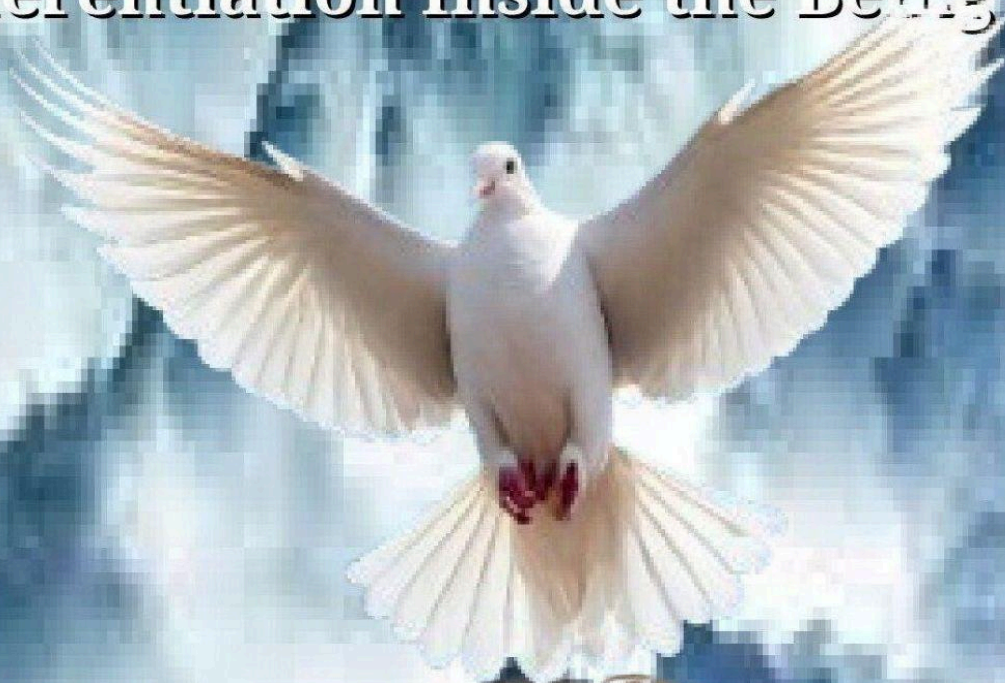


Us-ness, Our-ness and We-ness

Differentiation Inside the Being of God

Mark Mountjoy



Us-ness, Our-ness and We-ness

Us-ness, Our-ness and We-ness:

Differentiation Inside the Being of God

NEW TESTAMENT LIFE WORKSHOP

Mark Mountjoy



Motus Conservationis Christianae

www.truechristianpress.org

**Denver - San Francisco - Lagos
United States of America - Nigeria**

Copyright © 2026 by True Christian Press.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review. For more information, address: truechristianpress@gmail.com.

This work defends the New Testament's witness to God's interior differentiation — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — against Unitarian claims that God is a single, undifferentiated Person. It examines the evidential and logical arguments used to challenge Trinitarian belief and tests them against the plain sense of key texts. John 1:1, John 20:28, Hebrews 1:8, Philippians 2:6, and Revelation 5 are shown to present a Son who is addressed as God, worshiped as God, and eternally distinct from the Father, yet subsisting in one divine Being. The argument presses the “Unitarian Dilemma”: if Jesus is not fully God, then the apostolic commands to worship him mandate idolatry. Acts 19 and the Didache confirm the apostolic baptismal norm as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The cover depicts this tri-personal reality. The vast clouds represent the Father, transcendent and enthroned. The dove represents the Holy Spirit, descending in living personhood. The image, derived from the Shroud of Turin, depicts the Son — whom the Father has exalted and given the name above every name, Lord of lords and King of kings, to whom every knee must bow and every tongue confess. One God. Three Persons. His *Us-ness*, *Our-ness*, and *We-ness*.

Designed by True Christian Press

Preface

This work was born from a conviction that the New Testament does not whisper about the identity of God. It speaks plainly, repeatedly, and with a kind of narrative insistence that resists reduction. The question it forces on every reader is not whether God is one — the entire canon assumes that. The question is whether the one God subsists with genuine differentiation inside his own being: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The chapters that follow engage that question by examining the claims often made against the doctrine of God's "threeness." There is a persistent posture in Unitarian argumentation that presents itself as the plain, evidential, and logical reading of Scripture. It accuses Trinitarian belief of importing philosophy, councils, and creeds to sustain what the text itself never says. That accusation deserves to be tested, not dismissed.

The test runs in three directions.

First, evidential: what do the texts actually say when read in their grammatical and literary context? Passages like John 1:1, John 20:28, Hebrews 1:8, and Philippians 2:6 are not marginal. They are structurally central to the New Testament's witness to Christ. Any account of God that must systematically re-translate, re-point, or re-categorize them bears the burden of proof.

Second, logical: the claim that "one cannot be three" misstates what is confessed. The doctrine is one Being in three Persons, not one Person in three Persons or three Beings in one Being.

The deeper issue is whether love can be essential to God if God is eternally alone. A God who becomes a lover only at creation is not love itself.

Third, moral: the New Testament commands all creation to honor, pray to, and worship the Son as it honors the Father. If the Son is not fully God, those commands make the apostolic witness complicit in idolatry. That is not a peripheral tension. It goes to the coherence of God's character and the intelligibility of the gospel.

The final section addresses the pastoral claim that Trinitarian baptism is deficient. Acts 19 shows the opposite. The deficient baptism was the one that left disciples unaware of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic norm, confirmed by Matthew 28:19 and the Didache, is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — names of Persons, not titles of modes.

This preface is not an appeal to tradition for its own sake. It is an appeal to the text. The argument here is that the Unitarian reading does not preserve the testimony of Jesus and the apostles. It undermines it at multiple levels, rendering key statements about Christ's identity, worship, and mission unintelligible in their context.

The aim is not to win a debate, but to clear the ground so the text can be heard. If God is as the New Testament describes him — speaking, sending, loving, and receiving worship within his own life — then the church's language of "Us-ness, Our-ness, and We-ness" is not speculation. It is description.

Readers from any tradition are invited to weigh the evidence. The upper hand belongs not to any one party, but to the text itself.

