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 by Roderick L. Ross

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**“ONLY BEGOTTEN”
and the
“DEITY OF CHRIST”**

by Roderick L. Ross

Published by:
Speak As The Oracles, Inc.
2739 Woodruff Ave.
Lansing, MI 48912

Typeset by:
Robinson TypeSetting
304 Ripley St.
Corinth, MS 38834
(601) 286-6575

Printed by:
Decker & Ross Publishing
G-2388 N. Linden Rd.
Flint, MI 48504
(313) 733-0660

PREFACE

At the request of brother Ben F. Vick, Jr., of Indianapolis, Indiana, I reviewed brother Hugo McCord's paper distributed at the Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship in 1988. This review was first printed as a series of editorials in the March through December 1988 issues of **Speak As The Oracles**.

This booklet form is a joint effort of **Speak As The Oracles**, **Robinson TypeSetting**, and **Decker & Ross Publishing**. It is due to their efforts and generosity that it is offered in its first printing for free. My thanks to both Garland M. Robinson and brother Martin L. Decker for their generosity. Also, my thanks to the church where I labor, which will begin meeting at 3900 N. East St. in Lansing, Michigan, in the summer of 1989, for allowing me the time to do the research necessary for this review by relieving me of some duties. Their support and love for the truth are to be commended.

An **Addenda** has been added to the original series of editorials as they appeared in **Speak As The Oracles**. **THE FOURTH FREED-HARDEMAN COLLEGE PREACHERS AND CHURCH WORKERS FORUM** on the theme of ONLY BEGOTTEN, TRANSLATIONS, AND UNITY with Robert R. Taylor, Jr., J. Noel Merideth, Ralph Gilmore and Hugo McCord took place after the original series of editorials had closed. The **Addenda** deals with some questions raised by the Forum.

Read carefully and thoughtfully. The question is of great magnitude. It affects the doctrine of the deity of Christ. I honestly believe it shall have grave consequences upon the future of the church.

February 15, 1989
Roderick L. Ross

Scripture Index on page 40

"ONLY BEGOTTEN" and the "DEITY OF CHRIST"

Brother Hugo McCord has in the *Gospel Advocate*, and of late at the 1988 Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship, advocated that the Greek word *monogenes* be translated "unique" rather than "only begotten." I have never had the pleasure (and I say pleasure because of what everyone who has met him has reported to me) of meeting brother McCord. All reports I have heard of his piety and scholarship has been most favorable. Yet, in spite of this, I find his most recent work on "ONLY BEGOTTEN," distributed at the 1988 Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship, most distressing and dangerous.

Brother McCord has defined the difference between translating *monogenes* "only" and "only begotten" as: "the difference in fact is deity over against non-deity" in connection with Jesus, and accused those who use a translation which contains "only begotten" of "unintentionally" adopting the same error as the Unitarians and the "Witnesses" saying "these people do not know they have demoted the Lord whom they love to creature status." He further states in his paper that the Father-Son relationship between God and Jesus "is figurative," therefore not literal.

I must vehemently disagree with brother McCord in his opening statement: "A discussion of the phrase 'only begotten' is not of importance in itself." If a discussion of that which demotes our Lord to a mere creature is **not of importance**, if a discussion of the relationship which Jesus bears to the Father is **not of importance**, if it is **not of importance** whether Jesus is literally the Son of God, **then please tell me what, in all of Christianity, is important!** All Christianity is wrapped up in that confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God.

Brother McCord expresses love for "those sincere Christians who have not learned what they are really doing to our Lord." May I also express my love for those who have been deluded into accepting brother McCord's position, and for brother McCord: a deep enough love

(concern for the good) for them, and for our Lord, to respond to his error and expose it.

Time was not sufficient between the reception of brother McCord's paper and the preparation of this issue for the press to fully respond to the error of brother McCord's paper. But, Lord willing, we shall fully respond, point for point, reprinting his entire paper in order to properly review it in coming issues.

Meanwhile, remember the words of the apostle John: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written, *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*" (John 20:30-31); "For God so loved the world, that he gave *his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

In order to be as fair and complete to brother McCord in representing his position as presented in the paper at Freed-Hardeman College, brother McCord's paper will be quoted section by section. There is no intent at any point or position to misrepresent, but only to correctly refute the error which he has espoused.

As in the case of any erroneous position, there is some truth sprinkled within in order to make the concept more believable. Acknowledgement of truthful statements is made with joy. However, while acknowledging certain statements are true, it does not imply, or logically follow, that the conclusions reached are true. The whole of an argument must be true in order to justify a conclusion.

With these introductory remarks, the review of brother McCord's paper commences: **(his words are reproduced in smaller type)**

"ONLY BEGOTTEN"

Hugo McCord

A discussion of the phrase "only begotten" is not of supreme importance in itself. Many thousands of the Christians of the first three centuries went to their reward believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but who never heard that allegedly he was a begotten being. If Jesus were a begotten being he had an origin, and so has not always been in existence. This means he is younger than his Father, and means he is a creature, not the Creator (John 1:3). This is a demotion to him who, like his Father, is "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:6; 22:13; Isaiah 44:6).

It is true that a discussion of the English phrase "only begotten" is not of supreme importance; but, it is also true that a discussion of the concept expressed by that phrase, especially as it applies to Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament, is of supreme importance. Thousands, indeed millions, have lived and died as Christians and gone on to their reward without hearing the English phrase "only begotten;" but, they were not without the meaning of the phrase expressed in the Greek language (the original language of the New Testament) in the word *monogenes*.

If the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was begotten of God (as none other was before or since) is not true; then the prophecy of Psalm 2:7 [*I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee*] could not be fulfilled in him as inspiration clearly states (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5), and he is not the Messiah, the Savior of the world; and, we are yet in our sins. If the fulfillment of this prophecy (where God says he has begotten Jesus) and applying the word "begotten" to Jesus demotes him to creature status and denies his eternal existence because it states Jesus is "begotten," then God represents him as so in the Bible. The Lord rebuke such a position. It simply is not true! Therefore, if a demotion exists by the use of "begotten" in reference to Jesus, it is presented by the word of God, not by the English phrase "only begotten." Thus, brother McCord in his effort to get away from his perceived demotion of Christ by the use of "begotten" in "only begotten" runs right into the problem in the prophecy of Psalm 2:7 and its fulfillment in Acts 13:3; Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5.

The concept of a begetting of Jesus is prominent throughout the Bible. The statement of God to the serpent after the introduction of sin into the world implies begettal in the use of the word "seed" (Genesis 3:15). It is also inherent in the promise made to Abram and those who followed concerning the Seed in which all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:18; etc.). The prophecy of Isaiah implies a begettal of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). The idea of begettal in all of these passages, as well as its implication and statement in Matthew 1 and Luke 1, refers to the physical lineage of Jesus as the son of Abraham, the son of David, the Son of man. It is not a normal begettal, as Mormonism would teach; but, as the angel declared unto Mary, "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35). This is the begettal of Jesus of Nazareth: a begettal unlike any man born before or since. Thus, Jesus is the only begotten Son of God.

This begetting of the man Jesus in no wise contradicts the pre-existence of the personality of Jesus as the Word of John 1:1: a pre-existence of equality with the Father (Philippians 2:6-7). Rather, this begetting explains the mystery of godliness, "God made manifest in the flesh" (I Timothy 3:16); for Jesus was "made of woman" (Galatians 4:4) "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:4) and simultaneously "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Arius in the fourth century so reduced the Lord, time-dating him, affirming that Jesus was *homoiousios*, like deity, while Athanasius affirmed that he was and is *homoousios*, of the same essence as deity. The difference in spelling was only one letter, but the difference in fact was deity over against non-deity. The Jehovah's Witnesses have carried on the same depreciation of the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9) by calling him "a god" instead of "God" (John 1:1).

The Arian controversy takes its name from Arius (256-336 a.d.). "It denied that the Son was of the same substance (Gk. *homoousios*) with the Father and reduced him to the rank of a creature, though pre-existent before the world." (**The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. I**; Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI; 1949; p. 278). Arius, and all true Arians, declared Jesus to be of a different essence (Gk. *heteroousios*) than the Father. It was in reaction to this heresy especially that the Council of Nicea was convened in 325 a.d. Following the Council of Nicea, Eusebius of Nicomedia championed a modified form of Arianism. "The Eusebians, or semi-Arians, taught that the Son was similar in substance (*homoiousios*) to the Father; while the Aetians (from Aetius, a deacon of Antioch who revived Arianism) and the Eunomians (From Eunomius, Bishop of Cyzicus in Mysia) taught that he was of a different substance (*heteroousios*), and unlike (*anomos*) the Father in everything as also in substance (hence the name Heteroousiasts and Anomoians or Anomoeans)." (Ibid.; p. 28). Thus, brother McCord errs in his historical reference to the difference between Arius and Athanasius as being between *homoiousios* and *homoousios*; it was between *heteroousios* and *homoousios*. The later controversy was between *homoiousios* and *homoousios*.

Brother McCord also errs in applying this controversy to the use of the word "begotten" in reference to Jesus. The Nicene Creed, formed to combat Arianism at Nicea in 325 a.d., reads:

"[We believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,

begotten of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate, and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven; from thence he cometh to judge the quick and the dead. And those who say there was a time when he [the Son] was not; and he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or thing, or the Son of God is created, or changeable, or alterable; — they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church." (*Ibid.*; p. 279).

Had the use of the word "begotten" in any way been supportive of Arianism, it would not have found its way into this statement of the Nicene Creed.

