

The Ante-Nicene Church Fathers Were Proto-Arian Unitarians

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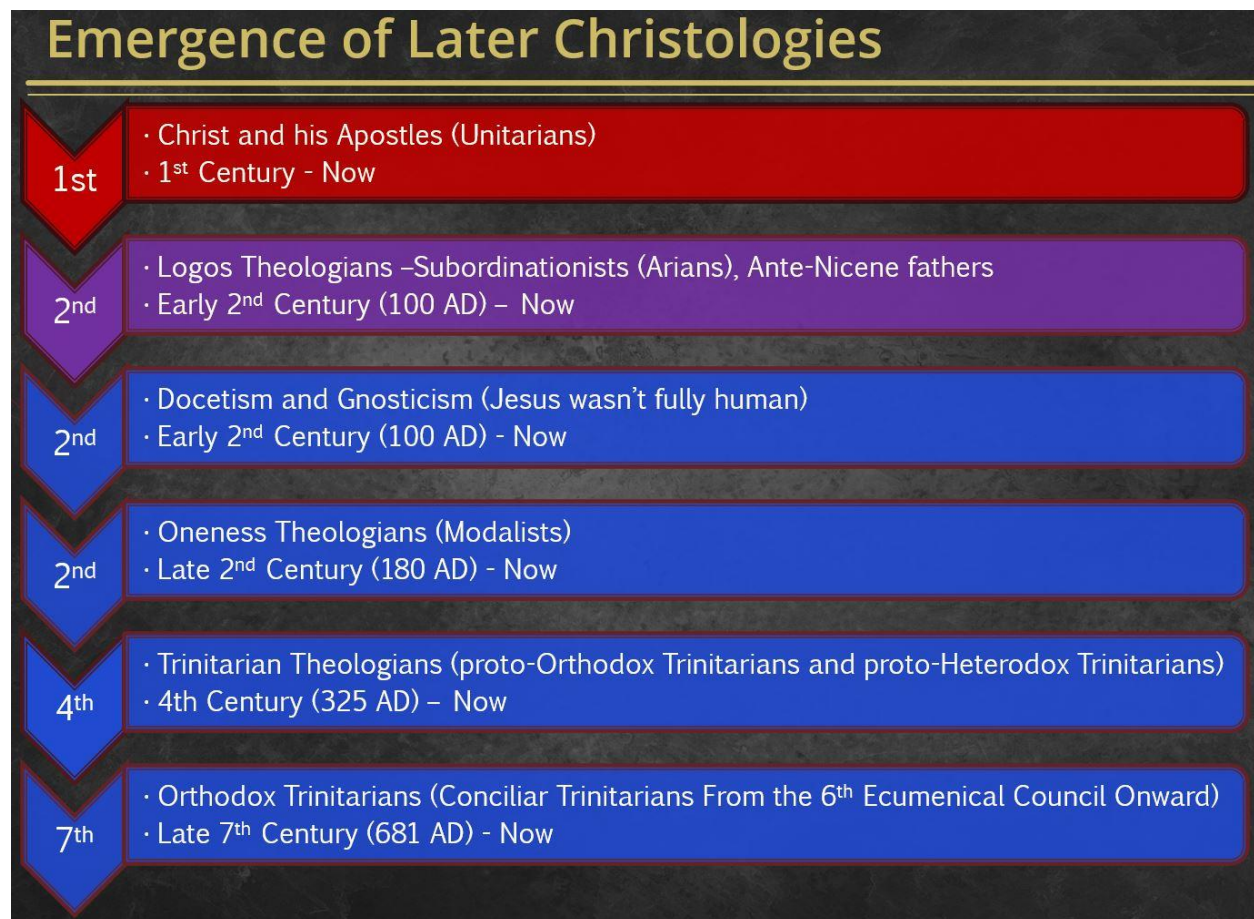
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Introduction

The purpose of this catalog of citations is to demonstrate that the “Orthodox” church fathers of the early centuries before Nicaea were predominantly Arian Unitarians. This shows a discontinuity between the early Church and later Trinitarian dogma.

The New Testament attests to the Unitarian roots of Christ and his Apostles. Variant Christologies developed which incorporated various Greek philosophical ideas. The earliest errors are various Christologies of the 2nd century including Logos theologians, Docetics/Gnostics, and Modalists. The writings of the proto-Orthodox Logos theologians indicate they had a type of Unitarian Christological view which affirmed that Jesus was the first creation of God and was “God” in a lesser sense. Thus, these early patristic writers were more like Arians than Trinitarians. Trinitarian Orthodoxy is an invention of the 4-7th centuries. The Ante-Nicaean (Proto-Orthodox) Church Fathers that precede Nicaea are proto-Arians. The chart below illustrates the emergence of later Christologies.



Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, Ch 18

The Ante-Nicean Church Fathers sometimes referred to Jesus being called God and for the worship of Jesus, but they saw Jesus as “God” in a lesser sense, as being from the Father and having his divinity grounded in the Father. They ascribed worship to the Son on account of the divinity that the Son exhibited in a secondary derived sense. A good example is Tertullian in *Against Hermogenes*:

“How can it be that anything, except the Father, should be older, and on this account indeed nobler, than the Son of God, the only-begotten and first-begotten Word? Not to say that what is unbegotten is stronger than that which is born, and what is not made more powerful than that which is made. Because that which did not require a Maker to give it existence, will be much more elevated in rank than that which had an author to bring it into being.”

Old Roman Symbol (primitive version of the Apostles Creed)

The first use of the word Trinity was by Tertullian, but he wasn't a Trinitarian by later standards of Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. References by him and others to the one God and Father, Jesus Christ his only Son, and the Holy Spirit were consistent with the Old Roman Symbol which was an earlier and shorter version of the Apostles' Creed based on the 2nd century Rule of Faith and the interrogatory declaration of faith for those receiving Baptism (3rd century or earlier). By the 4th century this creed was tripartite in structure. Here is a version of this most primitive creed according to the Greek text of Marcellus of Ancyra. (*Kelly, John Norman Davidson (1972), Early Christian Creeds, Longman (p. 102)*):

I believe in God the Father almighty;
and in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord,
Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried,
on the third day rose again from the dead,
ascended to heaven,
sits at the right hand of the Father,
whence he will come to judge the living and the dead;
and in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Church,
the remission of sins,
the resurrection of the flesh
the life everlasting.

[Apostolic Constitutions, Book VI. Section III, \(375-380 AD\)](#)

Even late in the 4th Century, the liturgy was more consistent with the primitive Apostles Creed (Old Roman Symbol) than the Nicene Creed of 325 or the Nicaea-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381, which was the first Trinitarian Creed that becomes definitive of modern Orthodoxy. This quote from Apostolic Constitutions, a 4th Century liturgical book, exemplifies the Arian view common among proto-Orthodox church fathers.