**Unitarian Prosecutors Have No Case:
Their Claim to Evidential and Logical Superiority
Examined, Reversed, and Refuted**

Introduction

There is a recognizable tone that enters the room whenever a Unitarian — whether of the classical Socinian variety, the Jehovah’s Witness variety, the Oneness Pentecostal variety, or the liberal Protestant variety — sits down to engage a Trinitarian Christian on the doctrine of God. It is not quite hostility. It is something more unsettling than hostility. It is the quiet, barely concealed confidence of someone who believes they are the only honest reader at the table — the only one who has actually followed the evidence where it leads, the only one who has not been taken in by what they regard as an elaborate theological confidence trick perpetrated on credulous believers by power-hungry bishops at a fourth-century council.

This is the prosecutorial urge. It manifests not as an inquiry but as an indictment. The questions it asks are not requests for information. They are accusations, ostensible traps; carefully baited and patiently set. “Do you believe in one God or three?” is not a theological question. *It is a charge.* “Was the Trinity invented at Nicaea?” is not a historical inquiry. It is a taunt.

“Can you show me the word Trinity in the Bible?” is not a lexical observation. It is a rhetorical maneuver designed to make the Trinitarian feel that his entire theological inheritance rests on a word that does not appear in the text — which is precisely like asking someone to show you the word monotheism in the Bible and concluding from its absence that the concept is unscriptural.

The Unitarian enters the conversation with a brief already prepared and a verdict already reached. The examination that follows is conducted for effect. Every question is designed to destabilize, to make the Trinitarian doubt what he has always believed, to create the impression that the Unitarian position is the plain and obvious reading of the plain and obvious text, while the Trinitarian position requires councils, creeds, philosophical categories borrowed from Greek metaphysics, and centuries of institutional enforcement to sustain a doctrine that — the implication runs — no honest and unencumbered reader of the New Testament would ever arrive at on his own.

This claim — that the Unitarian has the upper hand on both the evidence and the logic — is the foundation on which the entire prosecutorial posture rests. And it is false on both counts. Not partially false. Not false in some nuanced scholarly sense that requires qualification. False plainly, demonstrably, and at every level at which it is made.

This chapter names the posture, dismantles the evidential claim, dismantles the logical claim, exposes the internal moral incoherence of the Unitarian position, and then turns to the single most aggressive pastoral move that Oneness Pentecostalism makes against Trinitarian believers — the baptismal assault — and demonstrates from the text of Acts 19 that it too collapses under honest scrutiny.

The Evidential Claim Is Faulty

The Unitarian claim to evidential superiority rests on a selective reading of the New Testament so aggressive and so systematic that it amounts, in practice, to engagement with a different document. To sustain the Unitarian position one must work through the New Testament text explaining away, repointing, retranslating, or otherwise neutralizing an enormous range of passages that in their plain sense say something the Unitarian position cannot admit, tolerate or accommodate. This is not the method of the plain reader following the plain text. It is the method of a defense attorney working a difficult and arduous brief.

Consider what the Unitarian position requires one to do with the following texts.

John 1:1 — The Word Was God

The Gospel of John opens: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Unitarian — most famously in the New World Translation produced by the Jehovah’s Witnesses — renders the final clause as “the Word was *a* god,” arguing that the absence of the definite article before *theos* in the predicate position means the Word is merely a divine being of lesser rank rather than God himself.

This rendering has been examined and rejected by every serious Greek scholar who has engaged it, across confessional lines and without exception. The anarthrous predicate nominative in Greek does not indicate indefinite class membership. It indicates the nature or quality of the subject. When John writes *ho logos theos en* — the Word God was — he is saying that the nature of the Word is the divine nature. This is precisely and exactly what Trinitarian theology has always claimed. The absence of the article before *theos* in this construction is not a diminution of the claim. It is a grammatical feature of how Greek makes qualitative predicate statements. To translate it as “a god” is not a grammatical finding. It is a predetermined theological conclusion masquerading as one.

John 20:28 — My Lord and My God

When Thomas encounters the risen Christ and says “My Lord and my God,” the Unitarian response is to argue that Thomas was exclaiming in surprise rather than making a direct address — that “my God” is an expression of astonishment rather than a declaration of the identity of the one before him. This requires us to believe several things simultaneously that the text will not sustain.

It requires us to believe that Jesus, who corrected every misattribution of divine honor during His ministry, heard Thomas address Him as God and said nothing in response. It requires us to believe that John — the most theologically careful evangelist, the one who opened his Gospel with “the Word was God” and structured his entire narrative around a series of escalating Christological disclosures culminating in this moment — accidentally recorded an unrebuked act of idolatry as his climactic scene without noticing what he had done. And it requires us to believe that the author who immediately follows this scene with the statement that these things were written so that the reader might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, intended the climactic confession of his Gospel to be understood as a startled expletive.

None of this is credible. Thomas addresses Jesus as God. Jesus receives the address without correction. John records it as the

narrative and theological climax of his Gospel. The plain reading is the Trinitarian reading.

Hebrews 1:8 — The Father Calls the Son “*God*”

The first chapter of Hebrews records the Father addressing the Son directly with the words: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” The Unitarian response is to argue that the Greek can be rendered differently — that the pronoun reference is ambiguous, that the Father may be describing rather than addressing, that the verse may mean “God is your throne” rather than “your throne, O God.”

These are the maneuvers of a commentator determined not to find what the text plainly says. The address is direct. The Father speaks to the Son. He calls him God. He declares his throne eternal. He distinguishes himself from the Son as the one speaking from the one addressed. Two persons are present in this text: the Father who lauds and the Son who is lauded. The Unitarian rendering requires the dismantling of a grammatically straightforward address in order to avoid a conclusion the grammar straightforwardly supports.

Philippians 2:6 — Equality with God as Pre-Incarnational Reality

Paul writes that the Son, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself. The Unitarian response is to argue that *morphe theou* — the form of God — refers to a reflected or derivative divine image rather than genuine divine nature, and that equality with God describes an aspiration the Son declined rather than a possession he relinquished.