It is true that Arius, according to Socrates, advocated the theory that "If the Father begat the Son, he must be older than the Son, and there was a time when the Son was not; from thus it further follows that the Son has his subsistence (Gk. *hypostasis*) from nothing." (*Ibid.*; p. 278). However, the controversy was not over whether Jesus was the "begotten" or "only begotten" Son of God (as the Nicene Creed illustrates); but, over what was meant when it is said Jesus is the "begotten" or "only begotten" Son of God.

And then many people besides the Arians (today, Unitarians) and the Witnesses unintentionally have adopted the same error by using translations which make Jesus "only begotten." The phrase "only begotten" is *monogenes* (a non-Biblical word), whereas the inspired John wrote that Jesus is *monogenes* (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9). Again the difference in spelling is only one letter, but the difference in fact is deity over against non-deity.

To charge those who utilize a "translation which makes Jesus 'only begotten'" with "unintentionally" advocating Arianism has no foundation in the facts of history. As was noted above, the Arian controversy was not over whether Jesus was "begotten" or the "only begotten," both sides agreed to that fact; the controversy was over what it meant that Jesus was the "begotten" or "only begotten" Son of God.

Brother McCord states: "The phrase 'only begotten' is *mongennes* (a non-Biblical word)..." Since the word *mongennes* is not found in the Bible, where is it found? A search of Biblical Greek lexicons or dictionaries leaves one without a reference to the word. A search of classical Greek lexicons or dictionaries leaves one without a reference to the word. A search of modern Greek lexicons or dictionaries leaves one

without a reference to the word. Where in Greek literature of any period is the word *mongennes* found? Before the word *mongennes* is accepted as the word which actually means "only begotten," it must first be proven that it is a word at all. This reference to *monogennes* reminds one of the reference to *mongennetos* in **The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Vol. III; Abingdon Press: NY, Nashville; 1962)**. A search of classical, New Testament and modern Greek lexicons or dictionaries did not turn up a single reference to this word either. When brother J. Noel Merideth asked brother Jack Lewis "to produce his references in literature to this word *monogennetos*" after repeating the claim of **The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary** in the **Gospel Advocate** (May 1, 1986), brother Lewis replied: "In my opinion (without dilligent [sic] search) *monogennetos* is a hypothetical word formed on an analogy with *gennetos* from *gennao*." (**Christian Light; March 1987; p. 10**). It is suspected that the answer to references utilizing *monogennes* will be quite similar.

Reference to a non-existent word in order to establish the etymology and definition of another word does not inspire confidence in the application of true scholarship to the question at hand.

The question is not what would another word mean, if there were such a word; but, what does the word used by the apostle John (*monogenes*) mean when used in reference to Christ? Even should there be such a word as *monogennes* or *mongennetos*, and even should it be defined as "only begotten," that does not mean that *mongenes* would not, could not, and does not mean "only begotten." John W. Dahms points this out in his article, "The Johannine Use of *Monogenes* Reconsidered" in **New Testament Studies** (April, 1983; pp. 222-232). The argument based upon *mongennes* (or *mongennetos*) is "begging the question." It is beside the point. The point is: What does *mongenes* mean?

But these people do not know they have demoted the Lord whom they love to creature status. They steadfastly affirm his deity, and they rise in protest against the Arian and Witness heresy, but their adopting the phrase "only begotten" about Jesus logically places them with the Unitarians and Witnesses. From childhood they have become habituated to the phrase "only begotten," and now rally around it, not realizing how it demotes the Lord whom they love so dearly. I know, for from a youth I did the same thing.

Brother McCord states "adopting the phrase 'only begotten' about Jesus logically places them with the 'Unitarians' and 'Witnesses.'" This is a very serious charge against both those who translated the King

James Version and those who utilize it. The truth of the matter is, however, the use of "only begotten" only indicates the position of the Unitarians and Witnesses when the validity of their argument is accepted. Brother McCord has evidently accepted the validity of their argument. However, I do not! **It does not logically follow!** See the response made to the first paragraph. Again, if the use of the word "begotten" logically indicates the position of the Unitarians and Witnesses, what about Psalm 2:7? It would mean God "logically" indicates the Arian heresy! The Lord rebuke such a position! That is heresy.

This statement by Brother McCord shows the seriousness of the discussion. He is accusing the church wholesale of having advocated "logically" the Arian heresy throughout the English speaking world for at least the last two centuries. He charges the churches of Christ wholesale with heresy in their use of a translation which uses "only begotten." That is a most serious charge. It is a charge that I deny, and for which brother McCord needs to repent, and owes the brotherhood an apology.

I love those sincere Christians who have not learned what they are really doing to our Lord. One of them whom I failed to enlighten responds to me in a loving way:

I have written plainly about **monogenes** just as you have to me. Though I strongly disagree with you on **monogenes**, and have some lesser disagreements with you on some other points, yet I still deem you as one of my warmest and best friends. And remember that one of the best definitions ever given of a true friend is "one before whom I could think aloud." This I have done with you relative to this momentous matter.

Brother McCord's love and sincerity are not at issue. I have no reason to question his love for those who disagree with him. I have no reason to doubt his sincerity. I have reason to question his position. I love brother McCord as a brother in the Lord, and all those Christians who may accept his position. Every thing that is written in response to him, and to those who would accept his position is done with a tear in the eye and a cry in the voice. Indeed, a friend is one whom you love enough to tell the truth to, even when you disagree. But, just because disagreement does not lessen the love of the heart; it does not minimize the importance of the difference; nor, does it allow the difference to be overlooked. It makes the difference that much sadder: for it tears the heart and rips the soul because of the estrangement it creates. It becomes the question of: Does the love which is felt for the individual

outweigh the love which you have for the truth and for the Lord? Let us always love the truth, and the Lord, more than any person.

Also, let us remember the admonition of the apostle Paul, whether we are rebuking others, or being rebuked ourselves: "*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth*" (Galatians 4:16)? Let the truth never make us enemies one of another.

I. HISTORY OF THE "ONLY BEGOTTEN" TRANSLATIONS

The first known translation of the Greek NT into another language, the Syriac (170 a.d.), did not refer to Jesus as the "only begotten," but as *yechidaya*, "only." Likewise it is absent from the Coptic (c. 200 A.D.) both the Sahidic dialect, *owot*, and in the Bohairic dialect, *mawaas*, both meaning "alone" or "single." (Cited by R. L. Roberts, *RESTORATION QUARTERLY*, "The Rendering 'Only Begotten' in John 3:16," 1973, p. 3)

The phrase was not in the Old Latin (before the end of the second century), which used *unicus*, meaning "only," "alone of its kind," "unique," or "singular." But Jerome, in his Latin Vulgate (380-385) translation, changed *unicus* to *unigenitus*, "only begotten," in all references to Jesus and to Isaac (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9; Hebrews 11:17), but not in reference to three children mentioned by Luke (7:12; 8:42; 9:38). B. F. Westcott called his double renderings "Jerome's jumble."

But Jerome's translation became the Bible for western Europe for a thousand years. The King James (1611) and the American Standard (1901) copied Jerome's double renderings, as has the NASV [sic] (1960). More recent translations, the RSV (1946), the NEB (1961), and the NIV (1973) have removed "only begotten."

If the Greek word *monogenes* does not include the concept of "begotten" (See pages 1-2), and if the Syriac did not refer to Jesus as "only begotten," and if the Coptic Sahidic and the Coptic Bohairic did not refer to Jesus as "only begotten," and if the Old Latin did not refer to Jesus as "only begotten," how did the Arian controversy begin (if it is based on ("only begotten")) since it antedated "Jerome's jumble?" It would seem that there is no reference to "only begotten" prior to Jerome's translation into the Latin, according to brother McCord. If Jerome's translation is the source of "only begotten," and if "only begotten" is responsible for promoting the Arian heresy, how did the controversy begin with Arius over a century before Jerome's translation (and more properly, it began with Origen in the early third century, 182-251 a.d.)? The answer is threefold: 1) *monogenes* did, does and always

will mean "only begotten;" 2) translations did translate *monogenes* "only begotten;" and, 3) neither *monogenes* or "only begotten," correctly interpreted and understood, indicate the Arian heresy.

The Syriac Peshitta, the official Syriac translation and the earliest translation of the New Testament (approximately 125 a.d.), did refer to Jesus as the "only begotten." **The Holy Bible From Ancient Manuscripts Containing the Old and New Testaments Translated From the Peshitta, The Authorized Bible of the Church of the East**, by George M. Lamsa (A. J. Holman Co: Philadelphia, 1957), records "only begotten" in John 3:16,18; Hebrews 11:17; and I John 4:9; although "first-born" is found in John 14:14,18.

As to the Latin translation of *monogenes*, Thayer notes that Cicero (who died December 7, 43 a.d.) translated it *unigena*, while the Vulgate and in ecclesiastical writings it is translated *unigenitus*. Both terms carry the idea of "only begotten."

Brother McCord notes that the more conservative translations, which made a claim to translate the words rather than the thoughts of the scriptures, the King James Version, the American Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible, all translate *monogenes* as "only begotten." To this list may also be added the New King James Version.

It is also important to note which of the translations brother McCord cites as translating *monogenes* as other than "only begotten:" the Revised Standard Version, which the head of the Old Testament Translating Committee called the Bible of the liberal Protestant community [liberal here is used as a synonym for *modernistic*: a denial of the supernatural; including a denial of Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy]; the New English Bible, which one has but to read to note the modernism which its advocates admit is even less than literal in its renderings. For those who know the character of translations and the propensity of modern translations to promote error, the appeal for vindication of the translation of a particular word to these three translations does not inspire confidence: it sets off red lights, sirens and alarms. [The reader is referred for further studies in translations to: **Introduction to the Translation Controversy**, a special edition of **Speak As the Oracles**, October 1987; **UNITY/VERSIONS/CROSSROADS: The First Annual Michigan Church Leaders Lectureship**, edited by R. L. Ross (this book also includes a Resource List for further study in the version issue); **A Review of the New Versions**, by Foy E. Wallace, Jr.; and, **Challenging Dangers of Modern Versions**, by Robert R. Taylor, Jr.]