“But we, who are the children of God and the sons of peace, do preach the holy and right word of piety, and declare one only God, the Lord of the law and of the prophets, the Maker of the world, the Father of Christ; not a being that caused Himself, or begat Himself, as they suppose, but eternal, and without original, and inhabiting light inaccessible; not two or three, or manifold, but eternally one only; not a being that cannot be known or spoken of, but who was preached by the law and the prophets; the Almighty, the Supreme Governor of all things, the All-powerful Being; the God and Father of the Only-begotten, and of the First-born of the whole creation; one God, the Father of one Son... we declare unto you, that there is only one God Almighty, besides whom there is no other, and that you must worship and adore Him alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the most holy Spirit”

Unitarian Statements of Church Fathers

Most ancient creeds including the Old Roman Symbol, Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed, begin by declaring faith in one God, the Father Almighty. This Unitarian belief that God is one person, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is the first point of emphasis of these ancient creeds and confessions. The identification of the one God with the person of the Father extensively witnessed to by the ante-Nicene and even post-Nicene church fathers. The list below shows a large survey of quote attesting to the Father alone being the only true God.

[Clement of Rome, 1 Clement, Chapter 46](#)

“Why are there strifes, and tumults, and divisions, and schisms, and wars among you? Have we not [all] **one God and one Christ**? Is there not one Spirit of grace poured out upon us?”

[Clement of Rome, 1 Clement, Ch 59](#)

“We beseech Thee, Lord and Master, to be our help and succor. Save those among us who are in tribulation; have mercy on the lowly; lift up the fallen; show Thyself unto the needy; heal the ungodly; convert the wanderers of Thy people; feed the hungry; release our prisoners; raise up the weak; comfort the fainthearted. Let all the Gentiles know that **Thou art the God alone, and Jesus Christ is Thy Son**, and we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture.”

[Clement of Rome, 1 Clement, Ch 62](#)

“For concerning faith and repentance and genuine love and temperance and sobriety and patience we have handled every argument, putting you in remembrance, that ye ought to **please Almighty God** in righteousness and truth and long suffering with holiness, laying aside malice and pursuing concord in love and peace, being instant in gentleness; even as our fathers, of whom we spake before, **pleased Him, being lowly minded toward their Father and God and Creator and towards all men.**”

[Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Magnesians \(shorter version\), Chapter VIII](#)

“On this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence, and who in all things pleased Him that sent Him.”

[Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Philadelphians \(longer version\), Chapter VI](#)

“If anyone confesses Christ Jesus the Lord, **but denies the God of the law and of the prophets, saying that the Father of Christ is not the Maker of heaven and earth**, he has not continued in the truth any more than his father the devil, and is a disciple of Simon Magus, not of the Holy Spirit.

[Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Antiochians, Chapter IV](#)

“The Evangelists, too, **when they declared that the one Father was “the only true God,”** did not omit what concerned our Lord, but wrote: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

[Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Philippians, Chapter I.](#)

“For if **there is one God of the universe, the Father of Christ, “of whom are all things;” and one Lord Jesus Christ, our [Lord]**, “by whom are all things;” and also one Holy Spirit, who wrought in Moses, and in the prophets and apostles; and also one baptism, which is administered that we should have fellowship with the death of the Lord; and also one elect Church; there ought likewise to be but one faith in respect to Christ. For “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **one God and Father of all, who is through all, and in all.**””

[Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Philippians, Chapter II.](#)

“There is **then one God and Father, and not two or three; One who is; and there is no other besides Him, the only true [God]. For “the Lord thy God,” saith [the Scripture], “is one Lord.” And again, “Hath not one God created us? Have we not all one Father?** And there is also one Son, God the Word. For “the only-begotten Son,” saith [the Scripture], “who is in the bosom of the Father.” And again, “One Lord Jesus Christ.” And in another place, “What is His name, or what His Son’s name, that we may know?” And there is also one Paraclete. For “there is also,” saith [the Scripture], “one Spirit,” since “we have been called in one hope of our calling.””

[Ignatius of Antioch, Ignatius before Trajan, at his martyrdom. From the Martyrdom of Ignatius, Chapter II](#)

“Ignatius answered, “Thou art in error when thou callest the dæmons of the nations gods. For **there is but one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them; and one Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,** whose kingdom may I enjoy.””

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book I. Chapter III. 6.](#)

“And others of them, with great craftiness, adapted such parts of Scripture to their own figments, lead away captive from the truth those who do not retain **a stedfast faith in one God, the Father Almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book I. Chapter IV. 2.](#)

“The fallacy, then, of this exposition is manifest. **For when John, proclaiming one God, the Almighty, and one Jesus Christ**, the Only-begotten, by whom all things were made, declares that this was the Son of God, this the Only-begotten, this the Former of all things, this the true Light who enlighteneth every man, this the Creator of the world, this He that came to His own, this He that became flesh and dwelt among us,—these men, by a plausible kind of exposition, perverting these statements, maintain that there was another Monogenes, according to production, whom they also style Arche.”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book I. Chapter IX. 3.](#)

“But if the Word of the Father who descended is the same also that ascended, He, namely, **the Only-begotten Son of the only God, who, according to the good pleasure of the Father**, became flesh for the sake of men, the apostle certainly does not speak regarding any other, or concerning any Ogdoad, but respecting our Lord Jesus Christ.”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book I. Chapter X. 1.](#)

“The Church, though dispersed through our the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] **in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God**, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book I. Chapter X. 1.](#)

“The rule of truth which we hold, is, that **there is one God Almighty, who made all things by His Word, and fashioned and formed, out of that which had no existence, all things which exist**. Thus saith the Scripture, to that effect: “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them, by the spirit of His mouth.” And again, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.””

Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, Book II. Chapter I. 1.

“It is proper, then, that I should begin with **the first and most important head, that is, God the Creator, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein** (whom these men blasphemously style the fruit of a defect), **and to demonstrate that there is nothing either above Him or after Him; nor that, influenced by any one, but of His own free will, He created all things, since He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, alone containing all things, and Himself commanding all things into existence.**”

Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, Book II. Chapter II. 5.

“Now, **that this God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul the apostle also has declared, [saying,] “There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and through all things, and in us all.” I have indeed proved already that there is only one God**; but I shall further demonstrate this from the apostles themselves, and from the discourses of the Lord. For what sort of conduct would it be, were we to forsake the utterances of the prophets, of the Lord, and of the apostles, that we might give heed to these persons, who speak not a word of sense?”

Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, Book II. Chapter IX. 1.

“**That God is the Creator of the world is accepted even by those very persons who in many ways speak against Him, and yet acknowledge Him, styling Him the Creator, and an angel, not to mention that all the Scriptures call out [to the same effect], and the Lord teaches us of this Father who is in heaven, and no other**, as I shall show in the sequel of this work. For the present, however, that proof which is derived from those who allege doctrines opposite to ours, is of itself sufficient,—all men, in fact, consenting to this truth: the ancients on their part preserving with special care, from the tradition of the first-formed man, this persuasion, while they celebrate the praises of **one God, the Maker of heaven and earth**; others, again, after them, being reminded of this fact by the prophets of God, while the very heathen learned it from creation itself. For even creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it. The Universal Church, moreover, through the whole world, has received this tradition from the apostles.” *Against Heresies*, Book II. Chapter IX, 1.