But you cannot empty yourself of something you never possessed. The grammar of the passage describes a prior possession voluntarily surrendered. The Son had something. He gave it up. The giving up was the incarnation. This is the language of genuine pre-incarnational divine existence — existence in the form of God, with equality with God as a real and possessed reality — not the language of a creature modestly declining an aspiration. The Unitarian reading requires the text to mean something it does not say and to not mean something it plainly does.

The pattern across all these texts is consistent and revealing. The Unitarian does not arrive at his position by following the plain text. He arrives at it by a prior philosophical commitment — a decision made before the text is opened — that God must be undifferentiated in the Unitarian sense, that plurality within the

divine Being is impossible, and that any text which suggests otherwise must be explained until it yields the required conclusion. This is not the same as having a real upper hand on the evidence. It is *eisegesis* wearing the costume of exegesis.

The plain reader of the New Testament, reading without a prior commitment to Unitarian conclusions, does not arrive at Unitarianism. He arrives at something very much like what the church has always confessed — not because a council told him to, but because the text guides and drives him there.

The Logical Claim Is Equally Faulty

The Unitarian claim to logical superiority is typically expressed with an air of mathematical finality: the Trinity is an absurdity because one cannot be three and three cannot be one. Anyone who claims otherwise is not doing theology. He is doing mystification — importing Greek philosophical categories into the simple biblical text and calling the result a doctrine. The Trinitarian, on this account, has abandoned plain reason for ecclesiastical obscurantism.

This argument sounds compelling until you examine what it actually assumes. And what it assumes is not drawn from Scripture. It is drawn from a particular philosophical tradition — specifically from the Neoplatonic and Islamic philosophical traditions that prize divine simplicity as the highest divine

attribute and define God's oneness as the oneness of an undifferentiated mathematical unit. The Unitarian critique of the Trinity as philosophically contaminated is itself a position contaminated by a different strand of philosophical thought — one that imports into theology an assumption about divine unity that the New Testament nowhere requires and that the plural pronouns of Genesis already complicate.

The logical objection — that one cannot be three — furthermore misrepresents what Trinitarian theology actually claims.

Trinitarian theology does not claim that the number one equals the number three. It claims that the one God subsists in three Persons — that the divine Being is of such a nature that it includes within itself genuine personal differentiation without ceasing to be one Being. This is not a logical contradiction. A contradiction would require the same thing to be both one and three in the same sense at the same time. Trinitarian theology does not say that. It says: one Being, three Persons. The Unitarian who calls this absurd has confused a mystery with a contradiction. The confusion is not sophisticated. It is elementary.

And the Unitarian position that replaces it — a God who is absolutely simple, internally undifferentiated, and alone in the most complete sense — generates logical problems of its own that its proponents have not sufficiently reckoned with. A God

who is eternally alone, who has no interior life of relationship, who loves without an eternal object of love, who gives without an eternal recipient of giving — that God did not become a lover when he created the world. He became something he had never been. The world did not reveal a God who was already love. It produced a God who began to love when he had something to love. This is not the God of the New Testament, who is described not merely as loving but as being love itself — a description that only makes sense if love is intrinsic to his nature and not contingent on the existence of a creation to receive it.

The First Unitarian Dilemma:

A Position That Self-Immolates

The faulty evidential and logical claims of the Unitarian position are serious enough. But there is a deeper problem — one that does not merely show the position to be wrong but shows it to be internally incoherent at the level of God's own moral character. It is a problem your interlocutor will not raise, because he has not seen it. But once it is stated, it cannot be unseen.

The New Testament commands — not suggests, not permits, but commands — that all creation honor the Son just as it honors the Father (John 5:23). It records Thomas falling at the feet of the risen Christ and crying My Lord and my God without rebuke

(John 20:28). It records the entire heavenly court of Revelation 5 — angels, elders, living creatures, and every creature in heaven and earth — worshipping the Lamb alongside the Father with identical honor. It records Stephen praying to Jesus as he is stoned to death (Acts 7:59). It records Paul calling Jesus God over all, blessed forever (Romans 9:5) and our great God and Savior (Titus 2:13). It records the author of Hebrews quoting the Father himself addressing the Son as God with an eternal throne (Hebrews 1:8).

Now apply the Unitarian premise. If Jesus is not fully God — if he is a creature of any kind, however supremely exalted — then every one of these acts of worship, honor, and prayer directed toward him is idolatry. This is not a minor infraction or a forgivable enthusiasm. Idolatry — the capital sin, the arch-offense, the very transgression that the God of the Old Testament declares Himself most jealous against throughout the entire Hebrew canon.

This is the God who thundered from Sinai: you shall have no other gods before Me. This is the God who executed Israelites for bowing to a golden calf. This is the God who declared through Isaiah:

I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols (Isaiah 42:8). I will not give my glory to another (Isaiah 48:11).

The same God who said all of this — on the Unitarian account — turns around in the New Testament and commands all creation to worship, honor, and pray to a being who is **not** Himself. He obliges angels and mankind to commit the very sin He elsewhere calls the worst possible offense against His name and glory. He requires the worship of a creature in the name of the Creator.

This is not a peripheral inconsistency that can be tucked away in a footnote. It is a total self-contradiction at the level of God's own moral character. The God of the Unitarian position simultaneously declares Himself jealous for His own glory, commands the worship of one who is not God, and calls the worship of non-divine beings the gravest possible sin against His name. He is, on this account, the author of universal idolatry. He obliges all creation to commit the arch-hamartiological offense — the sin above all sins — in the name of faithfulness to Himself.

The implications are, as they must be, damning to God if true. A God who does this is not holy. He is not coherent. He is not trustworthy. His jealousy for His own glory is a pretense, since He has arranged for that glory to be redirected to another. His command against idolatry is a trap, since He has made idolatry the required response to His own Son. The Unitarian position, pressed to its logical conclusion, does not merely diminish Jesus. It destroys the moral integrity of the Father.

The Unitarian Dilemma, stated in its sharpest form, is this: either Jesus is fully God and worthy of the worship the New Testament commands, or the God who commanded that worship is morally monstrous. There is no middle position. The New Testament does not permit a version of Jesus who receives something less than full divine honor from all creation. The texts are too explicit, too numerous, and too unanimous. If the worship is legitimate, Jesus is God. If Jesus is not God, the worship is idolatry. And if the worship is idolatry that God himself commanded, God has required of all creation the very thing He declared to be the capital sin. The position collapses, implodes and self-destructs.