II. THE WORD MONOGENES

Monogenes consists of two words: *mono*, "only," plus *genos* (from *ginomai*), meaning either "offspring" (Acts 4:6,36; 17:28) or "kind" of things with no begetting in the meaning, as "tongues" and "voices" (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:10). Thus by etymology *monogenes* can mean "only begotten," or "only one of a kind."

Monogenes is derived from *monos* and *genos*: *genos* meaning either "race, stock, family" or "offspring, even a single, descendant, a child" or "a race in regard to number" or "sex" or "a class, sort, kind" (Liddell and Scott; p. 254). Thus, *monogenes* means "only begotten" or "one and the same" (Liddell and Scott. p. 919), or as brother McCord notes "only one of a kind." But, as brother McCord fails to note: *monogenes* means "only begotten" in reference to persons, and "only one of a kind" in reference to things. It depends upon whether it is a person or thing spoken of. In the case in question concerning Jesus of Nazareth, it is a person spoken of — not a thing; therefore, it is "only begotten," not "only one of a kind" or "unique" in reference to Jesus.

Brother McCord here correctly notes *monogenes* can mean "only begotten." But, are we to believe his statement here on page two of his paper when he says "*monogenes* can mean 'only begotten,'" or his statement on page one when he says "'only begotten' is *monogennes* (a non-biblical word), whereas the inspired John wrote that Jesus is *monogenes*" which he further emphasizes on page three when he invited the reader to compare "*mongenes* with a word that decisively and unequivocally means 'only begotten,' *monogennes*, from *monos*, 'only,' and *gennao*, to 'beget'?" Which definition of *monogenes* offered is to be believed? "Only begotten" or "unique?" ONLY BEGOTTEN!

Since the etymology yields two meanings, one turns to the usage of *monogenes* to determine what a writer meant. An example is seen in the phoenix, an Arabian bird of brilliant plumage, mateless and without father or mother, about the size of an eagle, with a life span of some 500 years. According to Herodotus' (c. 430 B.C.) account of Egyptian mythology, the phoenix senses its time to die and builds a nest of sweet spices as a funeral pyre; then it sits there and sings until the sun ignites the nest. The bird is then burned to death and is completely consumed, following which it arises from its ashes and starts another life. Clement of Alexandria (215 A.D.) described the phoenix as *monogenes huparchon*, "absolutely unique, the only one of its kind" (Epistle 1:25, cited by B. F. Westcott, THE EPISTLES OF JOHN, 170). Thus in Clement's mind *monogenes* in

regard to the phoenix does not have a begetting in its meaning.

Etymology is the inexact study of the derivation of words. Etymology does not give meanings, but possible meanings. Usage is the only means whereby definitions can be determined. [A study of **A DEBATE BETWEEN REV. A CAMPBELL AND REV. N. L. RICE ON THE ACTION, SUBJECT, DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATOR OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM; ALSO, ON THE CHARACTER OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE IN CONVERSION AND SANCTIFICATION: AND ON THE EXPEDIENCY AND TENDENCY OF ECCLESIASTICAL CREEDS, AS TERMS OF UNION AND COMMUNION: held in Lexington, KY, from the fifteenth of November to the second of December, 1843, a period of eighteen days** (A. T. Skillman & Son: Lexington, KY, 1844) on the Action of Baptism is excellent on this subject.] Clement of Alexandria represents the phoenix as "the only begotten, the only one of its kind." If it is the only begotten bird of its kind, it is the only one of its kind. There is no damage done to Clement's account, nor violation of the text to refer to the phoenix as "only begotten." There is nothing in Clement's usage to destroy the concept of "only begotten." Besides, is a bird a person, or a thing?

A second example of the use of *monogenes* is in Hebrews 11:17: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he who had received the promises offered up the *monogenes*." The equivalent OT word for *monogenes* in Genesis 22:2 is *yahid*, and like its Greek counterpart, means either an only begotten (Jeremiah 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zechariah 12:10), or an only one situation with no begettal involved (Psalm 22:20; 25:16; 35:17; 68:6).

The LXX translates *yahid* in Psalm 22:20; 25:16; 35:17 as *monogenes*, but often mistranslates *yahid* as *agapetos*, "beloved" (Jeremiah 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zechariah 12:10), and in one instance it defines *yahid* as both *monogenes* and *agapete*, "beloved" (Judges 11:34).

What does *yahid* mean in Genesis 22:2? Factually, one has to eliminate "only begotten," for Abraham fathered seven sons besides Isaac (Genesis 16:15; 25:2), which shows that Jerome and the KJ and the ASV introduced a contradiction in their rendition of Hebrews 11:17. The meaning of *yahid* and *monogenes* in regard to Isaac appears to be that he was an only one, one of a kind, a *sui generis*. He was the only son of Abraham to inherit Abraham's promise: "in Isaac shall your seed be called" (Hebrews 11:18; Genesis 21:12).

The question of the definition of *monogenes* is to be found in its usage, especially its usage in the New Testament, along with its usage in

the Old Testament, as translated especially in the LXX (the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament cited many times by Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament).

Did "Jerome and the KJ and ASV introduce a contradiction in their rendition of Hebrews 11:17?" Brother McCord admits: "The meaning of *yahid* and *monogenes* in regard to Isaac appears to be that he was an only one, one of a kind, a *sui generis*. He was the only son of Abraham to inherit Abraham's promise: 'in Isaac shall your seed be called' (Hebrews 11:18; Genesis 21:12)." Thus, Isaac is the only begotten son of promise. None of the other sons of Abraham were born in fulfillment of the promise. Isaac was the only born son of his mother. **The Classic Greek Dictionary**, prepared by George Ricker Berry, Ph.D. (late professor of Semitic Languages at Colgate University and the University of Chicago) [Follet Pub. Co.; Chicago; 1962] defines *monogenes*: "only-be-gotten: born from one and the same mother." Isaac fulfills this definition in the Epic and Ionic Greek: the periods of 500 B.C. to 283 B.C., according to Sophocles. The Septuagint was known to circulate in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphos (285-246 B.C.). Isaac truly is the definition given by Mr. Berry. Therefore, there is nothing in Hebrews 11:17 to call a contradiction by translating *monogenes* as only begotten. It is a correct translation.

A third example of the use of *monogenes* is in regard to Jephthah's daughter, which in her case means "only begotten." But translators do not render *monogenes* (or *yahid*) about her as "only begotten," apparently because in her case the phrase "only begotten" says no more than the word "only."

It is true that in reference to Jephthah's daughter, the use of "only" conveys the same sense as would "only begotten." But, the question becomes: in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, does the use of "only" in referring to the Sonship to the Father in heaven mean the same as "only begotten?" If it did, brother McCord would not so vigorously object to the use of "only begotten." That is why, although "only" can be acceptable in reference to Jephthah's daughter (while "only begotten" may be preferable), it can not be acceptable in reference to Jesus' relation to the heavenly Father.

A fourth example of the use of *monogenes* (or *yahid*) is in David's prayer, "Turn to me, and have mercy on me, for I am *monogenes*" (Psalm 25:16), but he was not an "only begotten" son, for he had seven brothers (1 Samuel 16:1-16). The translators settled on the non-begettal word "desolate" as appropriate in this instance.

David also claimed that he possessed a *monogenes*, apparently speaking of his most precious possession, his life. The translators settled on the non-begettal word "darling" as the best rendering: "Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog" (Psalm 22:20).

The word *yachid* (*yahid* in brother McCord's paper) in Psalm 25:16 shows the feeling of being alone or solitary. *Yachid* means "only, only one, or solitary" (**Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament**; edited by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs; Clarendon Press: Oxford; 1974). Remember, the Psalms are poetry.

Yachid is translated "darling" in Psalm 22:20 (as also in Psalm 35:17) where it is in the feminine gender referring to his life. Brown, Drive and Briggs say this substantive use (that is, use as a noun) is defined "my *only one*, poet. for *my life*, as the one unique and priceless possession which can never be replaced" (Ibid.). Notice, however, this use is: 1) in the feminine, and 2) poetical in nature. Therefore, Psalms 22:20 or 35:17 cannot be used as examples parallel to the statements concerning Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament to establish *monogenes* as meaning anything other than "only begotten."

A fifth example is Solomon, as he declared he was a "son to his father and *yahid* in the sight of my mother" (Proverbs 4:3). But the meaning "only begotten" is manifestly wrong, for Bathsheba was the mother of at least three other sons (2 Samuel 11:27; 1 Chronicles 3:5).

Solomon is the "only *beloved* in the sight of my mother" (Proverbs 4:3). Solomon is the favored son. He was chosen (I Chronicles 29:1). It does not say Solomon was the *yachid*; but, that he was *yachid* in the sight of his mother. Surely, such a situation existing when there are actually other children in the family is not unheard of in our day. I can name some examples.

A sixth example is described by David, "God sets the *yahid* in families" (Psalm 68:6), where again the meaning "only begotten" cannot be considered. The translators settled on the word "desolate."

Psalm 68:5-6 reads: "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows; is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the solitary [*yachid*] in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land." This usage of *yachid* is parallel to that in Psalm 25:16.

A seventh example is of three children (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38) who might be classed as "only begotten." However, as in the case of Jephthah's daughter, the phrase "only begotten" says no more than the word "only," which word the translators use.