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book II. Chapter XXX. 9.](#)

“But there is one only God, the Creator—He who is above every Principality, and Power, and Dominion, and Virtue: He is Father, He is God, He the Founder, He the Maker, He the Creator, who made those things by Himself, that is, through His Word and His Wisdom— heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them: He is just; He is good; He it is who formed man, who planted paradise, who made the world, who gave rise to the flood, who saved Noah; **He is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the living:** He it is whom the law proclaims, whom the prophets preach, whom Christ reveals, whom the apostles make known to us, and in whom the Church believes. **He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:** through His Word, who is His Son, through Him He is revealed and manifested to all to whom He is revealed; for those [only] know Him to whom the Son has revealed Him. But the Son, eternally coexisting with the Father, from of old, yea, from the beginning, always reveals the Father to Angels, Archangels, Powers, Virtues, and all to whom He wills that God should be revealed.”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book II. Chapter XXXV. 4.](#)

“Now, that the preaching of the apostles, the authoritative teaching of the Lord, the announcements of the prophets, the dictated utterances of the apostles, and the ministration of the law—all of which **praise one and the same Being, the God and Father of all,** and not many diverse beings, nor one deriving his substance from different gods or powers, **but [declare] that all things [were formed] by one and the same Father** (who nevertheless adapts [His works] to the natures and tendencies of the materials dealt with), **things visible and invisible, and, in short, all things that have been made [were created] neither by angels, nor by any other power, but by God alone, the Father**—are all in harmony with our statements, has, I think, been sufficiently proved, while by these weighty arguments it has been shown that there is but one God, the Maker of all things.”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book III. Chapter I. 2.](#)

“These **have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ the Son of God.** If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book III. Chapter III. 3.](#)

“In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome dispatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, **proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man**, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. **From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things.” Against Heresies, Book III. Chapter III. 3.

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book III. Chapter IV. 2.](#)

“To which course many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ do assent, having salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit, without paper or ink, and, carefully preserving the ancient tradition, **believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God**; who, because of His surpassing love towards His creation, condescended to be born of the virgin, **He Himself uniting man through Himself to God**, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, **and despise His Father and His advent.**”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book IV. Chapter I. 1.](#)

“Since, therefore, this is sure and stedfast, **that no other God or Lord was announced by the Spirit, except Him who, as God, rules over all, together with His Word**, and those who receive the Spirit of adoption, that is, **those who believe in the one and true God, and in Jesus Christ the Son of God**; and likewise that the apostles did of themselves term no one else as God, or name [no other] as Lord; and, what is much more important, [since it is true] **that our Lord [acted likewise], who did also command us to confess no one as Father, except Him who is in the heavens, who is the one God and the one Father**;—those things are clearly shown to be false which these deceivers and most perverse sophists advance”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching \(TDAP\)](#)

“And therefore it is right first of all to believe that **there is One God, the Father, who made and fashioned all things**, and made what was not that it should be, and who, containing all things, alone is uncontained.” ...“Thus then **there is shown forth One God, the Father, not made, invisible, creator of all things; above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God. And, since God is rational, therefore by (the) Word He created the things that were made**; and God is Spirit, and by (the) Spirit He adorned all things...” “This then is the order of the rule of our faith, **and the foundation of the building, and the stability of our conversation: God, the Father, not made, not material, invisible; one God, the creator of all things: this is the first point of our faith**. The second point is: The Word of God, Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, who was manifested to the prophets according to the form of their prophesying and according to the method of the dispensation of the Father: through whom all things were made; who also at the end of the times, to complete and gather up all things, was made man among men, visible and tangible, in order to abolish death and show forth life and produce a community of union between God and man. And the third point is: The Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied, and the fathers learned the things of God, and the righteous were led forth into the way of righteousness; and who in the end of the times was poured out in a new way upon mankind in all the earth, renewing man unto God.”

[Theophilus of Antioch, Theophilus to Autolycus, Book II. Chapter XXXIV.](#)

“**But God at least, the Father and Creator of the universe**, did not abandon mankind, but gave a law, and sent holy prophets to declare and teach the race of men, that each one of us might awake and understand that **there is one God**.”

[Athenagoras of Athens, A Plea for the Christians, Chapter IV.](#)

“But, since **our doctrine acknowledges one God, the Maker of this universe, who is Himself uncreated (for that which is does not come to be, but that which is not) but has made all things by the Logos which is from Him**, we are treated unreasonably in both respects, in that we are both defamed and persecuted.”

[Athenagoras of Athens, A Plea for the Christians, Chapter IV.](#)

“That we are not atheists, therefore, seeing that **we acknowledge one God, uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, illimitable, who is apprehended by the understanding only and the reason, who is encompassed by light, and beauty, and spirit, and power ineffable, by whom the universe has been created through His Logos**, and set in order, and is kept in being—I have sufficiently demonstrated. [I say “His Logos”],

Clement of Alexandria, Stromata Book 6, Chapter V

“And that the men of highest repute among the Greeks knew God, not by positive knowledge, but by indirect expression, Peter says in the Preaching: **“Know then that there is one God, who made the beginning of all things, and holds the power of the end; and is the Invisible, who sees all things; incapable of being contained, who contains all things; needing nothing, whom all things need, and by whom they are; incomprehensible, everlasting, unmade, who made all things by the ‘Word of His power,’ that is, according to the gnostic scripture, His Son.”**”

Clement of Alexandria, Stromata Book 7, Chapter X

“Wherefore also the apostle designates as “the express image of **the glory of the Father**” **the Son, who taught the truth respecting God, and expressed the fact that the Almighty is the one and only God and Father**, “whom no man knoweth but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him. That God is one is intimated by those “who seek the face of the God of Jacob;” **whom being the only God, our Saviour and God characterizes as the Good Father.**”

Hippolytus of Rome, Against the Heresy of One Noetus, 3.

“For it is right, in the first place, to expound the truth that the Father is one God, “of whom is every family,” “by whom are all things, of whom are all things, and we in Him.””

Hippolytus of Rome, Against the Heresy of One Noetus, 6.

“If, therefore, all things are put under Him with the exception of Him who put them under Him, **He is Lord of all, and the Father is Lord of Him, that in all there might be manifested one God, to whom all things are made subject together with Christ, to whom the Father hath made all things subject, with the exception of Himself. And this, indeed, is said by Christ Himself, as when in the Gospel He confessed Him to be His Father and His God. For He speaks thus: “I go to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.”**”

Origen, De Principiis, Preface 4.

“The particular points clearly delivered in the teaching of the apostles are as follow:– **First, That there is one God, who created and arranged all things, and who, when nothing existed, called all things into being—God from the first creation and foundation of the world—the God of all just men**, of Adam, Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noe, Sere, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets; **and that this God in the last days**, as He had announced beforehand by His prophets, **sent our Lord Jesus Christ** to call in the first place Israel to Himself, and in the second place the Gentiles, after the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel. **This just and good God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself gave the law and the prophets, and the Gospels, being also the God of the apostles and of the Old and New Testaments.**”

Origen, Origen Against Celsus, Book VII. Chapter XLI

“But whether Orpheus, Parmenides, Empedocles, or even Homer himself, and Hesiod, are the persons whom he means by “inspired poets,” let anyone show how those who follow their guidance walk in a better way, or lead a more excellent life, than those who, being taught in the school of Jesus Christ, have rejected all images and statues, and even all Jewish superstition, that they may look upward through the Word of God to **the one God, who is the Father of the Word**”.