The Second Unitarian Dilemma: The Creator Dilemma A Parallel That Permits No Middle Ground

The Unitarian Dilemma pressed the question of worship. This parallel presses the question of creation. The New Testament does not present the Son as a creature, a deputy, or a demiurge.

It presents Him as Creator of all that is not God.

The Texts Are Explicit

The question of worship forced a dilemma: either the Son receives divine honor because he is God, or the New Testament

commands idolatry. The question of creation forces the same kind of dilemma, but from the other side of the canon.

The Old Testament draws a bright, unbreakable line. Creation is the signature work of God alone. It is the act that distinguishes the Creator from every creature. Isaiah records YHWH speaking with finality: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens” (Isaiah 44:24). Job, Psalms, and Nehemiah repeat it: God made heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them, and he did it without partner, assistant, or proxy. Creative agency over all reality is not a task God delegates. It is the incommunicable prerogative that defines him as God.

The New Testament writers knew those texts. They cited them, preached them, and staked their monotheism on them. Yet when they speak of the Son, they use the same unqualified language of universal creative agency. They do not say he was the first creature, the model for creation, or the instrument God used after the fact. They say all things were made through him, by him, and for him. They place him before all things, holding all things together, and address him with the words Scripture reserves for the One who laid the foundation of the earth.

The texts are not obscure. They are not few. They are not late interpolations. They stand at the structural pillars of John’s Prologue, Paul’s Christological hymns, and the exordium to Hebrews. If the Unitarian premise is true, then the apostles have

taken the exclusive work of YHWH and handed it to a creature in the very documents that claim to reveal God.

Here is what they actually wrote:

John 1:3: “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:10: “He was in the world, and the world was made through him.” Colossians 1:16-17: “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Hebrews 1:2: through the Son God “made the worlds.” Hebrews 1:10-12: the Father addresses the Son directly with the words of Psalm 102, calling him “Lord” who “laid the foundation of the earth” and whose “years will have no end.” Revelation 4:11 declares the Lord God worthy to receive glory and honor “for you created all things,” while the Lamb is worshiped with identical honor in chapter 5.

The Encomiums Are Divine

Creation is not the only incommunicable divine prerogative the New Testament assigns to the Son. Glory is the other. In the Old Testament, “glory” is not a generic compliment. It is the summary term for the weight, radiance, and absolute uniqueness of God’s own presence and name. Isaiah records the principle in unmistakable terms: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my

glory I give to no other” (Isaiah 42:8). “For my own sake I do it... my glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 48:11). The “Lord of glory” is not a title that circulates. It belongs to YHWH alone, because glory is the public manifestation of his unshared deity.

The New Testament writers knew that boundary. They were Jewish monotheists who had been taught from childhood that to give God’s glory to another is the essence of idolatry. Yet when they speak of Jesus, they do not hedge, qualify, or restrict the language. They take the highest doxological title in the canon — the one Isaiah uses to distinguish the Creator from every idol — and place it directly on the crucified and risen Christ. They do it in contexts of worship, faith, and cosmic judgment. If the Son is a creature, these are not honorifics. They are blasphemies.

Here is how the apostles actually speak:

1 Corinthians 2:8 calls Jesus “the Lord of glory” — a title Isaiah reserves for YHWH alone. James 2:1 speaks of “our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” The crucifixion of the Lord of glory is not the killing of a mere creature. It is the Creator entering his creation.

The Dilemma Is Total

The evidence from creation texts and divine titles now converges on a single, unavoidable point. The New Testament does not merely hint that the Son shares in divine activity. It assigns to him, without remainder, the two works Scripture identifies as belonging to God alone: making all things and bearing the glory of the divine name.

This is where the Unitarian framework breaks down. A framework can absorb tension. It can tolerate paradox. It cannot survive contradiction. If Scripture reserves creation and glory for YHWH alone, and then predicates both of the Son in the same absolute terms, then one of two things must be true. Either the Son is included in the identity of YHWH, or the apostolic witness is systematically committing the sin it was sent to expose. There is no third category of “exalted creature” that resolves the collision, because Scripture itself has already closed that category. Creation and glory are not committee work. They are the Creator’s signature.

So the dilemma is not academic. It is existential for the text itself. To affirm the inspiration of the New Testament is to affirm what it says about the Son. To deny what it says about the Son is to deny its inspiration. The lines are drawn by the canon, not by councils.

The Old Testament is absolute: YHWH alone is Creator. “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens” (Isaiah 44:24). “You, LORD, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning” (Psalm 102:25) — the very text Hebrews 1 applies to the Son. Creative agency over all reality is the incommunicable prerogative of God. It is not shared. It is not delegated.

Now apply the Unitarian premise. If the Son is not fully God, then the New Testament ascribes to a creature the exclusive work of God. It calls a being who is not God the one through whom, by whom, and for whom all things exist. It identifies the one who laid the foundations of the world as the Son. It names the crucified man “the Lord of glory.”

That leaves only two options. If the texts are true, the Son is God. Creative agency of all reality and the title “Lord of glory” are either the pinnacle of praise offered to the Creator, or they are the height of abject blasphemy offered to a creature. There is no meaningful middle ground. If Jesus is not God, then John, Paul, the author of Hebrews, and the seer of Revelation have committed cosmic idolatry in the name of revelation. They have ascribed to a creature what Isaiah says YHWH alone does.

The Position Self-Immolates Again

Just as with worship, so with creation. The Unitarian reading does not preserve monotheism. It destroys the coherence of the apostolic witness. It makes the New Testament the most idolatrous document in the canon, assigning the incommunicable work of God to one who is not God. If the Son is not God, the New Testament is not inspired. If the New Testament is inspired, the Son is God.

The apostles were monotheists. They knew Isaiah 44:24. They knew Psalm 102. They still wrote John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, and Hebrews 1:10. They did not see a contradiction, because they did not hold the Unitarian premise. The contradiction exists only when that premise is imposed on the text.

The Creator Dilemma, like the Worship Dilemma, admits no compromise: either the Son is the uncreated Creator, or the New Testament commands blasphemy. The text has already chosen.