The three children — "the only son of his mother" in Nain (Luke 7:12); the "one only daughter" of Jairus (Luke 8:42); and, the "only child" possessed with an unclean spirit (Luke 9:38) — although described as *monogenes* are not called "only begotten" in the KJV translation. Yet, is there any difficulty from the context in determining that "only begotten" is meant? Again, as in the case of Jephthah's daughter, the terms used convey the entire sense of "only begotten" (which again may be the preferable translation). However, does "only" or "unique" give the same sense when used of Jesus as with these three children of whom it obviously means "only begotten?" If brother McCord agreed that it did, there would be no reason for him to have written his paper, and no reason for this reply. Brother McCord thus answers his own implied inquiry as to why a translation other than "only begotten" is acceptable of these three children, but is unacceptable in reference to Jesus: people just don't see the same implications in "only" in reference to Jesus as in reference to others. It is necessary to translate *monogenes* "only begotten" in reference to Jesus for people to realize the same implication for Jesus in the word *monogenes* as for the three children.

The eighth example in which *monogenes* describes a person is Jesus (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9). In the case of the three children mentioned by Luke the begetting is understood without the necessity of the translators writing in the two words "only begotten," and so they use one word, "only." But in the case of Jesus, his being begotten in heaven before he was begotten by Mary is unthinkable and demoting.

I would not advocate Jesus' "being begotten in heaven."

If he is "God" (as John 1:1 states), he had no beginning, and so actually he was never begotten. The NIV gives him a plurality of origins (Micah 5:2), whereas if he is God he did not have one origin. The Jehovah's Witnesses misuse Revelation 3:14 to teach that Jesus is the beginning thing that God created, but the word "beginning" in John's citation (*arche*) is also used of the Father (Revelation 21:6). The truth is that God the Father and Christ the Son are the ones who began the creation process, but neither one had a beginning.

Both of them are the Alpha and the first and the beginning of all things (Revelation 21:6; 22:13; Isaiah 48:12).

Amen: Jesus was not begotten in the beginning; but, he was begotten of the virgin Mary.

Ignatius in 110 A.D. wrote to the Ephesians about Jesus, *gennetos kai and agennetos*, "begotten and unbegotten" (cited by BGAD, 156). Physically Jesus was begotten (Luke 1:35) about 5 B.C., but he was not the only begotten either of Mary (Mark 6:3) or of God (John 1:13; I John 2:29; 5:1). Figuratively he was begotten (Psalm 2:7) on his resurrection day, April 9, 30 A.D. (Acts 13:32-34), and on his coronation day, May 28, 30 A.D. (Hebrews 1:5; 5:5). But actually he was unbegotten, *agennetos*, as stated by Ignatius.

Jesus is, as Ignatius stated, "begotten and unbegotten." If there is a difficulty in saying Jesus is "begotten," as brother McCord intimates on page one of his paper [see the reply on pages 3-7], brother McCord recognizes the answer here in saying "Physically Jesus was begotten."

It is true that Jesus was not the only begotten of Mary; but, he is never referred to as the only begotten son of Mary: **Jesus is the only begotten Son of God**. Brother McCord denies this with reference to John 1:13; I John 2:29; and 5:1.

John 1:12,13 states: "*But as many as received him [the Word—rlr], to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" Jesus' begetting of God was physical. The begetting here of believers is spiritual. Verse 13 clearly states this is not in reference to the flesh. The spiritual re-birth of these believers did not change the fact that one other than the Father in heaven was their physical father, Jesus still remains the **only begotten Son of God**.

I John 2:29—3:1 reads "*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*" Those who do righteousness are called the sons of God because of the love of God. God sent forth his only begotten Son, his only Son "*made of a woman*" "*that we might receive the adoption of sons*" (Galatians 3:26—4:7). This clearly shows the relationship with God as sons of the born again, in our begetting, is spiritual. The believer is adopted. He is a son of god; but, Jesus of Nazareth is and remains **the only begotten Son of God**.

I John 5:1 states: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." Again, the re-birth of believers is spoken of. It does not change the special relationship Jesus of Nazareth sustained in the flesh to the Father in heaven, he is **the only begotten (in the flesh) Son of God.**

Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee," speaks of the relationship which exists between Jesus and the heavenly Father. The statements made by the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:17), and at the transfiguration on the mount (Matthew 17:5), demand the begetting of the Son took place before these events. The most reasonable time would be at his physical begetting. Thus, Psalm 2:7, without a double or triple meaning and/or fulfillment, can be interpreted in all passages where it is quoted. Acts 13:32-34 being a verification that "God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus" (v. 23). Hebrews 1:5 comparing the relationship between Jesus and the Father with that of the angels and God. Hebrews 5:5 merely being a reference to the fact that the statement of priesthood was made to the same individual who was the Son (v. 6).

Monogenes, though having a begetting connected with it in the cases of Jephthah's daughter and the three children mentioned by Luke, is impossible and eliminated in the cases of the phoenix and of Isaac and of David and of Solomon and of Jesus. The context determines whether or not *monogenes* describes an only begotten or one of a kind. Just as "kinds" of tongues or of voices (I Corinthians 12:10; 14:10), though based in *ginomai* and *genos*, as is *monogenes*, are free of the begetting idea, so our blessed Lord is free from that idea.

Monogenes is "only begotten" in reference to persons, and "only of a kind" in reference to things. Which is Isaac? David? Solomon? Jesus? As has already been seen, there is nothing in the context which hinders *monogenes* from being "only begotten."

The begetting idea in reference to Jesus is found wanting if one compares *monogenes* with a word that decisively and unequivocally means "only begotten," *monogenes*, from *monos*, "only," and *gennao*, to "beget." The only difference between the unequivocal word and the ambiguous one is one letter "n." Notice the precision with which the inspired John wrote one "n" in reference to Jesus in three chapters (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9), but two "n's" in reference to ordinary people in the same three chapters (John 1:12-13; 3:3,5,6,7; I John 4:7). I do not believe that John accidentally

spelled the words the way he did, neither in his own composition in chapters one and four, nor in his quotation of Jesus' own words in chapter three.

Brother McCord invites the reader to compare "*monogenes* with a word that decisively and unequivocally means 'only begotten,' *monogennes*...." This would be welcomed if he would give us an instance of its use, or even of its reality. In referring to the difference between *monogenes* and *monogennes* as being only one "n," and stating "I do not believe John accidentally spelled the words the way he did," one would expect to turn to the Greek New Testament and read *monogennes* in the seven verses referred to. Yet, one turns to each verse in expectation, to meet with disappointment. **Not one of these verses contains the word *monogennes*!** But, then one remembers brother McCord's statement on the opening page: "The phrase 'only begotten' is *monogennes* (a non-biblical word)"; and wonders how brother McCord could invite the reader to "Notice the precision with which the inspired John wrote one 'n' in reference to Jesus and two 'n's' in reference to ordinary people" when he never uses the word with two "n's." Thus, when brother McCord states "The only difference between the unequivocal word [*monogennes*—rhr] is one letter 'n,'" one other description, a more apt description, comes to mind: one is imaginary and the other is real. Again, *monogennes* is not only a non-biblical word; it is not to be found in any other lexicons consulted: classic, New Testament, or modern!

One wonders why one of brother McCord's obvious learning and knowledge would resort to such a word in his argument, misrepresenting *monogennes* as appearing seven times in the New Testament in the writings of John, when in reality (as he himself had already admitted) it is not to be found in all of God's word. It is left to him to explain.

The application of the begettal idea to Jesus has led to theological nonsense, for learned men write of "the eternally begotten Son." The word "begotten" is such an expression forbids his being deity, and the word "eternally" implies that a begetting is still going on and will never be completed.

Theological nonsense has been found many places; "the eternally begotten Son" is one of them. However, Jesus being "begotten" of God in the flesh does not forbid his deity.

Furthermore, the translations (RSV, NIV) that omit the word "begotten" and say that Jesus is "the one and only" Son (John 1:14;

3:16,18; I John 4:9) or "the only" Son (John 1:18) are also inaccurate, for God has many sons (Genesis 6:2; Job 1:6; 38:7; Psalm 29:1; Luke 3:38; John 1:12; Romans 8:16,19; II Corinthians 6:18; I John 2:29; 5:2; Revelation 21:7). All Christians are sons of God (Galatians 4:6), though none is in a class with the "firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29).

Amen.

Some urge that in reference to Jesus the phrase "only begotten" is raised to a "heightened sense." That imaginary "heightened sense" is real only by a case of special pleading, not in the words "only begotten." Use of the invented phrase "heightened sense" is an admission that such a sense cannot be found in the Greek word *monogenes* and has to be added by a commentator. Such is eisegesis, not exegesis.

An "heightened sense" is rejected. The natural, normal physical begettal is pleaded for. The natural, normal sense of the word *monogenes* is contended. Nothing more.

Jesus, being then one of a kind, a singular person, I have in the five places where Inspiration called him *monogenes* called him "unique."

Jesus is more than unique. Each son of God is a unique son of God, even as each son of my earthly father is a unique son. There is no more accuracy in "unique" than in "only" in a translation of *monogenes* in reference to Jesus.

III. OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

One brother has made a list of a host of scholars who hold to the "only begotten" idea about Jesus. I could list a host of scholars who hold that sprinkling is included in the Greek word *baptidzo*, but neither list puts "only begotten" or sprinkling in the New Testament.

"A list of a host of scholars" does not prove anything if they are merely expressing opinions when it comes to a definition of a word. That is what happens when one produces "a host of scholars who hold that sprinkling is included in the Greek word *baptidzo*...." Yet, an examination of the **definitions** given of *baptidzo* by these same scholars show their opinions not to be substantiated by the facts. Surely, a

scholar of brother McCord's calibre can distinguish between the two, or at least should be able to. The same is true concerning *monogenes*, or only begotten. A study of the Campbell-Rice debate on the action of baptism is an excellent source to show the difference between an expression of opinion concerning a Greek word and the actual definition. The actual definition of *monogenes* is "only begotten."

