



Map 1 The Roman Empire and the church in the fourth century (note that modern rather than ancient place names are used)

Henry Melvill Gwatkin published in 1914 "The Arian Controversy".

Gwatkin was the Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Cambridge. [A free download of the 7th Impression can be found at [scribd.com](https://www.scribd.com).

The link is <https://www.scribd.com/document/98781664/The-Arian-Controversy-H-M-Gwatkin-1914>

I have read from a 1908 edition and this listening Guide will let you listen to the CD prepared and take a chapter each week. There are 8 chapters.

- 1 - The Beginnings of Arianism
- 2 - The Council of Nicaea
- 3 - The Eusebian Reaction
- 4 - The Council of Sardica
- 5 - The Victory of Arianism
- 6 - The Reign of Julian
- 7 - The Restored Homoean Supremacy
- 8 - The Fall of Arianism

A running time-line [in smaller font] is laid out as the readings are read. And then I summarise somethings in Gwatkin's text to aid the following of the reading as it proceeds. Gwatkin was an Anglican and some of his references to "our liturgy" reflects the Prayer Book of 1662.

250-251 Emperor Decius requires Christians to sacrifice to Roman gods

269 Claudius defeated the Goths at Naissus in Moesia Province

272 Aurelian defeats Zenobia

284 - 305 Diocletian

297 Birth of Athanasius

303-313 The great persecution - many perish

306-313 Constantine [in Gaul]

311 First Edict of Toleration of Christians by Galerius

312-337 Constantine [in Italy]

312 Second edict of Toleration [from Milan]

314 *Council of Arles* [On the Donatists]

315-337 Constantine [in Illyricum]

316, October 28, at a decisive battle at Milvan Bridge, just north of Rome, Constantine defeated Maxentius and was proclaimed Emperor, declaring himself a Christian shortly after.

317 Athanasius writes *de Incarnatione Verbi Dei* [The Incarnation of the Word of God]

318 The outbreak of the Arian Controversy

- Arianism - partly a theory of Christianity, partly Eastern reaction of philosophy against a gospel of the Son of God.
- Rejected by the Empire, nevertheless, that was not the end. It made converts in the North European nations, and renewed the contest as a Western reaction against a roman gospel.
- Reformation dealt with the supremacy of revelation over church tradition and authority; Arianism cleared the way by dealing with the deeper question, "Is there a revelation of God to man at all?"

The doctrine of the Lord's Person

Jesus: spoke with authority, as the Judge of all men and women. For the early disciples they knew the Lord and were thankful.

In contact:***[1] with the vulgar***

- The next generation had to deal with having only an historical record, and had many thoughtful heathens to deal with in a very religious age.
- Questions: Concerning the person of the Lord. Who was this man who died and is said to be now alive as Son of God? If divine, there must be two gods; if not his worship is no more than the worship of a dead person. But of worshipped thence have polytheism.

[2] with the philosophers

- Key to the difficulty was on the other side of the question; in the unity of God, taught by Christians, Jews and heathens. Common in the Supreme God far off and transcendent.
- Heathen lacked an historical revelation. Heathen "Supreme" could not be involved in human sympathy and human weakness. The incarnation was a stumbling block.

Arianism is Christianity shaped by these sorts of questions.

Arius himself

Arius, in the year 318 AD, was a presbyter in charge of the church of *Baucalis at Alexandria*. He had no love of heathenism. He was a disciple of Lucian of Antioch.

db **Lucian of Antioch [d.312]**, founded an influential school of which Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia were each members. He maintained a 'subordinationist' teaching - which emphasised, not in regard to their work but their being, the subordination of the Son to the Father or the subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Son. In this sense he may have been the source of the Arian teaching. The second of the four creeds put forward at the Council of Antioch in 341 was perhaps his work. He revised the LXX translation as well as that of the Four Gospels. Indeed the 'Lucianic Text' entered into our Received Text and so to our Authorised Version. He was a holy man and a scholar. He was tortured at Nicomedia and died there in 312.

- His aim was not to lower the person of the Lord, or to refuse him worship, but to defend that worship from the charge of polytheism.

- Starting from the Lord's humanity, lady to add everything to it short of the fullest deity. But would not think of a second God - that is, polytheism.
- Had evangelistic power, yet was using words which sounded Christian until the import of them was understood.

Its real meaning

Was that it was philosophy of the day put into Christian dress.

[1] Excludes not only distinctions inside divine nature

[2] and contact with the world

So, he is an unknown God, whose being is mysterious

no creature can reveal him

he cannot reveal himself

not in touch with the world needs a minister among the creation

This minister is the Lord

who is Son of God, begotten before all worlds

distinct from the Father,

He is not God

so, if a Son, then not co-eternal

for what is not God is a creature

if called 'God' he is so in a lesser way than God is God

He doesn't understand his own essence.

If no a sinner, then he is that by free-will struggle

Holy Spirit bears to the Son and relation not unlike that of the Son to the Father

So, the Arian trinity of divine persons forms a descending series, separated by unfit degrees of honour and glory, resembling the philosophical triad of orders of spiritual existence, extending out in a series of concentric circles.

Criticism of it

Heathen to the core, illogical, unfathomable, no more mysterious than human type.

Forgets that:

[a] metaphor would cease to be metaphor if there were nothing beyond it

[b] metaphor would cease to be true if its main sea was misleading.

Upholds the Lord's divinity by making the Son a creature - illogical

Makes the Lord's manhood his primary fact, and then denies him human soul - illogical

Makes revelation a mockery

It is a subordination of revelation to philosophy. [Warned of this by Origen's work, Tertullian's warning].

Athanasius De Incarnatione

God is good and not envious

His goodness shown in creation - man and woman in paradise

They sinned, fell into corruption heading to death

Image of God is disappearing, Who was God to do?

Sentence of death should stand; but humanity perishing.

Repentance won't solve this, doesn't deal with corruption

Angels don't help here; humanity not made in their image

Immortal Word of God took human flesh and gave his mortal body for us all.

no necessity but simply out of love

took principle of death within himself and overcame it, not only in his own self but for all

death not abolished yet; but now an entry into life

our mortal human nature is joined with life in him

in union with him we share his victory for us - no limit to his reign
fear of death is gone; heathenism is fallen
heathen gods of mankind now yield to one true God.

He was made man that we might be made God [Hebrews 2.5-18]

Athanasius pure spirit, intense and with a wide view . A great thinker and compare with
Apollinarius of Laodicea later.

Arianism

- attracted shallow thinkers, who often used language of Christian without abandoning their heathen ways
- used Scripture without paying attention to context or scope.
- Lord's divinity was a difficulty for thoughtful men and women. Two things seemed incompatible

[a] simplicity of the divine nature approached for outside but was not understood as something from within the divine being

[b] the Lord's distinction from the Father without destroying the unity of God. Heathens accused the Christians of polytheism.

Nothing could be done until the Trinity as placed inside the nature of God. This could not beset yet,

So Arianism was a dangerous enemy.

[a] Arius was followed by Pistus, Carpones, the deacon Euzoius.

[b] Arijus was an attractive person and a master of hype and spin

[c] He found supporters: in Caesarea in Palestine, the school of Lucian; Eusebius of Nicomedia

323 Battle of Chrysopolis Constantine defeats the Eastern Emperor Licinius,.

Constantine master of the whole Roman Empire.