The Prosecutorial Move Against Trinitarian Baptism

Of all the moves that Oneness Pentecostalism makes against Trinitarian believers, the most immediately subversive and pastorally destructive is not the argument about the nature of God or the person of Christ. It is the argument about baptism.

And it comes first — deliberately, strategically, and often before the Christological and Unitarian arguments are introduced.

The sequence is consistent and recognizable. A Oneness Pentecostal approaches a Trinitarian believer — often within a Trinitarian church, often someone who is settled and assured in their faith — and plants a single destabilizing seed: your baptism is invalid. You were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but the apostolic formula was baptism in the name of Jesus only. Your initiation into the Christian life was defective. You need to be rebaptized.

This is the entry wound. It is not chosen accidentally. The baptismal challenge is deployed first because it requires the least theological sophistication to land and produces the most immediate psychological effect. A believer does not need to understand the finer points of Christology to feel suddenly uncertain about whether the most foundational act of their Christian life was valid. The seed of doubt, once planted, creates insecurity and vulnerability — a felt need that the Oneness community then steps forward to meet by offering rebaptism in Jesus' name as the remedy.

The rebaptism is not primarily a theological act. It is an ecclesiological and social one. It moves the person out of their Trinitarian community and into the Oneness community. The water is the door. Once through it — once rebaptized, once

relationally embedded in a new fellowship, once separated from the Trinitarian pastors and teachers who might have answered the subsequent arguments — the full Oneness Christology is introduced. The denial of the Son's distinct eternal Person, the collapse of Father Son and Holy Spirit into three modes of one Person, the assertion that Jesus is the Father — all of this is brought forward only after the person has already been moved, already committed, already belonging to a new community.

The sequence is deliberate. The baptism question comes first precisely because it is the most destabilizing and the most socially effective. The Christology comes after because it is more easily resisted by someone still within their Trinitarian community and more easily received by someone who has already been separated from it.

But the entire opening move — the claim that Jesus-only baptism was the original apostolic standard and that Trinitarian baptism is therefore invalid — collapses completely under the weight of two witnesses that the Oneness position cannot answer: the Book of Acts and the Didache.

Acts 19:1–5 — The Smoking Gun

The passage is brief and its implications are devastating. Paul arrives in Ephesus and encounters a group of disciples. He asks them whether they received the Holy Spirit when they believed.

Their answer is immediate and astonishing: “We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Paul asks what baptism they received. They answer: the baptism of John.

Here is the point that needs to be seen with full precision and held without qualification:

If the standard apostolic baptismal formula from the very beginning of the church was baptism in the name of Jesus only — as the Oneness position requires — then anyone who had received that baptism would have heard the name of Jesus invoked over them. And the name of Jesus, in apostolic preaching from Pentecost onward, was inseparable from the promise of the Holy Spirit. Peter’s first sermon ends with: repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit is the promised gift. He is central to the proclamation. He is named in the very context of the baptismal call.

No one who had received standard apostolic baptism — on any account of what that baptism involved — could possibly have remained ignorant that the Holy Spirit exists. The Ephesian disciples’ ignorance is therefore not a minor anomaly to be noted and moved past. It is a diagnostic. It tells us with precision what these disciples had not received: they had not received the standard apostolic formula. They had not been brought into

contact with the full apostolic proclamation. They did not know the Holy Spirit existed because no one had ever spoken his name over them in baptism.

And the formula that names the Holy Spirit explicitly — that makes it linguistically impossible for the recipient to remain ignorant of his existence — is not the Jesus-only formula. It is the formula Jesus himself commanded in Matthew 28:19: baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. You cannot hear those words spoken over you and not know the Holy Spirit exists. It is impossible. The formula contains the name.

The Ephesian disciples had never heard that formula. That is why they did not know. And that is the end of the argument.

The Didache Confirms the Standard

The Didache — one of the earliest Christian documents outside the New Testament canon, widely dated to the late first or very early second century, reflecting actual baptismal practice in the earliest Christian communities — prescribes the baptismal formula explicitly and without ambiguity. Chapter 7 reads: baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

This is not a Nicaean invention. It is not a fourth-century theological imposition. It is the practice of the church as documented independently of the NT canon, at a date so early that it overlaps with or immediately follows the apostolic generation itself. The Didache is the church doing what Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19 — and doing it as standard, unremarkable, expected practice, with no sense that there is any competing formula under discussion.

The Oneness claim that Jesus-only baptism was the original apostolic standard has no documentary support. It has no early church support. It has no patristic support. What it has is a misreading of the Acts passages in which baptism is described as being performed in the name of Jesus — a phrase that describes the authority under which the baptism is conducted, not the formula spoken over the water. When Luke says that people were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, he is not recording the words of a competing formula. He is describing the apostolic authority by which the Trinitarian formula was administered. The formula itself is the one Jesus gave. The Didache is the one confirming it was used.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Are Names, Not Titles

The Oneness position has one final maneuver available when pressed on Matthew 28:19. It is this: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are merely titles, *not names*. Jesus said baptize them in

the name — singular — of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The singular name that encompasses all three titles is Jesus. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are descriptions of modes or functions of the one Person whose actual name is Jesus. Baptism in the name of Jesus only is therefore not a departure from Matthew 28:19 but its correct and complete fulfillment.

This argument sounds grammatically clever. It is not. It fails immediately and completely on contact with the actual usage of these three designations throughout the New Testament.

Father is used as a name in the New Testament — not merely a relational description or a functional title, but the name by which the first Person of the Godhead is directly addressed. Jesus uses it as a name throughout his ministry and most intimately in John 17, where he prays: Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me (John 17:11). The Father has a name. That name is Father. Jesus addresses him by it in direct, personal, intimate prayer. It is not a title pointing beyond itself to Jesus. It is the name of a distinct Person whom Jesus addresses as genuinely other than himself.

Son is used as a name in the New Testament — declared by the Father himself from heaven. At the baptism of Jesus the Father speaks: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17). The Father names the Son from heaven. Son is not a title for a mode of Jesus. It is the name by which the Father

identifies his distinct eternal Person in a public declaration witnessed by those present at the Jordan.

