arian attempts to support their doctrine from Scripture absolutely fail. They may confound the Trinity with tritheism and refute the notion that there are three gods; they may confound the Trinity with modalism and refute the notion that the Father, Son, and Spirit are the same Person; they may ignore the duality of natures in Christ and prove that the Lord Jesus is fully human; and they may advance various other objections to the Trinity, but none of their objections has any objective value. There are no verses whatever that establish the Arian doctrine of God, and vast numbers of passages that contradict it. On the other hand, there is overwhelming positive evidence from many, many verses for the Trinitarian doctrine of God, but there are no verses whatsoever that contradict it. The one only living and true God, who has given mankind knowledge of Himself through the Bible, is Triune. Recognizing Him as such is essential for the lost if they wish to gain eternal life (John 17:3), and knowing Him as such is a great portion of the glory and joy of the saints on earth and the saints in heaven.

Appendix: Are the Quotations Trustworthy in the Watchtower Society's *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* Three illustrative examples.

1.) In the section of *Should You Believe in The Trinity?* entitled, "Is It Clearly a Bible Teaching?" the Watchtower writes: "*The Encyclopedia of Religion* admits: 'Theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity.' . . . *The Encyclopedia of Religion* says: 'Theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity.'" The very vague references to the many-volumed *Encylopedia of Religion* can, with diligence, be traced to the article on the Trinity in that set. There the article in the *Encyclopedia* does indeed declare, "Theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity . . . the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity." The article goes on to say "the exclusively masculine imagery [that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] of trinitarian doctrine [is a problem]. The fatherhood of God should be rethought in light of the critique of feminist theologies and also in view of the nonpatriarchal understanding of divine paternity . . . the Christian doctrine of God must be developed also within the wider purview of other world religions . . . [it] cannot be christomonistic, excluding persons of other faiths from salvation." The reason the author of this article in the encyclopedia, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, denies that the Trinity is a Biblical doctrine is the same reason she thinks the "fatherhood of God should be rethought" and asserts that non-Christians are going to heaven—she is an radical liberal, anti-Bible "feminist theologian" who believes that much of the doctrine of the "Trinity is metaphysical speculation that must be rejected because it has given rise to 'sexist and patriarchal' outcomes . . . . [Her] approach [has] almost no reference to the biblical text and [manifests a] disdain for church history, [and] does not allow for the notion of truth or revelation outside of personal subjective experience."[252] "LaCugna argues that early

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[252] "The Revamping Of The Trinity And Women's Roles In The Church" in "Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine of the Trinity," Stepen D. Kovach, *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood,* 2:1 (Dec 1996). Compare Lacugna's book, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), in which she argues that "feminist and liberationist perspectives are valuable for living life triunely. Salvation must lead to deification [people becoming gods] . . . For promoting a relational metaphysics, some may [also] think her a pantheist" (Roderick T. Leupp, book review of *God for Us: The*

Christian history and dogma took an improper approach by defining God's inner life, the self-relatedness of the Father, Son and Spirit . . . she believes that valid criticisms have been made by liberation and feminist theologians about the Christian doctrine of God as sexist and oppressive . . . [she argues for a doctrine of God that will] allow oppressed persons (women and the poor) to be able to restructure the human community . . . the doctrine of monotheism . . . must be discarded . . . [the inspiration of the Bible is also rejected, to affirm that] God can only reveal to people what they experience."[253] The Watchtower wishes to convey the idea that rational scholarship, as evidenced in a weighty Encyclopedia, knows that the Trinity is not a Biblical doctrine—one who discovers that their quotation is actually the raving of a far-left radical feminist who rejects Scripture, monotheism, and the Fatherhood of God, but believes that people can become deified, one is not very likely to be impressed. The reason the Watchtower makes the reference hard to look up becomes clear.

2.) In the section of *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* entited "What About Trinity 'Proof-Texts'?" the Watchtower, to deny the Trinitarian doctrine taught in Philippians 2:6, quotes *The New Testament,* by G. R. Noyes, as reading "who, being in the form of God, did not regard it as a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God." It also quotes Noyes' version to support its mistranslation of John 8:58 as "I have been" and its attack upon Philippians 2:6. The publisher, place of publishing, and all information about the translator is not mentioned. In 2007, according to a search on *WorldCat,* Noyes' book was in only one library in the entire world, in Toronto, Canada. It is very possible that nobody is alive today in the entire world who has read through his translation of the New Testament. One who, with extreme difficulty, acquired a copy of his translation, would discover that it was published by the "American Unitarian Association." George Rapall Noyes was a Unitarian clergyman. It is hardly surprising that he would mistranslate the passages that deal with the Deity of Christ, since he was strongly biased against the doctrine. Even Noyes, however, with his powerful anti-Trinitarian bias,

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Trinity & Christian Life, by Catherine Mowry LaCugna. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,* 39:2 (June 1996) p. 317).

[253] "A Defense Of The Doctrine Of The Eternal Subordination Of The Son," Stephen D. Kovach & Peter R. Schemm, Jr., *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42:3 (September 1999), pgs. 473-476.

footnotes on John 8:58 the translation "I am," something the Watchtower leaves out, since its entire goal is to question the validity of this unquestionably correct translation. When the Watchtower cites a very biased "translation" of Scripture by a Unitarian, one that exists in one library in the whole world, as support for mistranslating John 8:58 as "I have been," and omits the fact that even this very biased source recognizes the correct translation, "I am," its dishonest manipulation of sources is evidently intentional and unconscionable.