"A list of a host of scholars" may not prove a point, as has been indicated above; but, when "a host of scholars," especially conservative scholars disagree with a position, it should give pause to make sure that the position occupied is right.

A brother wants to know what I have found out that escaped the knowledge of a great host of gospel preachers. He makes me look quite presumptuous, and indeed I am apprehensive in differing with them, and I know I could be wrong. Once I stood with them on the matter of the "only begotten" Christ, but does that mean I should not study for myself? Does a majority of gospel preachers prove they are right? None of those beloved men thought he was above criticism, and they were and are free in criticizing many with whom they differ. Should I refrain from all criticism of their positions because I admire their dedication and character and scholarship? Are they infallible? Are we disciples of men or of Christ? Those good men would be the last to say that they must be kept exempt from criticism. A brother writes,

While I am not opposed to citing the views of others in support of one's position, I am alarmed by our growing tendency to elevate "scholars in the brotherhood," and dismiss out-of-hand those view [sic] which may differ from "those things which are most surely believed among us" ("us" in this instance being "our brotherhood"). When we begin to speak and act in this fashion, I am led to wonder how we differ (other than by our confident assertion that "we are right") from those who cite their denominational creeds and their church authorities to substantiate their interpretations of Scripture.

In closing I ask only that you think carefully on these things lest we become victimized by the same snare of the devil which holds the Jehovah's Witnesses and the denominationalists whom we've so long opposed, and rightly so. Let us approach our study of the Scriptures with humility lest we too be taken captive by the devil to do his will. (Paul E. Jarrett, GA, July 17, 1986.)

Independent study and thinking have always been prized by free men. A diligent, untiring and unending search for truth is prized by all

Christians. Indeed, there must always be a recognition that just because a favorite preacher, or a man with a reputation for scholarship, states a position, it is not necessarily right. However, regardless of who offers criticism of a position, only the one who is right ultimately has the right to criticize. No man has the right before God to advocate that which is wrong. And, only the word of God is that ultimate determiner.

Among Hebrew and Greek learned men a brother cites "the forty-seven scholars who translated the King James Version and the one hundred one who translated the American Standard Version" who inserted the "only begotten" phrase about Jesus. He did not mention that any change from the KJ by the ASV required a two-thirds majority, and so one-third of the scholars controlled the decisions. Further, if the word "begotten" is an inherent meaning of *monogenes*, our brother needs to tell us why they omitted it in three places (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38). Further, he did not tell us why that same list of one hundred and forty-eight scholars mistakenly make Isaac an "only begotten son" (Hebrews 11:17), which is quite embarrassing since they had already said that Isaac had seven brothers (Genesis 16:15; 25:2). Quickly one learns that scholarship is not always accurate.

Regardless of how many of the translators of the King James Version and American Standard Version objected to the translation of *monogenes* as "only begotten," it remains true that the translation stands as their joint testimony of the English translation of that Greek word. As to the explanation of the absence of "begotten" and its translation in reference to Isaac, the reader is referred to the discussion of those passages earlier in this review (See pages 11-12). The embarrassment is to be found in objection to "only begotten." Even one of brother McCord's scholastic achievement "is not always accurate."

One brother writes that I am being led by "liberal professors" from the "old paths." On the contrary, the KJ and ASV scholars were led away from the old paths by following Jerome's Bible. I want to go back of Jerome to the inspired John.

In order to determine who was led by whom in what direction, the origin of the concepts must be examined. From what source has the recent objection to "only begotten" come, and from what source has its recent defense come? Can brother McCord produce a list of those who have unquestionably stood for the "old paths" who advocated his position? Then who are the advocates of the position from whom he has learned his position?

Brother McCord claims to want to go back "to the inspired John." Did he get *monogenes* from "the inspired John?" Did he get his argument on Arianism from "the inspired John?" Did he get his presentation on the ancient versions from "the inspired John?" *Monogenes* is the word used by "the inspired John." On this we all agree. The question is: What does *monogenes* mean? His arguments do not go back to "the inspired John," but away from him.

Some say that to eliminate "only begotten" is to deny the virgin birth and the deity of Christ. On the contrary, the "unique" Christ enhances the beautiful virgin birth doctrine and exalts his deity, while the "begotten" Christ has no deity.

The elimination of the phrase "only begotten" must be seen in the larger scale of theological jargon and the origin of the current disagreement on the translation of *monogenes*. When German rationalism, which originated with Semler, denies the virgin birth and the deity of Christ, saying that he is the "unique" Son of God, not the "only begotten" Son of God, indicating that he is a Son of God in the same way as every other son of God, yet unique in his relationship to God; it gives one pause when someone comes along declaring *monogenes* does not mean "only begotten" and should be translated "unique." Adopting the language, vocabulary and translation of those who by the use of the term mean a denial of the virgin birth and deity of Christ does not inspire confidence in the translation enhancing and exalting the virgin birth or the deity of Christ.

It is said that the word *prototokos*, firstborn (Colossians 1:15), shows that Jesus was begotten. If one makes the begetting of Colossians 1:15 actual, then Christ was the first thing that was born, and thus again one is time-dating Jesus and making him a creature, which is what the Jehovah's Witnesses assert. Further, if the begetting of Colossians 1:15 is actual, he was not only the first thing born, but he created himself, "for by him were all things created" (Colossians 1:16).

Such disastrous conclusions are avoided if one interprets *prototokos* as figuratively saying that Jesus was preeminent above all that he created, that he in the Father's plan is the "glory of the family," and so was styled the firstborn. Similarly, David was God's firstborn, *becor* (Psalm 89:27), but only figuratively.

Another explanation of *prototokos*, or firstborn, would be that it is merely a reference to the fact that Jesus existed before anything was created: not merely pre-eminence, but pre-existence.

A brother says that if the phrase "only begotten" in reference to Jesus is not in the Bible, then we ought to take it completely out of our preaching. He is correct, and likewise we ought to take out of our preaching that Isaac was an only begotten son.

Indeed, if the phrase "only begotten" is not in the Bible, it should not be used in reference to Jesus. The fact of the matter, however, as we have seen, is that the phrase "only begotten" is in the Bible. Therefore, there is no need to remove the phrase from our preaching; and, reason to object to the removal of it from our preaching.

Some say that the elimination of the phrase "only begotten" is a "rewriting of the Bible." On the contrary, one should say that it was Jerome in the fourth century who rewrote the Bible, and millions of innocent people have been victimized.

If eliminating "only begotten" is a "rewriting of the Bible," it is to be found in the definition of *monogenes*. If *monogenes* means "only begotten," and "only begotten" is eliminated, then the Bible is rewritten. Our discussion on the definition and use of *monogenes* tells the story.

One concerned brother writes that I ought not to criticize the phrase "only begotten" in the KJ and ASV because that would not "serve to build more faith in the reliability of" those versions.

I prize both of those versions. The KJ was the only Bible in my childhood home, the only Bible my mother ever saw. It was to her, as it has been to untold thousands, "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (KJ, Proverbs 4:18). And the fact that the KJ erred in inserting "Easter" (Acts 12:4) and the phrase "only begotten" (John 3:16) did not hurt my mother, but if I want [sic] "buy the truth, and sell it not" (KJ, Proverbs 23:23), I will want every error removed, so that my mother's Bible will attain an even more worthy status and save more souls. On the other hand, to shield the KJ and ASV from criticism is to invite the suspicion that something is being concealed. We are commanded to provide "for honest things" (KJ), "for things honorable" (ASV), "not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Corinthians 8:21).

In reference to the remark that the KJ and ASV should not be criticized, a brother writes:

I find this statement alarming because it reflects a mindset that is gaining increasing popularity with some that would give one (or two) translations a status that should only be reserved for the Spirit-inspired Word as it was given in its original purity to the apostles and prophets

who penned the autographs. When we elevate any translation to the point of resisting any discussion that might reflect on its accuracy as a translation on a given point, we are not far away from becoming unlike the Jehovah's Witnesses are toward their "inspired translation." While one may respect the scholarship of one translation above that of another, we dare not be afraid to examine and challenge, if necessary, any translation in the search for a clearer understanding of the message as it was revealed to the original authors. (Paul E. Jarret, GA, July 17, 1986.)

No one is more sincerely concerned over the version issue and its consequence of undermining faith in the inspiration and inerrancy of the scriptures than the author. Yet, honest, sincere and correct criticism of the KJV and ASV does not undermine faith, but establishes faith. No translation is perfect; but, the KJV is unquestionably superior in its handling of the word God to any other translation. Translations which undermine the faith are those which by their translation destroy and mutilate "the message as it was revealed to the original authors." Translations which make mistakes such as translating *monogenes* as "unique" or "only" rather than "only begotten" do undermine faith in Jesus as he is fully revealed in the word of God.

In considering the objections offered to his position, brother McCord correctly notes some errors made by some who oppose his position. However, it is possible to be right for the wrong reason. The valid objections offered are not answered. He fails to deal with the matter as he should.

IV. THE UNIQUE SON

To redeem the world the Father did not send a son (both angels and humans are sons of God, Job 1:6; 38:7; Luke 3:38), but the special Son, the only one of his kind, the only one virgin-born. This distinctive paternal-filial syndrome, with God as "his own Father" (John 5:18) and Jesus as "his own Son" (Romans 8:32), is figurative, but so appealing and meaningful. It is an unparalleled, and incomparable mystery: Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23; 1 Timothy 3:16).