Holy Spirit is used as a name in the New Testament — the name of a Person who is sent, who teaches, who intercedes, who is grieved, who distributes gifts as he wills, who can be lied to, and who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Jesus says in John 14:26: the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name. The Holy Spirit is named, sent, distinguished from both the Father who sends and the Son in whose name he is sent. He is not a title for a mode of Jesus. He is a named Person with a distinct identity, a distinct mission, and a distinct relationship to the other two Persons of the Godhead.

Therefore the singular name in Matthew 28:19 does not point forward to a single personal name called Jesus that secretly encompasses three titles. It points to the one divine Being — one God, one name — who subsists as three distinct Persons each of whom bears a real name used throughout the New Testament in direct address, public declaration, and personal description. The singularity of name reflects the unity of the one God. The threefold specification — Father and Son and Holy Spirit — reflects the genuine personal differentiation within that unity.

The Oneness reinterpretation of Matthew 28:19 does not recover the original apostolic meaning of the text. It imposes on it a conclusion that the text everywhere resists. And Acts 19 remains

the final and insurmountable refutation: whatever the Oneness savant claims about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being merely titles subsumed under the name Jesus — the Ephesian disciples who lacked the full formula did not know the Holy Spirit existed. If Holy Spirit is merely a title for Jesus, and Jesus-name baptism implicitly invokes that title, their ignorance is inexplicable. The ignorance only makes sense if the formula they never received was the one that names all three Persons explicitly — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — exactly as Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19 and exactly as the Didache confirms was standard practice from the very beginning of the church.

The prosecutor, it turns out, has no case. His evidential claims dissolve under examination. His logical claims rest on a philosophical assumption he imported rather than a biblical conclusion he derived. His position generates a morally incoherent God who commands the arch-sin in the name of holiness. And his most aggressive pastoral move — the invalidation of Trinitarian baptism — is refuted by the very document he inhabits, on the very page where a group of disciples demonstrate by their ignorance exactly what the absence of the full Trinitarian formula produces.

The Trinitarian believer who has been told his baptism is deficient may respond with confidence: the deficient baptism in Acts 19 is the one that left people ignorant of the Holy Spirit's

existence. Mine did not. I heard the name. All three names. Father and Son and Holy Spirit — spoken over me, as Jesus commanded, as the earliest church practiced, as the Didache confirms. My baptism is not the one Acts 19 is concerned about. It is the complete one that Acts 19 presupposes as the norm.

The Upper Hand Belongs to the Text

The prosecutorial urge in Unitarianism and Oneness Pentecostalism is ultimately a posture sustained by the assumption that the other party has not read carefully, has not thought clearly, and has not followed the evidence honestly.

Strip away that assumption — which this paper has done — and what remains is a position that requires the systematic neutralization of the New Testament's plain Christological testimony, generates a God who commands what He elsewhere calls the capital sin, and cannot account for the ignorance of the Ephesian disciples without conceding the very point it most needs to deny.

The upper hand in this conversation does not belong to the prosecutor. It belongs to the text. And the text has been speaking clearly, consistently, and unanimously on these questions since the first disciples fell at the feet of the risen Christ and heard no correction from the one they addressed as God.

Epilogue

Arguments end, but worship does not. The point of tracing the New Testament's testimony to God's "threeness" was never to win a prosecutorial case. It was to let the text speak in its own register, with its own force, and to see whether that register permits the reductions often demanded of it.

It does not. The evidence of the text is that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, yet God is one. That is not a puzzle the apostles tried to solve. It is the reality they assumed when they baptized, when they prayed, when they faced death, and when they wrote. They called Jesus "my Lord and my God" and heard no correction. They ascribed to him the creation of all things and the name "Lord of glory" that Isaiah said YHWH shares with no other. They recorded the Father addressing the Son as the unchanging Lord who laid the earth's foundations. They saw the Lamb receive the same honor, blessing, and worship as the One on the throne.

To reframe those statements as exaggeration, accommodation, or later development is to do more than disagree with Trinitarianism. It is to silence the apostles themselves. It leaves their monotheism incoherent, their worship idolatrous, and their gospel unintelligible. The Unitarian reading does not preserve the text. It rewrites it. The cost of that rewrite is the God the

New Testament actually proclaims: a God who is love not by becoming a lover, but by being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from eternity.

That is why the language of “Us-ness, Our-ness, and We-ness” is not speculative theology. It is a description. The clouds of transcendence, the dove of descent, and the face of the crucified and risen Son are not three ways of speaking about one mask. They are the one Being who has made himself known as He is: relational, personal, differentiated, and one.

The question for the reader is therefore not “Can this be explained?” but “Will this be believed?” The New Testament does not invite us to dissect God. It invites us to know him, to be baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to join the unending doxology where every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The prosecutor may rest. The New Testament text, allowed to speak with their own voice, does not. It still calls, still confronts, and still holds the upper hand. Not because it belongs to any party, but because it belongs to the God who spoke it — the God whose being is eternally Us, Our, and We.

New Testament Life Workshop

A Practical Application Supplement to Us-ness, Our-ness and We-ness:

Differentiation Inside the Being of God

The chapters above have prosecuted an argument. This workshop is its pastoral counterpart. An argument that ends in the mind without descending into life has not yet finished its work. The New Testament was not written to produce correct opinions about God. It was written, as John states with disarming plainness, so that the reader might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they might have life in his name (John 20:31). The workshops that follow press that purpose. They are designed for personal reflection, small group study, and pastoral conversation.

Workshop One:

The Irony the Unitarian Polemicist Cannot See

There is a profound and largely unacknowledged irony embedded in the Unitarian polemical project. The irony is this:

if the Unitarian reading of the New Testament is correct — if Jesus is not God, if the divine honors the apostles ascribe to Him are misattributed, if the worship He receives is offered to a creature rather than the Creator — then the New Testament is not a revelation. It is a criminal document.

This is not hyperbole. It is the inescapable logic of the position.

Idolatry — the worship of what is not God, the ascription of divine honors to a creature — is not treated by the Hebrew canon as a regrettable theological error. It is treated as the capital offense, the arch-transgression against the one who declared:

I am the LORD; that is My name; My glory I give to no other (Isaiah 42:8).