Origen, Origen Against Celsus, Book VIII. Chapter XIII

“Accordingly, we worship with all our power **the one God, and His only Son, the Word and the Image of God, by prayers and supplications; and we offer our petitions to the God of the universe through His only-begotten Son.**”

Tertullian of Carthage, Apology, Chapter XVII.

“The **object of our worship is the One God, He who by His commanding word, His arranging wisdom, His mighty power, brought forth from nothing this entire mass of our world, with all its array of elements, bodies, spirits, for the glory of His majesty;** whence also the Greeks have bestowed on it the name of Κόσμος. The eye cannot see Him, though He is (spiritually) visible.”

Tertullian of Carthage, Against Praxeas, Chapter II

“We, however, as we indeed always have done (and more especially since we have been better instructed by the Paraclete, who leads men indeed into all truth), believe that **there is one only God**, but under the following dispensation, or οἰκονομία, as it is called, **that this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made. Him we believe to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin**, and to have been born of her—being both Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and to have been called by the name of Jesus Christ; we believe Him to have suffered, died, and been buried, according to the Scriptures, and, after He had been raised again by the Father and taken back to heaven, to be sitting at the right hand of the Father, and that He will come to judge the quick and the dead; who sent also from heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.”

Tertullian of Carthage, Against Praxeas, Chapter XVI

“Hence, therefore, their error becomes manifest; for, being ignorant that the entire order of the divine administration has from the very first had its course through the agency of the Son, **they believe that the Father Himself was actually seen**, and held converse with men, and worked, and was athirst, and suffered hunger (in spite of the prophet who says: **“The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth**, shall never thirst at all, nor be hungry;” much more, shall neither die at any time, nor be buried!), and therefore that **it was uniformly one God, even the Father, who at all times did Himself the things which were really done by Him through the agency of the Son”**

Tertullian of Carthage, Against Praxeas, Chapter XVIII

“When, therefore, He attested His own unity, **the Father took care of the Son’s interests, that Christ should not be supposed to have come from another God, but from Him who had already said, “I am God and there is none other beside me,”** who shows us that **He is the only God**, but in company with His Son, with whom “He stretcheth out the heavens alone.””

Novatian, A Treatise of Novatian Concerning the Trinity, Chapter XXXI.

“Thus God the Father, the Founder and Creator of all things, who only knows no beginning, invisible, infinite, immortal, eternal, is one God; to whose greatness, or majesty, or power, I would not say nothing can be preferred, but nothing can be compared; of whom, when He willed it, the Son, the Word, was born, who is not received in the sound of the stricken air, or in the tone of voice forced from the lungs, but is acknowledged in the substance of the power put forth by God, the mysteries of whose sacred and divine nativity neither an apostle has learnt, nor prophet has discovered, nor angel has known, nor creature has apprehended.”

“Assuredly God proceeding from God, causing a person second to the Father as being the Son, but not taking from the Father that characteristic that He is one God.”

“But now, whatever He is, He is not of Himself, because He is not unborn; but He is of the Father, because He is begotten, whether as being the Word, whether as being the Power, or as being the Wisdom, or as being the Light, or as being the Son; and whatever of these He is, in that He is not from any other source, as we have already said before, than from the Father, owing His origin to His Father, He could not make a disagreement in the divinity by the number of two Gods, since He gathered His beginning by being born of Him who is one God.”

“Thus making Himself obedient to His Father in all things, although He also is God, yet He shows the one God the Father by His obedience, from whom also He drew His beginning.”

“The true and eternal Father is manifested as the one God, from whom alone this power of divinity is sent forth, and also given and directed upon the Son, and is again returned by the communion of substance to the Father. God indeed is shown as the Son, to whom the divinity is beheld to be given and extended. And still, nevertheless, the Father is proved to be one God; while by degrees in reciprocal transfer that majesty and divinity are again returned and reflected as sent by the Son Himself to the Father, who had given them; so that reasonably God the Father is God of all, and the source also of His Son Himself whom He begot as Lord.”

Gregory Thaumaturgus, A Declaration of Faith

“There is one God, the Father of the living Word, who is His subsistent Wisdom and Power and Eternal Image: perfect Begetter of the perfect Begotten, Father of the only-begotten Son.”

Lactantius, The Divine Institutes, Chapter VII.

“I have, as I think, sufficiently taught by arguments, and confirmed by witnesses, that which is sufficiently plain by itself, that there is one only King of the universe, one Father, one God.”

Cyril of Jerusalem, On the Ten Points of Doctrine (Lecture IV)

“For there is One God, the Father of Christ; and One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of the Only God; and One Holy Ghost...”

Cyril of Jerusalem, The Father (Lecture VII)

I traversed also the bye-paths of the manifold error of the godless heretics: but now let us shake off their foul and soul-poisoning doctrine, and remembering what relates to them, not to our own hurt, but to our greater detestation of them, let us come back to ourselves, and receive the saving doctrines of the true Faith, connecting the dignity of Fatherhood with that of the Unity, and **believing In One God the Father: for we must not only believe in one God; but this also let us devoutly receive, that He is the Father of the Only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

“For thus shall we raise our thoughts higher than the Jews, who admit indeed by their doctrines that **there is One God**, (for what if they often denied even this by their idolatries?); **but that He is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, they admit not; being of a contrary mind to their own Prophets, who in the Divine Scriptures affirm, The Lord said unto me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee.”

“But let us adopt the godly doctrine of our Faith, **worshipping one God the Father of the Christ...”**

“For if a Father, He is certainly the Father of a Son; and if a Son, certainly the Son of a Father. Lest therefore from our speaking thus, In One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of All Things Visible and Invisible, and from our then adding this also, And in One Lord Jesus Christ, any one should irreverently suppose that the Only-begotten is second in rank to heaven and earth,—for this reason before naming them we named God the Father, that in thinking of the Father we might at the same time think also of the Son: for between the Son and the Father no being whatever comes.”

Cyril of Jerusalem, The Father (Lecture VIII)

“But worship thou One God the Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Cyril of Jerusalem, The Father (Lecture X)

“Be not thou carried away with the Jews when they craftily say, There is one God alone; but with the knowledge that God is One, know that there is also an Only-begotten Son of God.”

On the Clause, And In One Lord Jesus Christ, with a Reading From the First Epistle to the Corinthians

Cyril of Jerusalem, [On the Article, And in One Holy Ghost, the Comforter, Which Spake In the Prophets \(Lecture XVI\)](#)

“There is One God, the Father, Lord of the Old and of the New Testament: and One Lord, Jesus Christ, who was prophesied of in the Old Testament, and came in the New; and One Holy Ghost, who through the Prophets preached of Christ, and when Christ was come, descended, and manifested Him.”

“The Father through the Son, with the Holy Ghost, is the giver of all grace; the gifts of the Father are none other than those of the Son, and those of the Holy Ghost; for there is one Salvation, one Power, one Faith; **One God, the Father; One Lord, His only-begotten Son; One Holy Ghost, the Comforter.**”

Maximinus, [Debate with Augustine](#)

“I believe that there is one God the Father who has received life from no one and that there is one Son who has received from the Father his being and his life so that he exists and that there is one Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, who enlightens and sanctifies our souls. I state this on the basis of the scriptures.”