This is the point where brother McCord makes his most dangerous statement: "This distinctive paternal-filial syndrome with God as 'his own Father' (John 5:18) and Jesus as 'his own Son' (Romans 8:32), is

figurative, but so appealing and meaningful." Is the statement that Jesus is the Son of God figurative? Figurative is defined: "1a: representing by a figure or resemblance: EMBLEMATIC ... 2. expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another with which it may be regarded as analogous: METAPHORICAL" (**Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary**). Does God merely resemble the Father of Jesus? Does Jesus merely resemble the Son of God? Is God called Jesus' Father metaphorically because he is analogous, or similar, to his Father? Is Jesus called the Son of God metaphorically, or because he is analogous, or similar, to his Son?

At this point it would be good to review how one determines whether language is literal or figurative.

Hermeneutics, by D.R. Dungan, states:

Sec. 50 Rules by which the meaning of words shall be ascertained.

Rule 1. All Words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless the evident meaning of the context forbids.

— Figures are the exception, literal language the rule; hence we are not to regard anything as figurative until we feel compelled to do so by the evident import of the passage. And even here great caution should be observed. We are very apt to regard contexts as teaching some theory which we have in our minds. And having so determined, anything to the contrary will be regarded as a mistaken interpretation; hence, if the literal meaning of the words shall be found to oppose our speculations, we are ready to give the words in question some figurative import that will better agree with our preconceived opinions. Let us be sure that the meaning of the author has demanded that the language be regarded in a figurative sense, and that it is not our theory which has made the necessity.

Principles of Interpretation, by Clinton Lockhart, in Chapter VII: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE states:

Nature and Use of Figures

Definitions. When a word has been appropriated by usage to one thing and is transferred to another, it is said to be used *figuratively*. When a word is used in its primitive or most usual sense, it is said to be *literal*. A figure, therefore, is a departure or deflection from the primitive or usual meaning of a word, or the usual manner of expressing ideas. In all languages figures are

necessary to express adequately some of the thoughts of intelligent people. Literal terms may be readily found in almost any language to express such ideas as, *cold iron*, *stony pavements*, *hard wood*, *soft clay*, and the like; but there is probably no language capable of expressing literally the ideas *cold heart*, *stony heart*, *hard heart* and *soft heart*. As applied to the heart all these adjectives must be figurative. This is due to the fact that literal meanings are given to words as applied first to material things; and when conceptions of immaterial things arise, they can be expressed only by analogous uses of the words at hand.

Close Relations. It follows from the foregoing that the figurative meaning of a word is necessarily a secondary sense. If this latter sense should become very usual, and especially if the primitive meaning should be obsolete, the secondary sense will be regarded as literal. Accordingly, it is not always easy to fix the exact boundary line between the literal and the figurative. This will require a careful study of language, a vigilant observation of the usage of words and a good judgment and training in literary matters.

Consistency the Test. It may be often important to distinguish between the literal and the figurative; and therefore a reliable test will be desirable. Perhaps no absolute test can be applied; but it is usually sufficient to inquire in any case of doubt, Does the literal make good sense? If the literal proves to be *absurd*, or in any way *inconsistent*, either with other parts of the sentence or with the nature of things discussed, we may conclude with tolerable certainty that the language is figurative. This test will require a careful study of the adjuncts associated with any word that may not seem to be literal, a careful examination of the general context, and perhaps a comparison of parallel passages. Sometimes a knowledge of the subject treated or of historical or doctrinal matters related to it, will reveal the inconsistency which marks a word or sentence as figurative. Great familiarity with all kinds of figures, so that the reader will readily recognize and classify them when he meets them, will often save much hesitancy and doubt. Moreover, the custom of a writer or class of writers in respect to a free use of figures or their employment in the discussion of particular subjects, will prove a valuable guide in distinguishing between the literal and the figurative.

RULE XXXI. -- Preference for the Literal

Since the literal is the most usual signification of a word, and therefore occurs much more frequently than the figurative, any term will be regarded as literal until there is good reason for a different understanding....

RULE: -- The literal or most usual meaning of a word, if consistent, should be preferred to a figurative or less usual signification.

How To Read the Bible, by John Allen Hudson, states under **General Rules for Determining the Sense of Scripture:**

1st. The most simple sense, the obvious sense, is the genuine meaning in almost all instances....

2nd. A simple and safe rule, nay, an indispensable rule, is never to read into a passage, from our own thinking, what it does not say....

3rd. Unless there is something in a passage that is repugnant to reason and common sense, it is to be taken in its most obvious sense....

4th. The plain and obvious literal meaning of a Scripture must not be abandoned unless something in the text makes it absolutely necessary. Fanciful interpretations are too much the interpretation of the day, when ill-advised scripturians, rashly take some conjectural meaning while ignoring entirely what the text would say. Such persons are convinced in advance that the text does not mean what it says, but means something else. It is like the case of the traveling man from Louisiana who asked N.B. Hardeman in Dallas once whether Christ meant water when He said water; that one must be born of water and the spirit. Brother Hardeman said, "No, He meant buttermilk. Since He did not mean what He said, but meant something else, and since He said water, He must have meant buttermilk!"

That, of course, was answering a fool according to his folly.

How To Study The Bible, by Earle H. West, in "Lesson 11: UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE STUDY (2)," says:

Since the Bible contains both figurative and literal language, one major problem of interpretation is that of recognizing figurative

language and learning what it means. Figurative language is language in which the words have other meanings than their usual meaning but in which there is some similarity between the common meaning the special meaning....

RECOGNIZING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Ordinarily it is assumed that words are used in their normal, literal sense. Good evidence is required before we treat words as figurative. Many figures of speech are so labeled by the writer as being parables, allegories, fables or the like. Sometimes we recognize words as figurative because their literal meaning would involve an impossibility or a contradiction, or be contrary to known fact. Certain types of literature are more marked for figurative language than others. Thus we would naturally expect figures of speech to be more abundant in the Psalms (poetry) or in the prophetic books than in the historical books. Common sense, enlightened by a good general knowledge of the Bible and the context of the passage, must be used.

The question is: “Is there sufficient reason, because of context or contradiction, in the New Testament to assume confidently that ‘this distinctive paternal-filial syndrome’ (the Father-Son relationship) of God and Christ is figurative and not literal?”

Following is a listing of the 110 times (by my count) in the New Testament that Jesus is called the Son of God: Matthew 2:15; 3:17; 4:3,6; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16; 17:5; 26:63; 27:40,43,54; 28:19; Mark 1:1,11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 13:32; 14:61; 15:39; Luke 1:32,35; 3:22; 4:3,9,41; 8:28; 9:35; 10:22; 22:70; John 1:18,34,49,51; 3:16,17,18, 35,36; 5:19,20,21,22,23,25,26; 6:40,69; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4,27; 14:13; 17:1; 19:7; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; 13:33; Romans 1:4,9; 5:10; 8:3,29,32; I Corinthians 1:9; 15:28; II Corinthians 1:19; Galatians 2:20; 4:4,6; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:13; I Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 1:2,5,8; 4:14; 5:5,8; 6:6; 7:3,28; 10:29; II Peter 1:17; I John 1:3,7; 2:22,23,24; 3:8,23; 4:9,10,14,15; 5:5,9,10,11,12,13,20; II John 3,9; Revelation 2:18; Acts 3:13,26.

Now, what is there in the context of these 110 verses that **demand**s a figurative interpretation of the word **Son**? Does Peter’s confession **demand** a figurative interpretation? Does the confession of faith by the Ethiopian eunuch **demand** a figurative interpretation? Does the voice from heaven either at the baptism of Jesus, or at the mount of transfiguration, **demand** a figurative interpretation? Or more appropri-

ately, why do **all** of these verses **demand** figurative interpretations?

When Peter made his confession of faith in Matthew 16:16, he said, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" That would have been a perfect time for Jesus to set Peter and the rest of the disciples straight as to the fact that he was not literally, or actually, the Son of God. This would have been a most appropriate time for Jesus to tell Peter and the apostles that he was merely represented as the Son of God — it was not meant to be taken literally. But, what did Jesus say? "*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 16:17). Does that demand a figurative interpretation? By what standard?

God, the Father himself, has stated in the voice from heaven upon two different occasions, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). 110 times in his written revelation unto mankind of salvation in Jesus Christ, God has referred to Jesus of Nazareth as his Son. Who has the right to say, "No, he isn't, not really"? Who can, speaking as the oracles of God, relegate this language to the realm of the figurative in each and every occasion?

Brethren, if we can accept the Sonship of Jesus as figurative in scripture, upon what basis can we accept anything the scriptures say as literal? Do not object to a figurative interpretation of creation; do not object to a figurative interpretation of the flood; do not object to a figurative interpretation of the crossing of the Red Sea; do not object to a figurative interpretation of the virgin birth; do not object to a figurative interpretation of the resurrection; do not object to a figurative interpretation of any historical and/or miraculous event if you accept a figurative interpretation of Jesus as the Son of God. If you can accept Jesus as the figurative Son of God, you can accept **any** figurative interpretation of scripture, and you might as well. For if Jesus is not actually the Son of God, "*your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*" (I Corinthians 15:17,18). The entire gospel is based upon the fact that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 16:16-18; I Corinthians 3:11).

The August 15, 1988 issue of **TIME** magazine ran cover stories on Jesus because of the controversy that was raging over Martin Scorsese's film adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis' best-selling novel, **The Last Temptation of Christ**. One of the articles ("Who Was Jesus? The debate among scholars is as heated as the one in Hollywood." by Richard N. Ostling) refers to the weird and unorthodox views the "higher criticism" of Rationalism (better known to us as Liberalism or Modernism) which radiated out from Germany in the last century. Among these are: 1) Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah; 2) the

Gospel of Thomas is authentic and of equal or greater authority than Matthew, Mark, Luke or John; 3) Jesus did not rebuke the Pharisees; and, 4) Jesus may have been crucified by mistake. However, what is important, and revealing, concerning our present discussion is the following point, placed between numbers 1) and 2) above in Ostling's article: "When Jesus said he was the 'Son of God,' he did not mean to be taken literally. New Testament language of this kind, as in reference to Jesus as the 'Lamb' or 'Word' of God, is metaphorical."