The same verdict is rendered, with equal severity, by Rabbinic *halakhah* and by the legal traditions of Islamic jurisprudence. Under Rabbinic law, *avodah zarah* — foreign or idolatrous worship — is among the three prohibitions for which a Jew must accept death rather than transgress. Under the Shariah tradition, shirk — the association of partners with God — is the one sin that is declared, on Quranic authority, beyond the ordinary reach of divine pardon.

The Unitarian polemicist who deploys these traditions against Trinitarian Christianity — who cites Rabbinic monotheism or

Islamic unitarianism as corroboration of his own position — has not noticed what he is also saying about the New Testament itself. He is saying that John, Paul, the author of Hebrews, and the seer of Revelation are, on the Unitarian premise, guilty of the very offense those traditions most condemn. He is saying that the apostolic witness, taken at its plain sense, is a systematic program for the commission of the arch-sin. He has not produced an argument against Trinitarianism. He has produced an indictment of the Christians' Source revelatory canon.

The polemicist has, in other words, been so eager to press his case against the doctrine of the Trinity that he has not paused to observe what his own position does to the documents he claims to read honestly and defend. An honest reader notices this. The Unitarian reader, in his prosecutorial zeal, often does not.

Workshop Exercise 1 — For Personal Reflection

1. The Unitarian argues that Trinitarian belief is the result of philosophical contamination imported into an originally simple biblical faith. But if that is true, who bears responsibility for the contamination — the councils, or the apostles who wrote John 1:1, Hebrews 1:8, and Philippians 2:6? What does your answer require you to conclude about the inspiration of the New Testament?

2. Rabbinic Judaism classifies *avodah zarah* as a *yehareg v'al ya'avur* offense — (i.e., it is better to die rather than to transgress). Islamic jurisprudence classifies shirk as the gravest category of sin. If the New Testament's plain Christological claims mandate creature-worship, how does the Unitarian account for the fact that the apostles — all of them Jewish monotheists trained in the Shema — never appear to notice the problem? What does their silence imply?

3. Consider the difference between a theological error and a criminal act under the law of God. If the Unitarian is right, which category does apostolic Christianity occupy? Write your answer out in full, without qualification. Then consider whether that conclusion is one you are prepared to defend.

Workshop Two

The Claims That Killed Jesus — And What That Proves

The Unitarian polemicist is oblivious, in a peculiarly self-defeating way, to what he is undoing. The precise claims he denies — that Jesus is divine, that He is equal with God, that He bears the divine name — are the precise claims for which Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified. The Jewish leaders who prosecuted Him were not confused about what He was asserting.

They understood it perfectly. That is why they killed Him.

The evidence is not buried. It is explicit, and it spans the Synoptics and the Johannine tradition alike.

Matthew 12:8 The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was not a human institution available for reinterpretation by a prophet with fresh insight. It was instituted by God at creation, hallowed by divine rest, and enshrined in the Decalogue. To claim lordship over it was to claim the prerogative of the One who ordained it. The crowd understood.

The Pharisees understood. That is why they began plotting his death in the very next verse.

Matthew 22:42–46 What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?... If then David calls him Lord, how is He his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Jesus does not merely accept the title Son of David. He presses the question of Psalm 110 to expose a category that the title cannot contain. If the Christ is David's son, why does David — speaking by the Spirit — call him my Lord? The silence of His interrogators is not confusion. It is recognition that a claim is being made that cannot be processed within the ordinary categories of Davidic messianism. The question implies an answer they are not willing to give.

John 5:18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

John does not attribute this charge to theological error or prosecutorial bad faith. He records it as the plain response to a plain assertion. The Jewish leaders heard what Jesus said. They understood what it claimed. And they sought to kill Him for it.

The Unitarian who dismisses the claim as a misunderstanding is, in effect, agreeing with the prosecution and disagreeing with the evangelist.

John 8:55–59 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad... Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. So they picked up stones to throw at Him.

The ego eimi — I AM — was not a typo or a grammatical accident. It was the divine name, first disclosed to Moses at the burning bush, now spoken by Jesus in the first person and applied to Himself before the foundation of the Abrahamic covenant. His hearers did not ask for clarification. They reached for stones. The penalty for blasphemy under Leviticus 24 was death. They understood the claim. They acted on their understanding.

Here is the irony the polemicist cannot afford to face: the Unitarian who says Jesus never claimed to be God is, by that very argument, vindicating the Sanhedrin. If Jesus was not God and did not claim to be God, then the charges of blasphemy were manufactured, and the crucifixion was a judicial error. But if the charges were manufactured, the evangelists who record them as the plain cause of His death are either deceived or deceiving. And if the evangelists are deceived or deceiving, the Unitarian has no reliable New Testament to appeal to in the first place.

Conversely: if the evangelists are reliable and the charges were well-founded — if Jesus genuinely made divine claims — then the only question remaining is whether those claims were true.

The Trinitarian says they were. The Unitarian says they were not. But the Unitarian cannot simultaneously say that Jesus never made such claims and that the evangelists are reliable witnesses. The position requires the reader to choose.

Workshop Exercise 2 — For Small Group Discussion

1. Read John 5:18 aloud. The evangelist says the Jewish leaders understood Jesus to be claiming equality with God. On the Unitarian account, they were mistaken. On the Trinitarian account, they understood correctly but rejected the claim. Which reading requires more from the text? Which reading does more damage to the reliability of the evangelist?
2. The Sanhedrin charged Jesus with blasphemy. Blasphemy, under Jewish law, required a false claim to divine status. If Jesus is not God, the charge was technically accurate and the execution was legally justified. What does that conclusion require the Unitarian to say about the resurrection as God's vindication of Jesus? Can God vindicate someone who was correctly charged with blasphemy?
3. Jesus asks: If David calls the Christ his Lord, how is He also David's son? (Matthew 22:45). The question was unanswerable in the categories available to his questioners. What category does the Trinitarian doctrine of the Son supply that resolves the

question? What category does Unitarianism supply — and does it resolve it?