“We worship one God, unborn, unmade, invisible, who has not come down to human contacts and human flesh. The Son is not a small, but a great God, as blessed Paul says, Awaiting the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Ti 2:13). This great God, Christ, says, **I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God (Jn 20:17). By his own subjection he acknowledged that there is one God. This is the one God,** then, as we have already shown by testimonies, whom Christ and the Holy Spirit adore and every creature venerates and worships. This is the reason we profess one God. It is not that a union or mixture of the Son with the Father—and certainly not a union or mixture of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son—makes one God. Rather, **he alone is the one perfect God who, as you go on to say, received life from no one and who granted to the Son his revelation, that he has life in himself.** We say they are united in charity and in harmony.”

“In accord with the testimonies that I have produced, **I say that the Father alone is the one God, not one along with a second and a third,** but that he alone is the one God. If he alone is not the one God, he is a part.”

Eusebious of Caesarea, a letter of Eusebius of Caesarea to Euphration of Balanea

(1.) **For we do not say that the Son is coexisting with the Father, but instead that the Father existed before the Son. For if they coexisted, how could the Father be a father, and the Son be a son? Or how could one indeed be the first, and the other second? And how could one be unbegotten and the other begotten?** For the two, if they are equal, likewise exist mutually and are honored equally, one must conclude that either they are both unbegotten or both begotten, as I have said, but it is clear that neither of these is true. For they are neither both unbegotten nor both begotten. For one is indeed the first and best and leads to/precedes the second, both in order and in honor, so that he is the occasion for the second's existing and for his existing in this particular way.

(2.) **For the Son of God himself, who quite clearly knows all things, knows that he is different from, less, and inferior to the Father, and with full piety also teaches us this when he says, "The Father who sent me is greater than me" [John 14:28].**

(3.) **But he teaches that that one [the Father] is alone true when he says, "that they may know you, the only true God" [John 17:3], not as if one only is God, but that one is the (only) true God, with the very necessary addition of true. For also he himself is Son of God, but not true, as God is. For there is but one true God, the one before whom nothing existed. But if the Son himself is true, it is simply as an image of the true God, and he is God, for [Scripture says] "and the Word was God" [John 1:1], but not as the only true God.**

(4.) For daring to divide the Word of God and to name the Word as another God, differing in essence and power from the Father, he has departed into as great a blasphemy, as is easily discerned from those very terms he uses. The following is an exact quote from his writings:

But surely the image and the one whose image it is are not considered one, but they are two Beings and two Things and two Powers, similarly with other titles [on image of God, see Col 1:15, 2 Cor 4:4].

(5.) He writes as follows, wishing to show the savior as only a man, as the great unspoken mystery unveiled to us by the apostle:

For more clearly also the divine Apostle transmits to us the unspoken and mystical theology when he calls and cries out, "There is one God;" then after saying one God he continues to describe another, "One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" [1 Tim 2:5].

Eusebious of Caesarea, Letter on the Council of Nicaea

[In his letter on the Council of Nicaea, Eusebious indicates that a semi-Arian could still affirm the creed. He also indicates that you could also believe the expressed logos was not eternal and still be in conformance with the creed. The purpose of the Council of Nicaea was to determine whether or not the son is of the same essence as the Father and in what way the son was begotten. Eusebious makes no mention of the creed teaching a tri-personal God while suggesting that it is inclusive of semi-Arianism.]

Eusebious of Caesarea, Letter on the Council of Nicaea, 5

On their dictating this formula, we did not let it pass without inquiry in what sense they introduced of the essence of the Father, and one in essence with the Father. Accordingly questions and explanations took place, and the meaning of the words underwent the scrutiny of reason. **And they professed, that the phrase of the essence was indicative of the Son's being indeed from the Father**, yet without being as if a part of Him. And with this understanding we thought good to assent to the sense of such religious doctrine, teaching, as it did, that the **Son was from the Father**, not however a part of His essence. On this account we assented to the sense ourselves, without declining even the term 'One in essence', peace being the object which we set before us, and steadfastness in the orthodox view

[Phillip Schaff explains the meaning of specialized terms used in the Nicene creed and agrees with Eusebious on his definitions:

"The term homoousion, in its strict grammatical sense, differs from monoousion or toutoousion, as well as from heteroousion, and signifies not numerical identity, but equality of essence or community of nature among several beings. It is clearly used thus in the Chalcedonian symbol, where it is said that Christ is "consubstantial (homoousios) with the Father as touching the Godhead, and consubstantial with us [and yet individually, distinct from us] as touching the manhood." Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, 130. (<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc3.iii.xii.xiv.html>)]

Eusebious of Caesarea, Letter on the Council of Nicaea, 9

Moreover to anathematize "Before His generation He was not", did not seem preposterous, in that it is **confessed by all, that the Son of God was before the generation according to the flesh.**

Church Fathers on the Son Being a Creature

[Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Ch 61](#)

The Word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power, and the Glory of the Begetter, will bear evidence to me, when He speaks by Solomon the following: 'If I shall declare to you what happens daily, I shall call to mind events from everlasting, and review them. **The Lord made me the beginning of His ways for His works. From everlasting He established me in the beginning, before He had made the earth, and before He had made the deeps, before the springs of the waters had issued forth, before the mountains had been established. Before all the hills He begets me.** God made the country, and the desert, and the highest inhabited places under the sky. When He made ready the heavens, I was along with Him, and when He set up His throne on the winds: when He made the high clouds strong, and the springs of the deep safe, when He made the foundations of the earth, I was with Him arranging. I was that in which He rejoiced; daily and at all times I delighted in His countenance, because He delighted in the finishing of the habitable world, and delighted in the sons of men.

[Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Ch 62](#)

Either that God said to Himself, 'Let Us make, 'just as we, when about to do something, oftentimes say to ourselves, 'Let us make;' or that God spoke to the elements, to wit, the earth and other similar substances of which we believe man was formed, 'Let Us make,'--I shall quote again the words narrated by Moses himself, from which we can indisputably learn that [God] conversed with someone who was numerically distinct from Himself, and also a rational Being. These are the words: 'And God said, Behold, Adam has become as one of us, to know good and evil.' In saying, therefore, 'as one of us,' [Moses] has declared that [there is a certain] number of persons associated with one another, and that they are at least two. **For I would not say that the dogma of that heresy which is said to be among you is true, or that the teachers of it can prove that [God] spoke to angels, or that the human frame was the workmanship of angels. But this Offspring, which was truly brought forth from the Father, was with the Father before all the creatures, and the Father communed with Him;** even as the Scripture by Solomon has made clear, **that He whom Solomon calls Wisdom, was begotten as a Beginning before all His creatures and as Offspring by God..**

Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Ch 128

And **they call Him the Word, because He carries tidings from the Father to men**: but maintain that this power is indivisible and inseparable from the Father, just as they say that the light of the sun on earth is indivisible and inseparable from the sun in the heavens; as when it sinks, the light sinks along with it; so the Father, when He chooses, say they, causes His power to spring forth, and when He chooses, He makes it return to Himself. In this way, they teach, He made the angels. But it is proved that there are angels who always exist and are never reduced to that form out of which they sprang. And that this power which the prophetic word calls God, as has been also amply demonstrated, and Angel, is not numbered [as different] in name only like the light of the sun but is indeed something numerically distinct, I have discussed briefly in what has gone before; when **I asserted that this power was begotten from the Father, by His power and will**, but not by abscission, as if the essence of the Father were divided; as all other things partitioned and divided are not the same after as before they were divided: and, for the sake of example, I took the case of fires kindled from a fire, which we see to be distinct from it, and yet that from which many can be kindled is by no means made less, but remains the same.

Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Ch 128

"And now I shall again recite the words which I have spoken in proof of this point. When Scripture says, 'The Lord rained fire from the Lord out of heaven,' the prophetic word indicates that there were two in number: One upon the earth, who, it says, descended to behold the cry of Sodom; Another in heaven, who also is Lord of the Lord on earth, as He is Father and God; the cause of His power and of His being Lord and God. Again, when the Scripture records that God said in the beginning, 'Behold, Adam has become like one of Us,' this phrase, 'like one of Us,' is also indicative of number; and the words do not admit of a figurative meaning, as the sophists endeavour to affix on them, who are able neither to tell nor to understand the truth. And it is written in the book of Wisdom: 'If I should tell you daily events, I would be mindful to enumerate them from the beginning. The Lord created me the beginning of His ways for His works. **From everlasting He established me in the beginning, before He formed the earth, and before He made the depths, and before the springs of waters came forth, before the mountains were settled; He begets me before all the hills.**'" When I repeated these words, I added: "You perceive, my hearers, if you bestow attention, **that the Scripture has declared that this Offspring was begotten by the Father before all things created; and that which is begotten is numerically distinct from that which begets, any one will admit.**"

Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, 5.14

“Well, they say that God pervades all being; while we call Him solely Maker, and Maker by the Word. They were misled by what is said in the book of Wisdom: He pervades and passes through all by reason of His purity; Wisdom 7:24 since they did not understand that this was said of **Wisdom, which was the first of the creation of God.**”

“Plato expressly said, Whether was it that the world had no beginning of its existence, or derived its beginning from some beginning? For being visible, it is tangible; and being tangible, it has a body. Again, **when he says, It is a difficult task to find the Maker and Father of this universe, he not only showed that the universe was created, but points out that it was generated by him as a son, and that he is called its father, as deriving its being from him alone, and springing from non-existence.**”

Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, 6:16

in His uncreated identity, He [God] that is absolutely alone..The sensible types of these, then, are the sounds we pronounce. Thus the Lord Himself is called Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, Revelation 21:6 by whom all things were made, and without whom not even one thing was made. John 1:3 God’s resting is not, then, as some conceive, that God ceased from doing. For, being good, if He should ever cease from doing good, then would He cease from being God, which it is sacrilege even to say. The resting is, therefore, the ordering that the order of created things should be preserved inviolate, and that each of the creatures should cease from the ancient disorder. For the creations on the different days followed in a most important succession; so that **all things brought into existence might have honour from priority**, created together in thought, but not being of equal worth. Nor was the creation of each signified by the voice, inasmuch as the creative work is said to have made them at once. **For something must needs have been named first.** Wherefore those things were announced first, from which came those that were second, all things being originated together from one essence by one power. For the will of God was one, in one identity. **And how could creation take place in time, seeing time was born along with things which exist.**”

“That, then, we may be taught that the world was originated, and not suppose that God made it in time, prophecy adds: This is the book of the generation: also of the things in them, **when they were created in the day that God made heaven and earth.** (Genesis 2:4) For the expression when they were created intimates an indefinite and dateless production. **But the expression in the day that God made, that is, in and by which God made all things, and without which not even one thing was made, points out the activity exerted by the Son.** As David says, This is the day which the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it; that is, in consequence of the knowledge imparted by Him, let us celebrate the divine festival; **for the Word that throws light on things hidden, and by whom each created thing came into life and being, is called day.**”

[Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, 8.9](#)

“The same relation holds with the creator, and maker, and father. A thing is not the cause of itself. Nor is one his own father. For so the first would become the second. Now the cause acts and affects. That which is produced by the cause is acted on and is affected. But the same thing taken by itself cannot both act and be affected, nor can one be son and father. And otherwise the cause precedes in being what is done by it, as the sword, the cutting. And the same thing cannot precede at the same instant as to matter, as it is a cause, and at the same time, also, be after and posterior as the effect of a cause.

Now being differs from becoming, as the cause from the effect, the father from the son. For the same thing cannot both be and become at the same instant; and consequently it is not the cause of itself. Things are not causes of one another, but causes to each other. For the splenetic affection preceding is not the cause of fever, but of the occurrence of fever; and the fever which precedes is not the cause of spleen, but of the affection increasing.”

[Origen, Commentary on John, 2.6](#)

“We consider, therefore, that there are three hypostases, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and at the same time we believe nothing to be uncreated but the Father. We admit, as more pious and as true, that the Holy Spirit is the most honored of all things made through the Word, and that he is [first] in rank of all the things which have been made by the Father through Christ. Perhaps this is the reason the Spirit too is not called son of God, since the only begotten alone is by nature a son from the beginning. The Holy Spirit seems to have need of the Son ministering to his hypostasis, not only for it to exist, but also for it to be wise, and rational, and just, and whatever other thing we ought to understand it to be by participation in the aspects of Christ which we mentioned previously.”

“For the Son of God, the First-born of all creation, although He seemed recently to have become incarnate, is not by any means on that account recent. For the holy Scriptures know Him to be the most ancient of all the works of creation; for it was to Him that God said regarding the creation of man, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.””

[Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, Ch 18](#)

The Lord, says the Scripture, possessed me, the beginning of His ways for the creation of His works. Before the worlds He founded me; before He made the earth, before the mountains were settled in their places; moreover, before the hills He generated me, and prior to the depths was I begotten. Let Hermogenes then confess that the very Wisdom of God is declared to be born and created, for the special reason that we should not suppose that there is any other being than God alone who is unbegotten and uncreated. For if that, which from its being inherent in the Lord was of Him and in Him, **was yet not without a beginning — I mean His wisdom, which was then born and created, when in the thought of God It began to assume motion for the arrangement of His creative works** — how much more impossible is it that anything should have been without a beginning which was extrinsic to the Lord! But if this same Wisdom is the Word of God, in the capacity of Wisdom, and (as being He) without whom nothing was made, just as also (nothing) was set in order without Wisdom, **how can it be that anything, except the Father, should be older, and on this account indeed nobler, than the Son of God, the only-begotten and first-begotten Word?** Not to say that what is unbegotten is stronger than that which is born, and what is not made more powerful than that which is made. Because **that which did not require a Maker to give it existence, will be much more elevated in rank than that which had an author to bring it into being.**”

[Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, 10](#)