Brother McCord's position is liberal and modernistic. It is the position of those who deny the Bible. It brings to mind the statement of the apostle Peter: "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not*" (I Peter 2:1-3).

Not only human sons of God, but angelic as well, are now subservient to this vested authority (Matthew 28:18; I Peter 3:22). A heavenly edict was proclaimed, "Let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6). In a sense never spoken of an angel he proclaimed, in anticipation of resurrection Sunday, April 9, 30 A.D., "My Son are you! Today I have begotten you" (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:32-34). And the same figurative Sonship of Psalm 2:7 was fulfilled again on the day Jesus was anointed King of kings and Lord of lords, and was anointed High Priest, Sunday morning, May 28, 30 A.D. (Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; Revelation 17:14).

For comments on Psalm 2:7 and Acts 13:32-34 see pages 15-16.

In one sense God could say of Solomon, "I will be a Father to him, and he will be my son" (II Samuel 7:14), but behold! "A greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42), and with deeper meaning the same words were spoken of Jesus, "I will be a Father to him, and he will be my Son" (Hebrews 1:5).

It was not any son (human or angelic), but "the Son," the highest of the high, whom the Father designated as deity: "Your throne, God, is forever and ever, and the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8).

Never has the Father said to a human or angelic son of God, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool" (Hebrews 1:13).

My mind falters! The only one of his nature, the *sui generis*, the *yahid*, the *monogenes*, the unbegotten, unparalleled, irreplaceable, incomparable, peerless, matchless, unequaled, non-duplicable! Singular, unique, and alone in his prophetic credentials, his virgin birth, his sinless life, his going about doing good, his dying for me, his being raised never to die again, his glorious ascension into the heaven of heavens, and his coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords! It is no wonder that his Father

exalted him to the highest, and gave him a name above every name, so that at Jesus' name, every knee should bend, of the ones in heaven, and of the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue should confess, to the praise of God the Father, that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11).

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"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12). All of the words at the command of the English language could not, and would not, adequately assign and ascribe praise to the Savior of the world, Jesus of Nazareth. To all that brother McCord or any other may correctly say in praise of Jesus, we readily say, Amen!

Jesus said, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 10:32,33). The confession of the Ethiopian eunuch which Philip required of him was, *"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"* (Acts 8:37). John wrote: *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"* (John 20:30,31). *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"* (John 3:16,17). Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess; but, some do not and will not do it willingly prior to Jesus' return.

Brother McCord cannot make the confession of the eunuch without qualification, for he denies (by implication) that Jesus is literally, or actually, the Son of God. Neither can brother McCord any longer, in good conscience, quote or preach the KJV rendering of John 3:16, for

he believes it to teach serious error. All of the words of praise of the characteristics of Christ he may write do not change the fact that he denies that Jesus is literally **THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD**. He denies he is **only begotten**; and, he denies he is **the Son of God**.

CONCLUSION

Brother Hugo McCord presented his paper, "ONLY BEGOTTEN," at the Freed-Hardeman College Bible Lectureship in 1988. In it he charged those who use translations "which make Jesus 'only begotten'" with demoting "the Lord whom they love to creature status" in the same way the ancient Arian heresy did and that the Watchtower Tract and Bible Society advocates do today, along with the Unitarians. Brother McCord also, in way of passing, states the Father-Son relationship between God and Jesus is "figurative;" therefore not literal, or actual, or in reality.

The problem I have with brother McCord is not so much his wishing to translate *monogenes* as "unique" (although I do disagree with that being an accurate and adequate translation, and believe it to have further implications concerning the identity of Jesus and his virgin-birth). My greatest problem is two-fold: 1) his acceptance of the arguments advocating the Arian heresy, and his consequent accusation of the brotherhood "unintentionally" advocating such heresy; and, 2) his teaching that Jesus is only figuratively the Son of God. Both of these positions are the basis of why brother McCord rejects "only begotten" as the translation of *monogenes*; and, are the real source of the problems with his paper.

Each and every argument brother McCord advances is wrong in his attack of translating *monogenes* as "only begotten" and in advancement of translating *monogenes* as "unique." Yet, that is not what is distressing about his paper. What is distressing is his accusation against the church. The Arian heresy of which he speaks, he does not understand. It does not now, and never has demoted (in any sense of the term) our Lord for him to be referred to as "the only begotten Son of God." Only in the twisted minds of heretics has it ever appeared to do so! The church of our Lord has always referred to her Savior as "the only begotten Son of God." She has never intentionally, nor unintentionally, demoted the One who bought her with his blood to creature status (Acts 20:28). Brother McCord owes the brotherhood an apology for such a vicious and untrue accusation.

Brother McCord's paper is distressing because he affirms Jesus is

the Son of God only figuratively. 110 times the New Testament refers to Jesus as the Son of God. Not once, in all 110 times it is recorded, is there any reason to assume figurative language is being used in reference to Jesus as the Son of God. To affirm Jesus is only figuratively the Son of God, is to affirm he is not literally the Son of God. It is saying Jesus is not actually the Son of God. That is heresy! That is blasphemy! It makes the voice from heaven, at both the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus, to be a liar; and, God cannot lie. Brother McCord, in his paper, denies the Lord who bought him (I Peter 2:1). To say the Father-Son relationship between God and Jesus is figurative, is the devil's lie.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Paul spoke of "grievous wolves" which would enter and arise from within the church, "not sparing the flock, ... speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29,30). It should be no surprise to see it happen today. The only question is, "Will we recognize the wolf in sheep's clothing?" False teaching and false teachers must be recognized.

I have never met brother McCord. I have no malice toward him personally. However, I believe with all of my heart, that his paper, "ONLY BEGOTTEN," contains false teaching and damnable doctrine. Brother McCord is wrong, and needs to repent! And, so do any who agree with him, or support him.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17,18).

ADDENDA

The review of brother McCord's paper on **ONLY BEGOTTEN** was written before **THE FOURTH (1988) FREED-HARDEMAN COLLEGE PREACHERS AND CHURCH WORKERS FORUM** on the theme: **ONLY BEGOTTEN, TRANSLATIONS, AND UNITY** with Robert R. Taylor, Jr., J. Noel Merideth, Hugo McCord, and Ralph Gilmore. An additional 21 page **FORUM HANDOUT** was distributed by Freed-Hardeman College written by Hugo McCord.

I was in attendance at that Forum. Brother Ralph Gilmore stated that he did not deny the Deity or the Sonship of Jesus. I have no reason to disagree with that statement.

I have studied my notes of the Forum, reviewed my review of brother McCord's paper, and read carefully the handout provided by Freed-Hardeman College by brother McCord, since the Forum. I stand by my criticism of brother McCord's position that: "This distinctive paternal-filial syndrome [Father-Son relationship – rlr], with God as 'his own Father' (John 5:18); and Jesus as 'his own Son' (Romans 8:32), is figurative...." That brother McCord continues to hold this Modernistic concept is seen on page 12, the fourth paragraph, of the **FORUM HANDOUT** under IV. LEXICONS AND COMMENTATORS:

Ordinary Christians call upon God as "Father" (Mt. 6:9; 2 Co. 6:18; Ep. 4:6) because they are begotten of him (1 Jn. 5:1). In that sense Jesus did not call upon God as his Father, but in a figurative and a very meaningful and affectionate sense Jesus looked upon him as "my Father" (John 5:17-18; 20:17).

This is further shown by pages 15-17, VII. FIGURATIVE USE OF "ONLY BEGOTTEN."

This position, that Jesus is figuratively the Son of God, is destructive of the entire Gospel message in that it directly affects who Jesus is. It denies a plain factual statement of Scripture. It stands in conflict with the Great Confession, the confession of faith.

Many statements of the Forum leave one in wonderment. Brother McCord's position that we have no inspired Bible today in the English language. His statement that the Hebrew word **almah** in Isaiah 7:14 means "of marriageable age." His explanation that Isaiah 7:14 has a dual fulfillment, or was fulfilled not only in the birth of Jesus but also in the birth of a child in the days of Isaiah. His contention that the King

James Version contains "fatal error." His declaration of contradictions in the King James. And others. All of these raise an eyebrow of concern. Time and space do not allow for a discussion of all these points at this time.

What I do wish to discuss in this **ADDENDA** are the points which directly affect the points made in our review of his first paper distributed at Freed-Hardeman.

THE MEANING OF MONOGENES

Brother McCord has changed his position as to the correct translation of **monogenes**:

The OT word comparable to **monogenes** is **yachid**, "one alone," "an only one," "a unique one." As seen above, it occurs twelve times, but in only four of the occurrences does the LXX follow through with **monogenes**. Eight times LXX uses **agapetos**, "beloved." It appears then that **monogenes**, the lexical translation of **yachid**, is in usage a synonym for **agapetos**. The LXX was the OT that was read by Jesus and the apostles and the first century Christians. Thus they understood that **monogenes** often meant "beloved," for most often a lone individual (as an only child) is deeply cherished.

After the above information sank into me, I was reminded that the last OT reference containing **yachid** (Zech 12:10) was a prediction of the coming Christ (Jn 19:37; Re 1:7; Co 1:15), and that the Father orally from heaven called Jesus his "beloved" (Mt 3:17; 17:5), and that Matthew (using the LXX text of Isaiah 42:1, not the Hebrew) quoted God as saying about Jesus, "My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased" (12:18). Also, Paul described Jesus as the Father's "dear Son," or "the Son of his love" (Co 1:13). Then I was told that "every **monogenes** introduced in Scripture seems to have been the object of great love, and Jesus is certainly no different from the others in this particular" (R.L. Roberts). So I reassessed the situation.