3.) The Watchtower society, to prove that the Trinity comes from paganism, states that the book "*The Paganism in Our Christianity* declares: 'The origin of the [Trinity] is entirely pagan.'"[254] While the lack of context makes the quotation extremely difficult to trace,[255] one can with great diligence discover that it comes from pg. 197 of the book in question, written by one Arthur Wiegall (New York, NY: Knickerbocker Press, 1928). An extensive quotation of Wiegall will demonstrate to all just how credible—or rather, incredible—he is:

> [T]he miraculous . . . made [Christ] God incarnate to the thinkers of the First Century; all these marvels make Him a conventional myth to those of the Twentieth. Many of the most erudite critics are convinced that no such person [as Jesus Christ] ever lived. . . . [The] twelve disciples [were invented from] the twelve signs of the Zodiac. . . . [The gospels are] meagre and garbled accounts . . . borrowed from paganism . . . many of the details of the life of our Lord are too wildly improbable to be accepted in these sober days. . . . [M]any gods and semi-divine heroes have mothers whose names are variations of "Mary" . . . the name of our Lord's mother may have been forgotten and a stock name substituted. . . . . The mythological origin of [the record of Jesus' birth] is so obvious that the whole story must be abandoned. . . . [When] St. Luke says that when the child was born Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger . . . [the] author was here drawing upon Greek mythology. . . . The story of the Virgin

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254 *Should You Believe In the Trinity?* in the section, "How Did The Trinity Doctrine Develop?" pg. 11. Weigall is also quoted with approval elsewhere in this Watchtower work (pg. 6).

255 The publisher of the book is not cited. The page number the quote is from is not cited. The year the book was published is not cited. The ISBN number is not cited. The Watchtower work which quotes the book has no bibliography. Nothing is provided in the Watchtower composition that would enable the reader to access the book in question and discover if the author has any credibility; the most basic conventions for quoted material are neglected. In light of the radically, ridiculously unhistorical and unscholarly nature of the book in question, a desire on the part of the Watchtower society to make the book inaccessible and so prevent readers from discovering the facts about it is understandable, though wicked. The lack of page numbers, publishers, year published, etc. is a common factor for all works cited in *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*

> Birth . . . is derived from pagan sources. . . . The story of the forty days in the wilderness and the temptation by Satan . . . [comes from] a pagan legend. . . . the account of the Crucifixion . . . parallels . . . rites of human sacrifice as practiced by the ancients. . . . In primitive days it was the custom in many lands for a king or ruler to put his own son to death as a sacrifice to the tribal god. . . . in the primitive Passover a human victim was probably sacrificed. . . . [T]he side of Jesus [being] pierced by a lance . . . [relates to] a widespread custom [like] . . . the primitive Albanians used to sacrifice a human being to the moon-goddess by piercing his side with a spear. . . . Nobody in his senses now believes that Jesus ascended into Heaven . . . His body must anyhow have died or been cast aside. . . . such an ascension into the sky was the usual end to the mythical legends of the lives of pagan gods . . . [T]he Christian expression "washed in the blood of the Lamb" is undoubtably a reflection of . . . the rites of Mithra. . . . [T]he worshippers of Mithra practiced baptism by water. . . . There is no authentic evidence that Jesus ever intended to establish a Church . . . the Lord's Supper has been changed . . . under Mithraic and other ancient influences. . . . The doctrine of the Atonement . . . nauseates the modern mind, and . . . is of pagan origin, being indeed the most obvious relic of heathendom in the Faith . . . it is not, of course, supported by anything known to have been said by Jesus. . . . this idea of a god dying for the benefit of mankind, and rising again, had is origin in the fact that nature seemed to die in winter and revive in spring. . . . [T]he *Logos* [the Greek term for "Word," used of the Lord Jesus in John 1:1, 14; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 19:13] theory, which had been adopted by the author of the Gospel of St. John from the philosophy of Philo . . . went a long way towards establishing the identification of Jesus Christ with God . . . the idea of the *Logos* itself was pagan. . . . Sunday, too, was a pagan holy day . . . the Jewish Sabbath . . . is obviously derived from moon-worship. . . . Now Sunday . . . had been for long the holy day in the solar religions of Mithra . . . Christians . . . [worshipped on Sunday] by pagan custom. . . . in this Twentieth Century thoughtful men . . . [reject] the phantom crowd of savage and blood-stained old gods who have come into the Church, and, by immemorial right, have demanded the worship of habit-bound man."[256]

Weigall is obviously an irrational, Bible-hating wacko. He provides no proof for the claims in his book; they are the speculations of his feverishly anti-Christian mind. A quote from him on the origin of the Trinity has about equal weight with a quote from a supermarket tabloid about King Kong being cited in Yosemite National Park or the Tooth Fairy opening up a dental practice in New York City.

The examples above are representative of the tremendous dishonesty and distortion of sources practiced by the Watchtower society in *Should You Believe in the*

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[256] Pgs. 17, 19, 20, 23-24, 50, 51, 60, 61-62, 68, 71, 85, 86, 87, 92, 105, 140, 141, 152, 155, 160, 163, 187-188, 229-230, 235-236, 277.

Trinity? Just as their exposition of Scripture is exceedingly poor and distorted, so they have misquoted and distorted their sources. If they are intelligent enough to ransack the world for books that are in one library on earth, their incredible and appaling use of sources cannot be explained away as very high levels of stupidity—their distortions are definitely deliberate. Their quotations in favor of Arianism are not at all to be trusted.

For more on the true doctrine of God, how one can be saved from sin, and other very important topics, please visit http://faithalonesaves.googlepages.com/salvation (note no www). May the Triune God lead you into all truth!