Workshop Three

Unitarianism and the Self-Defeating Text

The Unitarian position claims to take the New Testament seriously. It is worth examining what happens when it does so — when the New Testament is allowed to say what it plainly says and the Unitarian framework is applied to the result. The outcome is not a coherent reading of the text. It is the dissolution of the text's central claim.

The apostle John, at the end of his first letter, makes three consecutive statements that have the character of a formal summary — a doxological creed binding together everything the letter has argued.

1 John 5:11–12 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:20-21 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Read these statements in sequence. Eternal life, John says, is not an attribute God grants independently of the Son. It is a life that subsists in the Son. To have the Son is to have this life. To lack

the Son is to lack it entirely. The Son is not the means to an end separable from Himself. He is, in His own person, the life.

Then, in verse 20, John gathers the entire Christological argument of the letter into a single sentence of devastating plainness: He is the true God and eternal life. The referent of He, in context, is Jesus Christ, named in the immediately preceding clause. John does not say Jesus is godly, or god-like, or the highest of God's creatures, or the one through whom God's life flows. He says Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.

The Unitarian response to this verse is predictable: he must refer not to Jesus but to the Father, described earlier in the verse as Him who is true. But this reading strains against the grammar, which places the pronoun immediately following the reference to Jesus Christ, and against the logic of the letter, which has consistently identified eternal life as residing *in the Son* — not as a gift the Father grants in independence from the Son, but as something the Son Himself is.

More fundamentally, the Unitarian reading of 1 John 5:20 requires John to have completed his letter with a statement that says nothing new — a repetition of the truism that the Father is the true God, which no reader of the letter needed to be told. The Trinitarian reading requires John to have ended with the letter's most radical and summary claim: that the one in whom eternal life subsists, the Son, is Himself the true God. This is precisely

what the letter has been building toward. It is the claim the New Testament has been making from its opening pages. And it is the claim Unitarianism, by philosophical commitment rather than grammatical evidence, refuses to find.

This refusal is not exegetical. It is prior to exegesis. The Unitarian does not examine 1 John 5:20 and conclude that Jesus is not there called God. He examines 1 John 5:20 having already concluded that Jesus *cannot* be God, and then arranges the grammar accordingly. The text is not being followed. It is being managed.

The irony is total. Unitarianism presents itself as the philosophy that takes the text seriously and resists the imposition of external frameworks. Yet it is precisely the Unitarian framework — the prior philosophical commitment to divine simplicity in the Unitarian sense — that produces the systematic management of texts like John 1:1, Hebrews 1:8, Philippians 2:6, and 1 John 5:20. The framework is not derived from the New Testament. It is imposed upon it. And when the New Testament resists — which it does, repeatedly, in its most structurally central passages — the framework does not yield. The text is made to yield instead.

This is what it means for a philosophical position to collapse under its own weight when applied to a document it claims to honor. Unitarianism does not produce a coherent reading of the

New Testament. It produces an endless series of special pleadings against the New Testament's plain and repeated testimony. The weight of those testimonies accumulates. The special pleadings multiply. And the position that began as an appeal to the plain text ends as an elaborate machinery for neutralizing it.

Workshop Exercise 3 — Scripture Study and Personal Examination

1. Read 1 John 5:11–12 slowly and then stop. John says eternal life is in the Son — not merely through the Son or because of the Son, but in him. What does it mean for a life to be in a person rather than granted by a person? What does this language require the Son to be?
2. In 1 John 5:20, John calls Jesus Christ the true God and eternal life. Locate this claim in the grammar of the verse. Who is the grammatical subject of the sentence that contains this predicate? Now read the Unitarian explanation that He refers to the Father rather than to Jesus. Does that explanation relieve the grammatical pressure, or does it simply relocate it?
3. Unitarianism claims to go where the evidence leads. List three New Testament texts whose plain grammatical sense requires special reinterpretation under the Unitarian framework.

At what point does the accumulation of special pleadings constitute a philosophical override of the text rather than a reading of it?

4. The New Testament was written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in His name (John 20:31). Has your engagement with these questions moved you toward that belief or away from it? What does your answer reveal about the framework you brought to the reading?

Closing Word:

What the Text Leads Its Readers To Believe

The argument of this book began by naming a posture — the prosecutorial urge — and dismantling the evidential and logical claims on which it rests. The workshop has done something different. It has turned the argument into a mirror.

The mirror shows this: the Unitarian framework, when pressed to its conclusions, does not merely fail to account for what the New Testament says. It requires the New Testament to be criminally complicit in the arch-sin it was written to oppose. It vindicates the Sanhedrin against the Savior. It makes the apostolic witness — from John's prologue to John's first epistle — a sustained program for the promotion of idolatry,

blasphemy, and creature-worship. These are not peripheral implications that can be dismissed by a well-placed caveat. They are the load-bearing consequences of the position, and they collapse it from beneath.

The New Testament does not lead its readers toward Unitarianism. It leads them toward the confession that the one through whom all things were made, the one who bears the divine name, the one who receives the worship the Father will not give to another, the one in whom eternal life subsists — this one is the true God and eternal life. The text is not ambiguous about this. It is insistent. And the life it promises is not available on any other terms.

1 John 5:12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

That verdict is not a philosophy. It is not a council. It is not a creed formulated under imperial pressure. It is the self-disclosure of the one God who is, and has always been, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — Us, Our, and We — whose interior life of love is not a product of creation but its source, and into whose name every believer is baptized, in whom every knee will bow, and from whom every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Other PDFs by
**True Christian
Press**

**Oneness
Pentecostalism
and
the Bully Pulpit**

**Virulent Anti-Trinitarianism
and the Challenge of Biblical
Grammar, Logic, and Language
Conventions**

Mark Mountjoy

**The Boy
Who
Cried
"Wolf!"**

**False Alarms and
the Death of Trust**

Mark Mountjoy

New Testament Christian Apologetics Series



**7 Unconventional Ways
the Bible Indicates
Jesus is God**

**An Investigation for Your Jehovah's
Witness Loved Ones & Friends**

Mark Mountjoy

**Before You
Embrace
Preterism**

Mark Mountjoy

Spurious?

**Is the Book of Revelation
a Forgery?**

**Why the Mismatch with
Roman History Is a Red Flag
— Not the Problem**



Late Second Jewish Commonwealth Studies Series Mark Mountjoy