Etymologically and logically, as seen above, the word "unique" lacks nothing in exalting our blessed Lord. However, the word does not have the feeling and tenderness inherent in the LXX's usual rendering, "beloved." True, "beloved" is a secondary and an emotional translation, but apparently it was commonly used by people of NT times and later. (page 4, paragraphs 5-7, under III. USAGE in **FORUM**

HANDOUT).

Brother McCord now believes the **monogenes** should be translated "beloved."

Notice, "etymologically and logically" brother McCord disagrees with his own translation of **monogenes**. It is a "secondary and emotional translation." Brother McCord objected to some trying to defend "only begotten" on the basis of a "heightened sense." But, what is "beloved," if not a heightened sense? Brother McCord has become guilty, even in his own words, of doing that which he rejected in others.

Brother McCord's duplicity shows the invalidity of his position. For if **monogenes** means "unique," why translate it "beloved?" If it means "beloved," why did he earlier translate it "unique?"

THE SYRIAC PESHITTA

Concerning the rendering of the Syriac Peshitta, brother McCord writes:

...A gospel preacher writes:

"The Syriac Peshitta, the official Syriac translation and the earliest translation of the New Testament (approximately 125 A.D.), did refer to Jesus as the 'only begotten'."

Factually there was no English translation in 125 A.D. referring to Jesus as an only begotten, but if there had been it would be erroneous (as are the KJ/ASV), for Jesus was not an only begotten (as already pointed out). The same gospel preacher uses as his authority a 1957 publication by George M. Lamsa, **THE HOLY BIBLE FROM ANCIENT EASTERN MANUSCRIPTS**, which Bible makes both Jesus and Isaac only begotten children. That Bible "is not a translation of the Peshitta but rather a slavish paraphrase of the Authorized Version" (Richard M. Frank, **THE CATHOLIC QUARTERLY**, July, 1958, p. 386). Lamsa's New Testament (1940) canon is that of the KJ, not the Syrian canon, for he includes the "apocryphal" books of the Peshitta (2-3 Jn, Jude, Rev).

It is necessary to look at the **PREFACE** and the **INTRODUCTION** of Lamsa's translation to see the fallacy of brother McCord's position concerning what Lamsa did in his work.

"Manuscripts used in making this translation were the Codex

Ambrosianus for the Old Testament and the so-called Mortimer-McCawley manuscript for the New Testament; the former is in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, Italy, and has been identified as fifth century A.D.; the latter was used for our previous translation of the New Testament, of which this edition is a revision, and has been variously identified as sixth or seventh century A.D. Comparisons have been had with Peshitta manuscripts in the Morgan Library, New York, N.Y., with manuscripts in the Freer Collection, Washington, D.C., with the Urumiah edition, and with a manuscript of the Peshitta Old Testament in the British Museum, the oldest *dated* Biblical manuscript in existence. Our translator states that comparisons show no differences in text between these various manuscripts,...."

(The Publisher's **PREFACE**;

p. ii).

Lamsa notes: "...this ancient New Testament text omits the story of the woman taken in adultery, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. (But these books are included in later Aramaic texts.)" (The Author's **INTRODUCTION**; p. viii.)

Thus, the portions found in later Aramaic texts which are not found in the early translation known as the Peshitta are supplied from the later Aramaic texts. However, the passages in question concerning **mono-genes** are found in the ancient version. A reading of the **PREFACE** and **INTRODUCTION** explains what an author or translator does. It should be read **before** remarks are made concerning the work. Brother McCord's remarks concerning Lamsa's translation are incorrect.

TRANSLATIONS

On pages 18-20 of the **FORUM HANDOUT**, brother McCord deals with the subject of TRANSLATIONS under the headings of I. ADDING TO THE PRESCRIPTION, II. REMOVING PART OF THE PRESCRIPTION, III. ARRANGING THE WORDS, and IV. MAKING THE PRESCRIPTION CONTRADICTORY. For a full discussion of the items discussed under this portion of brother McCord's paper, read and study: **A REVIEW OF THE MODERN VERSIONS**, by Foy E. Wallace, Jr.; **CHALLENGING DANGERS OF MODERN VERSIONS** by Robert R. Taylor, Jr.; **THE TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS: A STUDY IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE** by Roderick L. Ross; **The First Annual Michigan Church Leaders Lectureship:**

UNITY/VERSIONS/CROSSROADS edited by Roderick L. Ross; **INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATION CONTROVERSY: A Special Edition of Speak As The Oracles**; and, **NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM** (16 audio cassettes) by Roderick L. Ross. We will note just a few of the attacks made upon the Bible, as illustrative of the position brother McCord is driven to sustain his position on **monogenes**.

The KJ pharmacists, instead of translating **Haidēs**, in ten places added the word "hell" where it does not mean the place of eternal punishment (Mt 11:23; 16:18; Lk 10:15; 16:23; Ac 2:27,31; Re 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14). Their additive sends Jesus to hell (Ac 2:27,31). Dr. Luke, a professional prescription writer, would hardly approve a copy of his inspired prescription that lands the Lord in hell.

The Mormon missionaries have ever used this argument to try to show the unreliability of the Bible. The difficulty is, evidently, neither they nor brother McCord ever bothered to pick up a dictionary and see what the definition of the word "hell" is. They assume it is an incorrect translation; but, as with many other assumptions, it is **wrong!** **Webster's New Seventh Collegiate Dictionary** on page 386 says: "**hell ... 1 a (1) : a neither world in which the dead continue to exist: HADES.**" Is "hell" an incorrect translation of **haidēs**? The dictionary says it is not.

Brother McCord places himself in the same camp with other skeptics and unbelievers in his attack on the Bible (in particular the King James Version) containing contradictions. He says:

If the doctor's prescription has contradictory directions, what should the druggist do? The KJ prescription writers left contradictions now nearly four hundred years old and still being reprinted by thousands. Some are (1) Ge 1:28 = 1 Co 15:45; (2) Ge 16:15 = He 11:17; (3) Ge 22:1 = Js 1:13; (4) 1 Sa 21:1 = Mk 2:26; (5) 2 Ch 24:20 = Mt 23:25; (6) Is 63:3 = Re 19:13; (7) Ze 11:13 = Mt 27:9; (8) Ac 9:7 = Ac 22:9; (9) 2 Ti 2:5 = 2 Ti 2:24.

Brother McCord needs to go back to Bible class with the children if he thinks these are contradictions. These same tired refrains have come from the skeptics for decades, and they have no more validity from "one of us" than from "one of them!" A dictionary is all that is necessary to

eliminate the supposed difficulties in most cases.

Take, for example, Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9. The difficulty is supposed to be that in chapter 9 the men with Saul are said to be "hearing a voice" and in chapter 22 "they heard not the voice." Did you ever hear someone say something, and ask them, "Could you repeat what you said? I didn't hear you." The word hear can mean either to recognize sound, or to understand the words. In chapter 9, the men recognized the sound; and in chapter 22, they did not understand the words. There is nothing difficult about understanding and harmonizing the passages unless you don't want to.

Alleged Bible Contradictions Explained by George W. DeHoff, as well as many other useful works, can help the novice who is having difficulty; but, there is no excuse for a man of brother McCord's learning and experience to make such an accusation of the word of God.

PREACHERITIS

Much was made of "preacheritis" at the Forum, and in the **FORUM HANDOUT**. Brother McCord points out the possibility and the reality of "preacheritis," admitting that he has suffered from the disease in connection with N.B. Hardeman, G.C. Brewer, and Foy E. Wallace, Jr. It is, indeed, possible for us to follow after men, and not after God. While we readily admit and respect the deeds done by those who have gone on before, we must also realize that our faith must not rest in men but in God. It is not what men have said, but what God says that makes the difference. Truth must be our guiding light, not that "brother so-and-so" has said it. But, even as it is possible to blindly follow a man who may be proclaiming the truth, even unwittingly; so, it is also possible to blindly follow men who are proclaiming error, even unwittingly. We must be sure of what we believe. We must be as the Bereans, who received the word of God with all readiness of mind, searching the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so (Acts 17:11). Do not accept what I say, or write, because I have said it. Search for the truth, and accept it.

CONCLUSION

It is not pleasant nor easy for me to write the words that are contained in this review. It pains my heart, and swells tears in my eyes to see one so widely known and respected by the church of our Lord come to the place and position that brother McCord has. It does so for

the sake of brother McCord, and for the sake of those whom he may be able to influence into accepting his error. My prayer, and my plea, is that both brother McCord and those whom he may have influenced will realize the error of their ways and repent before it is everlastingly too late.

It is also with a fearful recognition of the possibility of apostasy that these words were written. I know that it is possible for me to depart from the faith, and to give heed to error. That is why I must be careful, always careful (as must each and every one of you), to "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Corinthians 13:5).

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

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may not perish, but may have life
γάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὥστε τὸν
loved God the world that
ἐνῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων
often he gave, that everyone who believes
ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. 17 οὐ γὰρ
but may have life eternal. For
υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κ
his Son into the world that he mig
να σωθῆ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτ
that might be saved the world through him
αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστε
him is not judged; but he that believes
ὅτι μὴ πέπιστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ
because he has not believed on the name of
θεοῦ. 19 αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ κρίσις, ἣ
of God. And this is the judgment, that
τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρω
the world, and loved men
ἡ τὸ φῶς· ἦν γὰρ πονηρὰ αὐτῶν
the light; for were evil their
ὁ φαῦλα πράσων μισεῖ τὸ φῶς, κα
that evil does hates the light. and