“The first and only (one God), both Creator and Lord of all, had nothing coeval with Himself; not infinite chaos, nor measureless water, nor solid earth, nor dense air, not warm fire, nor refined spirit, nor the azure canopy of the stupendous firmament. But He was One, alone in Himself. By an exercise of His will He created things that are, which antecedently had no existence, except that He willed to make them.... **Therefore this solitary and supreme Deity, by an exercise of reflection, brought forth the Logos first;** not the word in the sense of being articulated by voice, but as a ratiocination of the universe, **conceived and residing in the divine mind. Him alone He produced from existing things; for the Father Himself constituted existence, and the being born from Him was the cause of all things that are produced.** The Logos was in the Father Himself, **bearing the will of His progenitor,** and not being unacquainted with the mind of the Father. For simultaneously with His procession from His Progenitor, inasmuch as **He is this Progenitor’s first-born,** He has, as a voice in Himself, the ideas conceived in the Father. And so it was, that **when the Father ordered the world to come into existence, the Logos one by one completed each object of creation, thus pleasing God....**

Hippolytus Against Noetus, 10

“God, subsisting alone, and having nothing contemporaneous with Himself, determined to create the world. And conceiving the world in mind, and willing and uttering the word, He made it; and straightway it appeared, formed as it had pleased Him. For us, then, it is sufficient simply to know that there was nothing contemporaneous with God. Beside Him there was nothing; but He, while existing alone, yet existed in plurality. For He was neither without reason, nor wisdom, nor power, nor counsel And all things were in Him, and He was the All. When He willed, and as He willed, He manifested His word in the times determined by Him, and by Him He made all things. When He wills, He does; and when He thinks, He executes; and when He speaks, He manifests; when He fashions, He contrives in wisdom. For all things that are made He forms by reason and wisdom — creating them in reason, and arranging them in wisdom. He made them, then, as He pleased, for He was God. And as the Author, and fellow-Counsellor, and Framer of the things that are in formation, **He begot the Word; and as He bears this Word in Himself**, and that, too, as (yet) invisible to the world which is created, He makes Him visible; (and) uttering the voice first, and begetting Him as Light of Light, He set Him forth to the world as its Lord, (and) His own mind; and whereas He was visible formerly to Himself alone, and invisible to the world which is made, He makes Him visible in order that the world might see Him in His manifestation, and be capable of being saved.

Hippolytus Against Noetus, 11

And thus there appeared another beside Himself. But when I say another, I do not mean that there are two Gods, but that it is only as light of light, or as water from a fountain, or as a ray from the sun. **For there is but one power, which is from the All; and the Father is the All, from whom comes this Power, the Word. And this is the mind which came forth into the world, and was manifested as the Son of God.** All things, then, are by Him, and He alone is of the Father. Who then adduces a multitude of gods brought in, time after time? For all are shut up, however unwillingly, to admit this fact, that the All runs up into one.

[Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.38.2-3](#)

“let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects Himself, all things are possible to Him. **But created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline...** With God there are simultaneously exhibited power, wisdom, and goodness. His power and goodness [appear] in this, that of His own will He called into being and fashioned things having no previous existence; His wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole; and those things which, through His super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly. **For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God. And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God’s subjection. But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One.** By this arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies, and a sequence of this nature, man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God — the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, **the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating**, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is made], but man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One.

Church Fathers on the Father Being Before the Son

[Theophilus of Antioch, To Autolycus, Book 2, Ch 22](#)

“For before anything came into being He had Him as a counsellor, being His own mind and thought. But when God wished to make all that He determined on, **He begot this Word, uttered, the first-born of all creation, not Himself being emptied of the Word [Reason], but having begotten Reason, and always conversing with His Reason.** And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-bearing [inspired] men, one of whom, John, says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,” showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him. Then he says, “The Word was God; all things came into existence through Him; and apart from Him not one thing came into existence.” The Word, then, being God, and being naturally produced from God, whenever the Father of the universe wills, He sends Him to any place; and He, coming, is both heard and seen, being sent by Him, and is found in a place.”

[Tatian, Address to the Greeks, Ch 5](#)

“God was in the beginning; but the beginning, we have been taught, is the power of the Logos. For the Lord of the universe, who is Himself the necessary ground (ὑπόστασις) of all being, inasmuch as no creature was yet in existence, was alone; but inasmuch as He was all power, Himself the necessary ground of things visible and invisible, with Him were all things; with Him, by Logos-power (διὰ λογικῆς δυνάμεως), the Logos Himself also, who was in Him, subsists. And by His simple will the Logos springs forth; and the Logos, **not coming forth in vain, becomes the first-begotten work of the Father.** Him (the Logos) we know to be the beginning of the world. But He came into being by participation, not by abscission; for what is cut off is separated from the original substance, but that which comes by participation, making its choice of function, does not render him deficient from whom it is taken. For just as from one torch many fires are lighted, but the light of the first torch is not lessened by the kindling of many torches, so the Logos, coming forth from the Logos-power of the Father, has not divested of the Logos-power Him who begat Him.”

Origen, Commentary on John, Book 2.2

We next notice John's use of the article in these sentences. He does not write without care in this respect, nor is he unfamiliar with the niceties of the Greek tongue. In some cases he uses the article, and in some he omits it. He adds the article to the Logos, but to the name of God he adds it sometimes only. **He uses the article, when the name of God refers to the uncreated cause of all things, and omits it when the Logos is named God.** Does the same difference which we observe between God with the article and God without it prevail also between the Logos with it and without it? We must enquire into this. As the God who is over all is God with the article not without it, so "the Logos" is the source of that reason (Logos) which dwells in every reasonable creature; the reason which is in each creature is not, like the former called par excellence The Logos. Now there are many who are sincerely concerned about religion, and who fall here into great perplexity. They are afraid that they may be proclaiming two Gods, and their fear drives them into doctrines which are false and wicked. Either they deny that the Son has a distinct nature of His own besides that of the Father, and make Him whom they call the Son to be God all but the name, **or they deny the divinity of the Son, giving Him a separate existence of His own, and making His sphere of essence fall outside that of the Father, so that they are separable from each other.** To such persons we have to say that God on the one hand is Very God (Autotheos, God of Himself); and so the Saviour says in His prayer to the Father, "That they may know Thee the only true God; "but that all beyond the Very God is made God by participation in His divinity, and is not to be called simply God (with the article), but rather God (without article). **And thus the first-born of all creation, who is the first to be with God, and to attract to Himself divinity, is a being of more exalted rank than the other gods beside Him, of whom God is the God, as it is written, "The God of gods, the Lord, hath spoken and called the earth." It was by the offices of the first-born that they became gods, for He drew from God in generous measure that they should be made gods, and He communicated it to them according to His own bounty. The true God, then, is "The God," and those who are formed after Him are gods, images, as it were, of Him the prototype. But the archetypal image, again, of all these images is the Word of God, who was in the beginning, and who by being with God is at all times God, not possessing that of Himself, but by His being with the Father, and not continuing to be God, if we should think of this, except by remaining always in uninterrupted contemplation of the depths of the Father.**

Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, Ch 3

“I maintain that the substance existed always with its own name, which is God; the title Lord was afterwards added, as the indication indeed of something accruing. For from the moment when those things began to exist, over which the power of a Lord was to act, God, by the accession of that power, both became Lord and received the name thereof. **Because God is in like manner a Father, and He is also a Judge; but He has not always been Father and Judge, merely on the ground of His having always been God. For He could not have been the Father previous to the Son, nor a Judge previous to sin. There was, however, a time when neither sin existed with Him, nor the Son;** the former of which was to constitute the Lord a Judge, and the latter a Father. In this way He was not Lord previous to those things of which He was to be the Lord. But He was only to become Lord at some future time: **just as He became the Father by the Son,** and a Judge by sin, so also did **He become Lord by means of those things which He had made,** in order that they might serve Him.”

Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, Ch 5

God is unborn; is not Matter also unborn? God ever exists; is not Matter, too, ever existent? Both are without beginning; both are without end; both are the authors of the universe--both He who created it, and the Matter of which He made it. For it is impossible that Matter should not be regarded as the author of all things, when the universe is composed of it. What answer will he give? Will he say that Matter is not then comparable with God as soon as it has something belonging to God; since, by not having total (divinity), it cannot correspond to the whole extent of the comparison? But what more has he reserved for God, that he should not seem to have accorded to Matter the full amount of the Deity? He says in reply, that even though this is the prerogative of Matter, both the authority and the substance of God must remain intact, by virtue of which He is regarded as the sole and prime Author, as well as the Lord of all things. Truth, however, maintains the unity of God in such a way as to insist that whatever belongs to God Himself belongs to Him alone. For so will it belong to Himself if it belong to Him alone; and therefore it will be impossible that another god should be admitted, when it is permitted to no other being to possess anything of God. Well, then, you say, we ourselves at that rate possess nothing of God. But **indeed we do, and shall continue to do--only it is from Him that we receive it, and not from ourselves. For we shall be even gods, if we, shall deserve to be among those of whom He declared, "I have said, Ye are gods," and, "God standeth in the congregation of the gods." But this comes of His own grace, not from any property in us, because it is He alone who can make gods.** The property of Matter, however, he makes to be that which it has in common with God. (Against Hermogenes, Ch 5)

[Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, Ch 18](#)

“Let Hermogenes then confess that the very Wisdom of God is declared to be born and created, for the special reason that we should not suppose that there is any other being than God alone who is unbegotten and uncreated. For if that, which from its being inherent in the Lord was of Him and in Him, was yet not without a beginning — I mean His wisdom, which was then born and created, when in the thought of God It began to assume motion for the arrangement of His creative works — how much more impossible is it that anything should have been without a beginning which was extrinsic to the Lord! But if this same Wisdom is the Word of God, in the capacity of Wisdom, and (as being He) without whom nothing was made, just as also (nothing) was set in order without Wisdom, **how can it be that anything, except the Father, should be older, and on this account indeed nobler, than the Son of God, the only-begotten and first-begotten Word? Not to say that what is unbegotten is stronger than that which is born, and what is not made more powerful than that which is made. Because that which did not require a Maker to give it existence, will be much more elevated in rank than that which had an author to bring it into being.**”

[Tatian, Address to the Greeks, V.](#)

God was in the beginning; but the beginning, we have been taught, is the power of the Logos. For the Lord of the universe, who is Himself the necessary ground of all being, inasmuch as no creature was yet in existence, was alone; but inasmuch as He was all power, Himself the necessary ground of things visible and invisible, with Him were all things; with Him, by Logos-power, the Logos Himself also, who was in Him, subsists. **And by His simple will the Logos springs forth; and the Logos, not coming forth in vain, becomes the first-begotten work of the Father.** Him (the Logos) we know to be the beginning of the world. But He came into being by participation, not by abscission; for what is cut off is separated from the original substance, but that which comes by participation, making its choice of function, does not render him deficient from whom it is taken. For just as from one torch many fires are lighted, but the light of the first torch is not lessened by the kindling of many torches, so the Logos, coming forth from the Logos-power of the Father, has not divested of the Logos-power Him who begat Him. I myself, for instance, talk, and you hear; yet, certainly, I who converse do not become destitute of speech (logos) by the transmission of speech, but by the utterance of my voice I endeavor to reduce to order the unarranged matter in your minds. And as the Logos begotten in the beginning, begat in turn our world, having first created for Himself the necessary matter, so also I, in imitation of the Logos, being begotten again, and having become possessed of the truth, am trying to reduce to order the confused matter which is kindred with myself. **For matter is not, like God, without beginning, nor, as having no beginning, is of equal power with God; it is begotten, and not produced by any other being, but brought into existence by the Framer of all things alone.**

[Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies](#)

“The first and only (one God), both Creator and Lord of all, had nothing coeval with Himself; not infinite chaos, nor measureless water, nor solid earth, nor dense air, not warm fire, nor refined spirit, nor the azure canopy of the stupendous firmament. But He was One, alone in Himself. By an exercise of His will He created things that are, which antecedently had no existence, except that He willed to make them.... Therefore this solitary and supreme Deity, by an exercise of reflection, brought forth the Logos first; not the word in the sense of being articulated by voice, but as a ratiocination of the universe, conceived and residing in the divine mind. Him alone He produced from existing things; for the Father Himself constituted existence, and the being born from Him was the cause of all things that are produced.” (

[Hippolytus, Against Noetus, Ch 10-11](#)

“God, subsisting alone, and having nothing contemporaneous with Himself, determined to create the world.... And as the Author, and fellow-Counsellor, and Framers of the things that are in formation, **He begot the Word; and as He bears this Word in Himself, and that, too, as (yet) invisible to the world which is created, He makes Him visible; (and) uttering the voice first, and begetting Him as Light of Light, He set Him forth to the world as its Lord, (and) His own mind;** and whereas He was visible formerly to Himself alone, and invisible to the world which is made, He makes Him visible in order that the world might see Him in His manifestation, and be capable of being saved... And thus there appeared another beside Himself.”

[Eusebius of Caesarea, Letter to His Diocese, includes description of Constantine’s belief](#)

At this point in the discussion, **our most pious Emperor maintained that the Son existed before all ages even according to his divinely inspired begetting, since even before the act of begetting was performed, in potentiality he was with the Father, even before he was begotten by him, since the Father is always Father, just as he is always King and always Savior; he has the potentiality to be all things, and remains exactly the same forever.”**

[Eusebius claims that Constantine, who was behind the Nicene Creed, held that Jesus preexisted his begetting on account that his begetting was divinely inspired (planned) by the Father]

[Maximinus, Debate with Augustine](#)

“If the Son was in the beginning, the Father was before the beginning and without beginning, insofar as he is unbegotten and unborn. The Son, however, was in the beginning as the firstborn of all creation.”

Homoian Sermon

“But God without beginning had foreknowledge that he was going to be the Father of the only-begotten God, his Son... Because he generated the Son, he was called Father by the Son, and because the Son has revealed him, he is known by all Christians as the God and Father of the only-begotten God.”

Ulfilas, Letter of Auxentius

“He never hesitated to preach quite openly and very clearly to willing and unwilling alike the one true God, the Father of Christ... Who being alone, not to the division or diminution of His divinity, but to the display of His goodness and power, by His will and power alone, passionless Himself impassible, indestructibly Himself indestructible, and immovably Himself unmoved, did create and beget, make and establish the only-begotten God... He never concealed that, according to the authority and tradition of the Holy scriptures, this second God and Author of all things existed from the Father, after the Father, for the Father, and for the glory of the Father”

As we seen from the many citations above, the Anti-Nicene Church fathers are more properly classified as proto-Arians than proto-Trinitarians.